

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

DianneA: welcome to Teaching teachers

WilliamBa: Do you have any suggestions when it comes to the kids in a class who refuse to participate (The ones who when you call on them they just shake their head or reply with "I don't know" to everything else)?

DianneA: and can you now introduce yourselves .. where you are from and what area of teaching is your interest

BJB2: I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania

DianneA: thanks William

RushtonH: Those students sometimes respond when given the opportunity, after class, to suggest something that might help students better learn the topic.

JanSe: I am from Indiana ... I am a department chair of General Education at a local college ... my area of expertise is Holocaust History

RushtonH: My name is Rushton Hurley, and I teach Japanese language and video production. I also run the nonprofit Next Vista for Learning (<http://nextvista.org>), which is working to help students and teachers around the globe through a free, online library of video resources by and for teachers and students everywhere. (bit long-winded, sorry). I'm in Santa Clara, California.

DianneA: I engage in professional development of teachers in Wollongong Australia

BJB2 . o O (like maybe that reluctant participant would be interested in creating a video of the topic being studied?)

RushtonH nods

BJB2 . o O (hint, hint...Rushton leads the Next Vista discussion)

RushtonH: Perhaps when we get to the second topic on mentoring, using video might be something to discuss.

BJB2: www.nextvista.org

DianneA: before the witching hour began, I was exploring with Jan and William their current practice issues ...

DianneA: and can I now give a tip to Jan and William ...

BJB2 listens to Dianne

DianneA: if you use your up arrow you can recall previous inputs to chat, do that until you find your question then resend to us to see what is on your agenda for today

DianneA: Jan raised "dealing with a teacher that is too regimented and thinks its ok"

DianneA: William raised "Do you have any suggestions when it comes to the kids in a class who refuse to participate (The ones who when you call on them they just shake their head or reply with "I don't know" to everything else)?"

DianneA: William's question is one where I think I would be mentoring William about dealing with lack of motivation in class

DianneA: Jan's question is about mentoring a teacher about their teaching expectations and teaching styles

BJB2 . o O (or finding out why the child is not engaged in the learning process)

DianneA: We have had a suggestion that Rushton might have some really useful inputs to help William with his concern

JanSe: could the refusal to participate be a learning styles issue?

JanSe: the teacher only lectures ...but the student is a kinesthetic learner

BJB2 . o O (or a learning disability, or a programmed for failure response)

DianneA: can we focus for the moment on William's issue .. thanks Jan

JanSe: Dianne ... I am referring to William's question

BJB2 agrees

DianneA nods to Jan

RushtonH: Students think of being in class typically from only one direction - being the learner. They can get intrigued by the thought of providing something useful.

BJB2: does the child have a history of failure/nonparticipation?

BJB2 . o O (are there personal/family issues that may be influencing behavior?)

BJB2 . o O (wouldn't it be nice if there were a simple answer to questions like William's?)

WilliamBa Smiles

JanSe: BJ ...absolutely !

DianneA notices that we are asking William about what he thinks might be the difficulty for the student here ...

DianneA: and other questions would include what has William already tried and found doesn't work

BJB2 nods

DianneA: in part we are asking is this lack of engagement just one student, or is it more general - class wide?

WilliamBa: I'm speaking from a general point of view...

WilliamBa: I know that from what I've seen... there seems to be at least one in each class...

WilliamBa: even if the class is engaged

DianneA: and we are asking have a range of techniques been used with the class to know a bit more what kinds of approaches draw more responses than others

DianneA: and which kinds of techniques William is most comfortable with

RushtonH: William, what kind of technology projects do you do with your students, and has this student responded to any of them?

WilliamBa: I'm speaking from an observer stand point... I'm still finishing up my education... I'm in my last year... about to start my student teaching...

DianneA: Ok, from the observer point ...

DianneA: why is this an issue for you?

WilliamBa: I've observed many classes as an observer and there seems to be at least one regardless of the technology used (usually PowerPoint) or enthusiasm of the teacher

RushtonH: I think students are most engaged when the person presenting the topic is speaking from personal experience. That can also turn a disengaged student into an engaged one. I've got one kiddo who has been great since she learned I have cats!

DianneA: hands up those experienced teachers here who have engaged all students at any one time in a lesson?

RushtonH: once, several years ago...

RushtonH smiles

WilliamBa: I'm concerned/worried as to when I am teaching a class... which is what I'll soon be doing... I would prefer a class that is fully engaged... It seems that if there is one person like that... It seems to draw the energy/flow out of the class

JeffC: once... <http://snurl.com/netc1>

DianneA: OK Rushton ... elaborate ... what did you do that was so engaging?

DianneA: and you too Jeff

RushtonH: I teach language, and I used to do skits...

RushtonH: that wasn't what engaged them, though.

RushtonH: When I started teaching them to use iMovie...

RushtonH: the opportunity to craft their own presentations got them very excited.

RushtonH: And the quality of their presentations went through the roof.

DianneA: so ownership for the students was important Rushton?

RushtonH: Having time to create the piece that they wanted to convey seemed to be the key.

DianneA: Jeff what was the key in your instance?

WilliamBa: Do you think that making the class more student-centered and leaning more toward constructivism would help in participation of these students?

JanSe: I've had several classes where the students were fully engaged ... I've discovered that if you use a variety of techniques during a session that it keeps the non-participation to a bare minimum or not at all ... lecture, hands on, AV, group project, etc

JeffC: the key was the net

JeffC: getting the kids virtually out of the classroom in 1997.

JanSe: if the students know that you will have a variety of activities then they seem to stay engaged during the parts that aren't their favorites

DianneA: for Jan it seems that variety is the spice of life .. and different kinds of activities operate as triggers for different learning approaches of the students

BJB2 . o O (which answers the earlier question about learning styles)

DianneA: notice William we rarely claim full success all of the time

DianneA: and one of the keys will be working with the key that helps an individual student

WilliamBa: I see... I just am worried that I will be drug down by the negativity and non-cooperativeness of these students

DianneA: and one of the big turn offs is not knowing seeing any relevance between what is going on and where they are at

JanSe: 100% participation 100% of the time is impossible

DianneA: so Rushton's movie and Jeff's net work was more with where they were at

WilliamBa: yeah... I understand that...

RushtonH: Just keep smiling and asking them how they're doing. You may be the only teacher who talks with them rather than at them.

BJB2 . o O (we don't even pay attention all the time, William!)

BJB2: good comment, Rushton

WilliamBa: So, when the time comes, should I choose to focus on the willing participants as opposed to getting the other ones (non) to participate?

DianneA: it is working with your responsibilities with learning design that will be the key to good teaching

RushtonH: I like Jan's comment about their staying on with stuff that isn't their favorite because there is other stuff going on they like. Getting their opinions on such things can create even more buy-in.

DianneA nods to Rushton

WilliamBa: I see

DianneA: Now Jan ... are there linkages between what we have just been doing and with your issue?

JanSe: Rushton is right about the rapport with the students ... if a student feels that you care about them as a person they are more likely to buy in to what you are doing in class

RushtonH: Thinking about your question, I'd say make VERY sure not to spend loads of time in class focusing on the disengaged; that can be frustrating for the ones who want to participate.

JanSe: absolutely ... I think that the teacher with regimentation issues doesn't have the buy in of the students because they think she doesn't care

DianneA nods to Rushton

WilliamBa: That is true... I've seen and have been, as we all have, how students who have a good rapport with the teacher are more willing to interact

JanSe: so they tune her out

WilliamBa: Yup

DianneA: my other 'implicit' question involves how you might approach your teacher as her mentor ...

WilliamBa: So be interested in them and they will be interested in what you have to say... that's basically it in a nut shell... right?

JanSe: that is the harder part ..

JanSe: I co-taught with her before I became her "boss"

DianneA listens for some more details

BJB2: often regimentation is from either a lack of knowing a different way to present a lesson, or fear of failure in trying something new

JanSe: it is hard for her to take criticism from me because she sees me as a colleague not her department chair

RushtonH: It can be easier for another teacher to open up about difficulties if they are asked what they think of a challenge a veteran teacher is having.

JanSe: I've had other DCs talk to her and she changes for awhile but then she falls back into her old routine

JanSe: I think what BJ said about fear of failure is also playing a part in her regimentation

RushtonH nods

DianneA: earlier both Jan and I noted that we found that asking for an extension hard, but not the end of the world ... I thought that perhaps sharing what we found so hard about asking for an extension, and what we found so helpful about getting an extension might help this teacher see why extensions for adults are so valuable

JanSe: it's comfortable for her to be strictly structured

RushtonH: but not so interesting for the students, definitely.

JanSe: absolutely Rushton

DianneA knows the comfort of strict structuring

RushtonH: One approach is to compare the response of students in classes now with what a teacher most wants out of student response. At core, we all want to go home each day energized at seeing students grapple and succeed with what we teach them.

RushtonH: From that, the 'how do we get there' discussion can perhaps start more easily.

DianneA: and perhaps drawing on her experience ... had she had a request for an extension refused as an adult ...

RushtonH: apologies to the group - how are we using the word, "extension"?

DianneA: that might explain other inflexibilities

DianneA: sorry Rushton

DianneA: Jan detailed one of the inflexibilities as not giving adults an extension of time to complete assignments

RushtonH: Ah!

DianneA: I have recently worked with adult teachers who are explicit about acknowledging that adults have multiple obligations

DianneA: and assignments can pale into insignificance at times

DianneA: but still be important

DianneA: and when encouraged to be done when they can be done become what they should be

DianneA: not just compliance exercises but real learning

JanSe: Dianne ... she refused to request for an extension as an adult ...

DianneA: any idea why Jan?

JanSe: pride mostly

JanSe: fear that it would be seen as failure

DianneA: changing pride is nearly impossible!

JanSe: absolutely!

DianneA: these are very deep personal identity issues

RushtonH: A good time to convey that you are more interested in seeing what she is capable of doing rather than in what time frame she can crank something out.

DianneA: and change there takes a lot of effort, and repetition, and time

JanSe: she sees the students request as a failure on their part of negotiating their time

DianneA nods to Rushton

JanSe: part of our problem is that we have only 4 weeks to teach the students

RushtonH: Tough, definitely.

DianneA: and Rushton's comment goes back to some of what are your own flexibilities as chair ...

DianneA: and there is one such inflexibility ... not in yourself so much as in the system constraints

DianneA: how much capacity as chair have you to change that 4 week situation

DianneA: what other options might there be to help students do what has to be done over the four week period?

JanSe: none ...

RushtonH: Giving students a choice of assignments (as long as they properly and meaningfully engage in the content, of course) can help them use more of their time on their studies.

BJB2: have students create digital stories that summarize the four weeks of the course...demonstrate learning and understanding?

JanSe: there is a process for an incomplete but it totally up to the teacher

DianneA: Now William can you 'see' how we have been dealing with Jan's problem is much the same way as we dealt with your problem, and how in some respects the 'answers' principles are the same ...

DianneA: so we are back to the change for the teacher

WilliamBa: yeah

WilliamBa Smiles

JanSe: sure are

DianneA: and Jan as a teacher of a teacher has a particularly difficult role

JanSe: I sure do ...

DianneA: when you were co-teachers, what was it you most appreciated about your co-teacher's contribution Jan?

JanSe: her enthusiasm for the subject composition and grammar

DianneA: have you shared that with her?

JanSe: absolutely!

DianneA: and what did you find most difficult about co-teaching with her?

JanSe: I've also shared with her that I think her approach to student ownership of their writing is fabulous

JanSe: her hard line stance on working with students

DianneA: and do you know what my next question would be?

BJB2 hopes Dianne asks soon...only 5 minutes left

DianneA grins at BJ

DianneA: your cue BJ!

WilliamBa amazed how fast time flew by

BJB2: the next Teaching Teachers discussion will be on June 7

DianneA hoped Bj would ask the awkward question!

WilliamBa marking calendar

BJB2: when is the old broad going to retire?

RushtonH laughs

DianneA lol

WilliamBa =D

JanSe: lol she is in her late 20s ...not very old ...and is leaving us in September for a job in a K-12 public school

BJB2: sometimes attrition is the best way to weed out the resistant faculty

DianneA: Jan my next question was to be: have you shared that with her?

BJB2: oh, the poor children!

DianneA: sometimes it is easier to compliment than to correct

DianneA: so now you need to work on leverage to compliment and to move in the direction of more flexibility

RushtonH: With our students, we sometimes find it easier to correct than to compliment.

DianneA: that is a design issue for you

JanSe: absolutely! she thinks that she is making the students better time managers

RushtonH: And if they were teens, she'd probably be on a good track.

JanSe: Rushton ...I think you hit it on the head

RushtonH: Perhaps if you hit her on the head.

WilliamBa LOL

JanSe: lol

BJB2 chuckles.

BJB2: Thanks, everyone, for a really engaging discussion!

RushtonH: Enjoyed it!

WilliamBa: It was fun

DianneA disappears quietly to another session I should moderate, thanks for your sharing and keep it going if it is helpful

WilliamBa: Thanks all!

BJB2: I hope you'll all be able to return next month and report how things turned out

JanSe: thanks for your help

BJB2 heads to Teachers in Training

WilliamBa: Don't forget to e-mail me Rushton

RushtonH: I won't!