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Reading and Discussing Teaching and Learning: A Book Club Experience

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A Book Club Experience

WHY A BOOK CLUB?

A book club was a novel way to engage participants, prior to the U of C Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching. Drawing from the 'slow scholarship' notion (Hartman & Darab, 2012), that we learn, and process information when we take the time to think, and reflect. Caster and Hautala (2008), describe the need for time, and balance, and suggest a book club is an effective method for faculty to learn, discuss, and share with one another. Book clubs are also applicable to classroom activities, across disciplines, (Reilly, 2008; Scourfield & Taylor, 2014).

FORMAT

- A series of three face-to-face meetings, leading up to the Conference
- A D2L course was generated for additional participation, discussion, and sharing
- Learning Outcomes: Read the entire book; discuss selected chapters; analyze the content; and explore potential applications for teaching and learning.

PARTICIPANTS

- Facilitator (EDU faculty)
- Faculty, students, and staff from across all disciplines
- Attendance varied from six to ten participants

BOOK CLUB EXPERIENCES

Facilitator

Increased personal development, and learning
D2L is a useful 'blending' tool to facilitate a discussion group
A book club is a great way to commit to reading

Participants

Rated the experience as 'very good' to 'excellent'
Would like to continue the book club or journal club
Learned something new and practical about teaching
Plans to incorporate learning into practice
Appreciated the opportunity, and different perspectives

*SELECTED BOOK

Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses.
Dee Fink (2013)

*A copy of the book was given to each book club participant

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Proposal

L Dee Fink, released a new edition of *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* (2013), with the message that, “the whole point of this book is to offer ideas that can improve the way teaching is usually practiced in higher education” (p. xii). The challenge to those who want to meaningfully read and learn from this 334 page book, is described by Caster and Hautala (2008), is that of time and balance. They also provide evidence that a book club is an opportunity for learning, and helps to address the challenges. Levin et al. (2007) suggest the knowledge gained from book group discussions can be shared with others, and provide a model for others to adopt the book club format. Williams et al. (2013) describe this as increasing the opportunity to build networks to enhance teaching and learning. With the idea to bring together a university community to explore teaching and learning issues, a book club was established, and Fink’s book was selected. The popularity of this format was quickly embraced by faculty, graduate students and staff from across disciplines, to discuss Fink’s ideas on teaching, and explore potential applications of the text. Topics were identified, face-to-face meetings were scheduled, and a discussion board was created in the online learning management system (D2L). A facilitator organized the group, monitored the D2L site, and Barthelmess (2014) guidelines for good book club discussion were adopted. This poster will present the process, format, membership, and experiences, with implications for applications and future development.

References

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