

RE-STORYING: A STORYTELLING TECHNIQUE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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“Humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Story.....is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.”

(Connelly & Clandinin (2006) NARRATIVE INQUIRY in Green, Camilli, Elmore (eds) HANDBOOK OF COMPLEMENTARY METHODS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. Publishers)

“Telling their stories of practice provides teachers with an opportunity to focus on particular instances of teaching and to examine those instances more deeply.....”

(Richert, A. E. (2002) “Narrative that teach: Learning about teaching from the stories teachers tell” in Lyons & LaBoskey (eds) NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN PRACTICE. New York: Teacher’s College Press

“Teachers live in stories.....It is through this narrative dialogue of reflection and interpretations that experience is transformed into pedagogical content knowledge.” *(Gudmundsdottir, S. (1995) “The narrative nature of pedagogical content knowledge” in McEwan & Egan, (eds) NARRATIVE IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND RESEARCH.*

“Teachers’ stories are much more than charming anecdotes.....They are experiences that evoke stories from others, encapsulate professional perspectives, and lead to professional insight about the meaning of teaching. *(Jalongo & Isenberg, (1995) TEACHERS’ STORIES, FROM PERSONAL NARRATIVE TO PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*

WHAT IF TEACHERS GATHERED TOGETHER TO SHARE THEIR CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES AND TELL THE STORIES OF WHAT HAPPENED (OR DIDN’T HAPPEN).

Caveats:

- ***Not a time to whine, complain, blame or say unpleasant things about people or situations***

- *A time to commit oneself to really listening and discuss the experiences with the purpose of helping each other and learning to become a better teacher.*

A RESTORYING TEACHER SUPPORT GROUP

Step One: An educator orally shares a story or experience from some aspect of teaching. The experience can be one experienced by the teller or taken from someone else's experience. The educator prepares the telling so he/she can be as clear and articulate in the telling as possible. The group can also decide to have the teller write the experience and distribute copies.

Step Two: After the telling, the listeners ask clarifying questions or identify parts of the story that were unclear.

Step Three: The listeners spend a few moments in silence, thinking about the story. Listeners might retell the story in writing, or make notes about the story or retell the story in one's own mind. A good way to start is by writing: (Teacher's name) told a story about

Step Four: Reflect upon the story. What could you offer that will help your colleague with this situation? Have you had a similar experience that might be useful (but make sure you don't take over with your experience; this is the time for your colleague's experience to be the focus).

Step Five: Engage in discussion. Do your best to be the most helpful colleague you can be. But be aware of new insights and understandings that you are gaining for yourself.

Step Six: Be willing to share your written retellings or notes with the teller.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Always be respectful and confidential

Treat your colleagues the way you would like to be treated

Set a reasonable time and place that is comfortable for your group

A group of six to ten is reasonable

Decide beforehand who will share a story so the storyteller has time to prepare the telling.

Serve munchies