

ISACS
Notes from the Academy for Exceptional Teaching Conference
Day Two with Jeffrey Cufaude
February 17, 2012

INNOVATION NETWORKS

Premise:

- How to take the content and put it into context and is relevant? Not organized around the textbook (Why do we need textbooks? Can we create our own?)

Alternative Premises/Innovations/Solutions:

- Start with a big question, problem to solve
- Tap into experience and resources
- What skill they need applied through the content (Sen. Lugar organizes symposiums in this way)
- Tap into community resources for authentic experiences

Little Bets:

- Design a unit or activity around a theme
- Make the question explicit
- Find a way to have students generate the questions is relevant to them (why is this topic valuable to them?)
- Student generated content share through appropriate media (wiki, googledoc, audio, etc.) (Is technology the answer? The synergy of a face-to-face group can be invigorating)

Tech into Curriculum as Part of a School Culture

Needs: Infrastructure/faculty/admin buy-in

Assumptions: No Time?

Variety of interest levels

Unarticulated need – 21st century products. Do you know what they can do/what they are?

(Student Driven: How do they use tech? What do they use?)

Solution Possibilities:

- Possible incentives/rewards
- Exposure at faculty meetings/classroom visits
- Training
- Accountability

How Can We Innovative Faculty Meetings?

1. Shared design
 - Survey faculty (smaller/diverse groups rather than the entire faculty)
 - Set purpose
 - Better use of time (Scattergood Friends School elects a clerk {from the staff} that works to keep the meeting moving. It works!)
2. Vary format
 - Master class – learn from each other
 - Tips from the pros – non academic
 - Chat rooms, wikis, web page
 - One week – no meetings
3. Environment
 - Different places to meet
 - Arrange seating
 - Food!
 - (how about faculty evaluation of each meeting – assess the value, get feedback)

Math

Problem

- Relevance
- Motivation
- Lack of resources

Assumptions

- Skills “needed”/required
- Collaboration with other disciplines: science, reading
- (Does this happen at most schools?)

“Little Bets”

- Computer resources
- Application questions
- Provide “choices” for H. with tests/projects
- “Use: Khan Academy, Dan Meyers, Wolfram Alpha
- (Use LOLcats to illustrate concepts or make motivational posters – kids love it.)

Problem to solve: How do we create student engagement while still addressing critical content?

(are these things at odds?)

Premises:

- Teachers create engagement
- Identifying “understanding” is possible/quantifiable
- There is a clear meaning to “critical content”

What we thought to do:

- Bring in an object to make something tangent – an idea/concept
- Determine how to create a critiquing process
- Use ideas from another department
- Analogy/modeling
- Self – larger theme through personal experience

How can we facilitate environments that adapt to our ever-changing educational culture?

Need: fluid, flexible, personalized, adaptable, simple, efficient, student-driven

Possible innovations: alternative furniture/no furniture, mobile furniture, mobile learning, classroom spaces by instructional techniques vs. content, utilizing non-traditional spaces

Small Bets:

- adding wheels/sliders to furniture
- use walls/ceilings
- remove some furniture for students to contribute/personalize space

Problem: Learning is compartmentalized

- Schedule
- Physical space
- Content
- Methods

Little bets

1. 2-week trial – teams of 4-5 teachers
2. 1 project/teacher/yr
3. Needs:
 - Self-organizing (teacher)
 - Curricularly diverse “bites”

