Using Blended Learning to Support Interdisciplinary Professional Development for Teachers

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Project Objectives

- Help ELA teachers integrate informational text
- Support science teachers integration of text
- Generate interdisciplinary lesson plans
- Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration
Overview of First Summer Workshop

- Gardening & Cooking
- 23 Middle & High School Teachers
- Integrated Curriculum Model
  - Science & English model lessons
- Hands-on interactive sessions

Growing Communities of Learners, NSTA/SCST, March 2015, Chicago, IL
Critical Friends Groups (CFG): Building PLCs

- CFG = 6 – 12 members
  - Norms and Protocols
  - Conversations about teaching & learning
  - Collaborative, democratic, reflective
  - Potential changes in practice & outcomes

https://www.nsrfharmony.org
## CFG: Tuning Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event (Time)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction (1 min)</td>
<td>Facilitator introduces protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (5 min)</td>
<td>Presenter shares focusing question and context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifying Questions (2 min)</td>
<td>Participants ask questions to presenter to get more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Writing (3 min)</td>
<td>All take notes and write down ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback to Presenter (6 min)</td>
<td>Participants provide warm and cool feedback to presenter, who remains silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection (5 min)</td>
<td>Presenter reflects aloud on feedback, participants remain silent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Conversation (5 min)</td>
<td>All discuss and extrapolate from the feedback and reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debrief (3 min)</td>
<td>Facilitator closes session with summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Modified from the Tuning Protocol by J. McDonald & D. Allen National School Reform Faculty, 2014
Benefits of Interdisciplinary CFG

- Less anxiety/judgment, especially when taking risks with teaching

- Perspectives outside of content area

- Naïve questions from others provides new insight/focus

- Greater appreciation for each other's work

- Increased creativity
Problem: K-12 teachers need more support from Belmont faculty, especially during the fall for CFGs
Solution: Utilize technology to provide more opportunities for Belmont faculty to support K-12 teachers
Online support of K-12 teachers:

- Assigned at least one Belmont Faculty Coach
- ½ day online session
- Google Hangout meetings
- Calendar of meetings and CFGs
Barriers:

- Technology issues
- User errors
- Logistical issues with calendar
Overall, a success!

- Anecdotally teachers responded positively, benefits of online environment
- More lessons generated
- Better attendance at winter dinner, longer engagement period
- Plans to continue with other grant proposals
What We Learned:

- Upfront day of training with Belmont Faculty Mentors
- More clearly outline for each BU Mentors expectations
- Intentionally pair Mentors in different ways
Acknowledgements

- Tennessee Higher Education Commission
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- Teacher Participants in Summer Workshop
Questions? Comments?

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