Student Resistance: What to do When ‘Best Practices' Flop

Karina Leonard

Dawson College, kleonard@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons, Educational Methods Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons/2009/65

This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in SoTL Commons Conference by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
What To Do When ‘Best Practices’ Flop:

Karina Leonard
Educational Consultant

Dawson College
Montreal, Quebec
Agenda:

- Context: Okay.. So I did it, and the kids hate it!
- Workshop Approach: Blended PBL & Boalian Theatre (dual purpose)
- Group Activity & Presentations on:
  - What Are ‘Best Practices’ & Why Should I Use them?
  - Looking Backwards
  - Looking at the Wo/Man in the Mirror
  - Looking forward (Reform Students to Come)
- Dealing with Change & Grieving
- Forum Theatre Exercise
- Summary & Email contact sheet
Okay..
So I did it, and the kids hate it!

- My job: Idea Factory/Researcher/Brainstormer
  - Students are motivated to work only if the work counts for grades and/if they see it has direct relevance to the test.
  - Students openly prefer a teacher-centered learning environment, where they write down ‘verbatim’ notes based on your presentation/lectures
  - They consider that you are “Not doing your job” if you do not lecture.
My Job continued:

“It has been estimated that 5% to 10% of participants will continue to use best teaching practices over time if ongoing coaching and support are absent.”

(Kohn, 2000, pg.49)
Workshop Approach:

- **PBL:** Starts off with a problem and participants share resources and learn together to find a solution.
- **Forum Theatre:** Boalian concept - based on ‘theatre of the oppressed’ used by grassroots organizations in South America.
The Trouble with “Best Practices” - A Play

- Dramatic read through to present the ‘problem’ / learning opportunity
Group Activity:

- 5 minutes total discussion time
- Choose the role you will take in your group
- With your role in mind, please discuss the question on your discussion sheet
- Be prepared to briefly share the main points of your discussion with the larger group
What Are ‘Best Practices’ & Why Should I Use them? (You said)

- Authentic
- Evidence based
- High buy-in
- Student-centered
- Constructivist
What Are ‘Best Practices’ & Why Should I Use them?

- Socio-constructivism embedded in competency-based approach
- Transition from teacher as ‘sage of stage’
- Group work based on real life learning experiences
Looking Backwards: Causes of Student Resistance

(You said)

- Good to have both group work and individual work
- Set the context before sharing in group
- Foundation building
- Maturity of the group / demographics
- Each group accountable – pre-select
Looking Backwards: Causes of Student Resistance

- Competition – retraining required
- “Keep your eyes on your own work” of traditional exams/assessment activities
- Teacher burn-out = student burnout
- QEP reform of 1992 - stakeholders complained that graduates lacked social competencies, and creative and analytical thinking skills.
Looking at the Wo/Man in the Mirror (You said)

- You tend to use a written reflection where students are asked to reflect on what they did and what the teacher asked of them.
- You examine how students prepare for class
- One minute reflection before / after class.
- Summarize above
Looking at the Wo/Man in the Mirror

- What is your real buy-in rate?
- Do you have a clear vision of the desired outcome and have you communicated this to the students?
- Do we indirectly award compliance or encourage critical thinking?
Different students = text savvy
Value experiential
Bored easily
Receive & process
Learning styles change from day to day – inventive teaching please!
Hands-on, different learning styles
Looking forward (Millennial Students)

- Awareness of the learning process (how we learn to learn)
- Cross curricular competencies (methodological, organizational, analytical, language, etc..)
- New dichotomy in the classroom (a new concept of the classroom)
Dealing with Change:

- Make the class a safe space
- Predictable progressions
- Ellsworth “Teaching is impossible!” (1997)
- Repression, denial, ignorance, resistance, fear, same themes as psycho-therapy
- Teacher acts as guide, questioning students to make their own meaning
- Normalize the grieving process
The Grieving Process:

The Grieving Process for Coping with Change

1. Shock
2. Denial
3. Strong Emotion: depression; physical symptoms: Panic, regret/guilt/anger resentment
4. Resistance: to return to The routine, withdraw
5. Acceptance: resignation, hope, “leap of faith”
6. Struggle: to affirm new reality, frustration
7. Better Understanding: impatient with Performance; Sense of direction
8. Integration

Performance
Current Level
Change
New Level of Performance

This chart was taken from a presentation given by P. Weissinger at the IINFD in 2007.

PBL: Getting the Most from PBL

June 27, 2007
Course Design

63
The Trouble with “Best Practices” - A Play

- Forum Theatre - “Freeze” and improv based on what we have learned.
- A chance to consolidate our exchange.
- A chance to practice in a safe space.
Summary:

- Be aware of what you’re doing, asking students to do and the reasons behind it. Try to remember that change takes time and don’t get frustrated. Reflect some more…

- Thank you for your participation.
Please email me if you would like an emailed copy of this presentation, including the play and the modified slides.

kleonard@dawsoncollege.qc.ca