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DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS
by Rosemary Caffarella

INTRODUCTION

The challenge in designing and delivering professional development is to come up with a high quality product that not only has an impact on the participants at the time of the activity, but also transfers into their practice — and that of others around them.

Despite the enormous amount of money invested in professional development programs for school leaders and their personnel, this is not always the case. It is not enough to talk about this; we need to model 'good practice', When I present seminars or workshops, I do provide 'content material' relating to the issue, but in the delivery of the seminar I also try to model effective approaches which will have significant effects on how the participants will provide leadership and how they will operate as teachers in the future.

Effective, high quality professional development provides participants with opportunities to learn in ways that are applicable to their work settings. It is well planned, it helps the participants to plan their own follow-up to the sessions, and it is concerned with issues of learning transfer.

DOING THE GROUNDWORK

What are some of the basic tenets in designing effective professional development?

- First we need to identify a clear and genuine need, and tailor our activities to meet it..

- For teachers, the activities should be in worktime, not out of hours; the activities will be of immediate relevance; and we will need to help the teachers change their mindsets and attitudes — to seeing themselves as learners.

- Motivation should be generated by seeing the activities in the context of a continuum of learning — not as a one-off experience.

- There will be an emphasis on involvement and the generation of tangible outcomes and/or products.

- Study will be in-depth, rather than as a collection of 'bits and pieces'.

- There will be incentives, for example through rewards at the end of the sessions.

- The professional development will take account of the participants' reasons for attending the activities and their expectations of the program, as well as their age, experience and other relevant factors.

Why are these elements important?   We are trying to motivate teachers and those in leadership positions to improve their practice. We want to rejuvenate the teaching profession. We want to provide opportunities for personal as well as professional development.

As we undertake this mission we will need to take into account a range of questions about how to gauge our success. These might include:

- How will we achieve transfer of learning, and sustain it in the workplace?

- How will we measure the long term effects of any change in practice that occurs?

- How will we ensure that the message we deliver is aligned with the message that each participant receives? (Just because we think we are teaching something does not mean that this is what the participant is learning — which may vary in layers of meaning, apart from the overall message.)

- How will our use of learning and communication technologies fit with the professional development we are delivering? Will it add or detract?

- How will we motivate members of an ageing teacher population, and how will this affect our delivery, since novice and experienced learners learn quite differently?

- How do I learn myself, and how do I relate to others in a teaching and learning context — and what is the immediate context for learning in the particular activity?

- If we are aiming our professional development at leaders, what are the predictors of leadership performance? Where is the database on this, for us to relate to?

- How can we evaluate the effectiveness of our professional development, and how can we build it in throughout the process, rather than tacking it on at the end?

- What is the emotional availability of our participants? What stresses and strains are impacting on them from their workplace? Are they overworked, tired, feeling unappreciated?

Planning of professional development is not linear; it is about the interrelationship of factors (see the diagram below).

Needs Assessment

Evaluation

Transfer
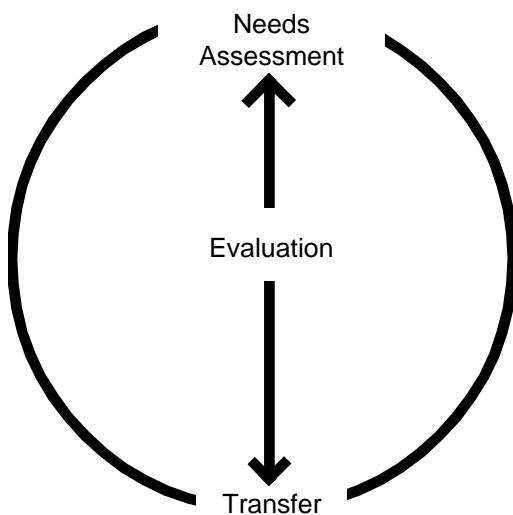
Planning of good professional development will take into account not only the factors and questions mentioned here, but a range of others I haven't talked about — because of space or because they would arise in specific circum-stances and would be dealt with in context. Context is important — consider the case of urban and rural participants. Most of those who provide professional development are from metropolitan areas and would not think about context beyond that. Who is involved in your planning influences what you provide and what is learnt.

An interactive model of Program Planning

I propose an interactive model of program planning. What does this involve? It is about taking on board the factors and issues I have raised and negotiating ways of dealing with them. This may have no formal 'beginning' or 'end', as the negotiation process will be ongoing, throughout the planning and delivery process. Some presenters/facilitators will find this difficult. Some will really not be able to handle it. They will deliver what they were going to deliver. How often have you been to a professional development activity and felt that the presenter was delivering a standard package, with little if any knowledge of, or concession to, the nature and needs of the audience?

We need to be flexible as presenters of professional development, varying our input according to needs and desired outcomes. The increasing tendency for globalisation of education and training programs means that we cannot afford to ignore differing expectations and responses. A degree of interactivity is required in the planning of programs. This is a complex process, which involves:

- discerning the context for planning
- building a solid base of support
- conducting needs assessment and identifying ideas for programs
- sorting and prioritising program needs
- developing program objectives
- preparing for the transfer of learning
- formulating evaluation plans
- determining formats, schedules and staff
- preparing budgets and marketing plans
- designing instructional plans
- co-ordinating facilities and on-site services
- determining and communicating the value of the program.

(Also see Caffarella, in print.)

Some assumptions underpin these 'nuts and bolts' of program development. An interactive model recognises the non-sequential nature of the planning process, discerns the importance of context and negotiation and attends to pre-planning and last minute changes. There is an acceptance that program planning is a practical art, and that program planners are themselves learners.

The interactive model also assumes a 'client-based' focus on learning and change. It honours and takes into account diversity and cultural differences. It assumes an operational style based on interdependence, collaboration and connected ways of acting, allied with individual modes of learning.

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The sources for this model lie in what we know about adult learning. Most theory, based in a psychological framework, tends to emphasise individual elements. It addresses the rich background of experience and knowledge that each person brings to a program. It acknowledges that each person will be subject to internal and external motivation, and that s/he will have personal preferences and ways of processing information.

Meaningfulness will also vary according to the person. People interpret what they hear differently. They add it to their existing body of experience and practice. If an anticipated change to their practice looks radical, even very experienced teachers may be alienated and reject what the professional development activity is proposing — in general, they will feel that what they already have as experience has worked for them in the past and needs tuning rather than drastic change.

Individuals, after all, have their own personal goals and objectives, and we need to take account of their physical and psychological comfort as well as their roles and personal contexts. We need to ask people where they are, what they do and what are their concerns — in general terms as well as relating to the specific activity. We must respond to that information, designing or reframing the activity, on the spot if necessary, to make sure that program and participant connect. Otherwise the person may feel cut off.

Individuals will be looking for something they can add to their repertoire; something practical; something they can use over the next one, six or twelve months in their own contexts.

On the contextual side, the interactive model looks more towards a sociological base, taking into account factors such as gender, class, ethnicity and culture. People learn because of who they are.

Some cultures, for example, are more aligned with a collaborative approach than others — the American Indians and the New Zealand Maoris have a communal culture which makes this 'second nature' for them. By contrast many American educators, coming from a cultural background based on the individual, find such an approach difficult and are only gradually starting to build it into their practice.

In my own thinking, I have drawn on practical experience; my own and that of other professionals. I have observed and discussed the issues with practitioners, faculty colleagues, graduate students and program participants.

Contextual and individual approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact the two start to merge, and it is crucial that we use both.

If we go routinely through the interactive planning elements on page 2, using them as a the checklist, every time we plan a program, we will find we are changing and changing again what we will deliver. We might have 10 programs with the 'same' content but 10 different emphases and approaches. It is worth noting in this regard that in terms of general current practice, genuine needs assessment is rarely carried out, And if it is done, it is rarely used. Presenters have their own comfort zones, as I suggested earlier, however even for a 'canned' program, we should still go through the checklist first. I like the analogy of finding our way through a maze — what we are about is ongoing redesign.

I said earlier that many teachers will come to an activity wanting something practical that they can take away to use in their personal context. That is a legitimate expectation, but how much stronger will the effects be of that learning if it has been communal as well as individual? We need to encourage teams to come from schools, rather than a single person, and we need to look at series of sessions rather than one-offs, so that learning within the group can be cumulative and based on a common and growing understanding.

We hear a lot of words about 'collaborative' practice, but how often do we actually see it happening? It will not happen overnight, or through some mystical transformation. We need to work at making it happen, setting up opportunities for teachers to work together — taking something that works, building on it and going beyond it.

We need to talk to those people who actually **do** the things we read about — perhaps some of those ethnic groups for whom collaborative modes of operation are a part of the culture — learn from them, and translate that learning into our own contexts.

USING THE INTERACTIVE MODEL

When I present this model to a group of teachers and educational leaders, since I wish to model the approach, the actual delivery varies. In a recent session, the participants included some classroom practitioners, some school leaders and some system level policy makers. The eventual 'mix' was different from what had been anticipated so I discussed this the day before the session with the organisers and changed the

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emphasis in my presentation. On the day, I explained this to the participants, using it as an example of needing to be flexible and take account of context.

Having introduced the concept of interactive programs, I wanted the group to experience negotiation and collaboration within a framework.

The workshop task that I set was to design a professional development program/activity for a rural or an urban region. A basic premise, regardless of content, was that the program would impact on student learning.

Participants were going to work in planning teams, playing the roles of the team members. These were to be:

- 2 consultants from a Region,
- 2 Principals,
- a teacher if one was available on time release, and
- 1 university researcher.

The theme was to be Literacy, to which everyone could be expected to bring an individual viewpoint and context. For example:

- the consultants might have 150 schools to cover, and would be concerned about what the program would mean for them in achieving its implementation;

- the Principals might be concerned about how relevant their teachers might see the program as being in their context, or about what resources would have to be found;

- the researcher might be worrying about how to link Literacy with measurement of student achievement and how to deal with all the intervening variables.

- the teacher (if s/he had been able to attend) might be asking what the program would mean in terms of his/her classroom practice and workload. How might it relate to a specific cohort of students? (The teacher might also be wondering where all the other teachers were, and why they weren't at a meeting which had such clear pedagogical implications.)

I gave the participants pre-reading on some of the issues — for example, background material on discerning the context — about people and environmental factors — on negotiation, ethics and the importance of power in the planning process.

When the quiet reading by individuals was completed they partnered up with someone sitting at the same table. They were asked to read the material to themselves, then in pairs identify the essential elements in what they had read, consider whether their perceptions matched, make observations and ask questions. They were to teach each other at the table where they were working.

For each group, one pair was asked to focus on contextual issues, another on factors relating to power situations and relationships, and a third on negotiation and ethics.

Large sheets of paper were put up on the walls. They were to use these to record their thoughts and display their findings. This might be achieved using just words — descriptive text — but might also include a range of other approaches to communication, such as metaphor, or drawing. They should use whatever seemed a natural mode of communication for them (recognising that this might be quite different for their partner).

One of the things I suggested they note was the fact that not everybody reads the same way. It is not just a question of speed or facility; some skim read, while others read word by word and in more depth. The style of reading leads to differences in the meanings that the readers gain.

I also drew their attention to the fact that the themes they had been asked to focus on , although discrete, were inter-related. If you don't understand the context, in the environmental realm, transfer probably will not work. How can you expect people to learn, if you don't take into account what is going on around them? Political or environmental factors will affect how and what they learn. It's not a question of spending hours on academic contextual analysis; it's more about having the knowledge of those factors and using that intuitive knowledge as you go through the planning process. The knowledge may be very complex and far from predictable.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Let's consider an example that is close to me, from my home State of Colorado. It is not too long since the school shootings at Columbine — a tragedy that shook people around the world. Studies have subsequently explored what has happened there since the shootings. The school continues to operate, but how have events affected it? You might think that we could take for granted how some of the contextual factors would impact on learning in the school. Perhaps to some extent

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… to ask permission
for something
is like waving a red flag.
It gives or assumes
the message
that one person
is in control.
As Principal,
if you give or
withhold permission,
you're not operating in an
adult-adult relationship.

we can, but could we have predicted that in some ways very little has changed at the school? Athletics and sport still dominate the school culture. The 'power' groups among the kids are still there. 'Jocks' are still very strong. Kids who were seen as 'different' or 'deviant' are still seen that way.

One observation I would make is that a key group is being left out of the planning of professional development to address some of the dynamics and issues that have emerged in the school. The students are not being involved in the development and revision of programs. They know the school — even the kids who are seen as the 'outs', let alone the 'ins' — but they are not asked. With the knowledge that they hold, they are effectively a 'power' group within the institution, but when we run into problems in a school we tend to circumscribe the power to the administration. After the Columbine shootings, the children who were killed, their families and the teacher who was shot all received a lot of press coverage. But there were also children in that building who did enormous things to save other children's lives. They may have got a line or two to talk about it, or their voice may not have been heard. How things change depends to some extent on whose voice is heard and whose is not.

That is one part of our context. What is also happening in our State, as another contextual factor, is that we are moving to grade our schools as A, B, C, D, E and F. Although legislation is currently being considered in our state legislature to change the labels – to excellent, high, average, low or unsatisfactory – the meaning is still the same. This yearly grading of schools is based solely on one state developed test. This type of labeling of schools, and the method for doing so, is a point of personal disagreement for me with the Governor. Why so? For one thing, kids are not always nice to each other; you know that. We have elementary level kids living in the same neighbourhoods who taunt each other about which grade of school they attend.

Put that sort of contextual factor alongside recent history at Columbine, and the failure to involve students in discussions about programs following that tragedy, and I believe that we have the potential for an ongoing explosive situation. It is crucial to provide appropriate training for those who work in this setting. How are we going to train teachers about dealing with violence in schools unless we contextualise it? How are we going to ensure that we get the appropriate and/or missing voices into the professional development that we design for administrators, teachers and students?

If we are planning for administrators and teachers, then student voices need to be heard at some point. Similarly, administrators need to listen to teachers, and vice versa, so the composition of your planning teams may be different, depending both on the context in which you are working and on the target audience.

As a less dramatic example than the last one I cited, in observing one of the groups I worked with in Melbourne, I noted signs of contextual factors for the participants — particularly relating to rural and urban differences — that affected their involvement in the program. It was also apparent that positions in the room, and proximity to other participants, can be significant contextually. An overheard comment about one participant having once been another's supervisor is contextual. That comment might be made in a spirit of fun; it might also mean that at least one person will make more cautious contributions to discussion because the ex-supervisor is present. This can be a serious matter. It is a microcosm. The person may be saying to him/herself things like: *'Who is looking at me? What are they looking at? What am I bringing to the table?'*

Think about your own microcosms. When you're participating in an activity, or in the workplace, take note of where people are in terms of the issues you want to address, and consider what is going on around you in terms of contextual pieces. Think about how you might enrich professional development by taking account of the different contexts that you identify. This can be complex of course, but build on the richness of context rather than ignore it, which can often be the easier option. It is much easier to plan without context — to bring in an outside speaker, who will do nothing but talk at you, then go home and say that you have done professional development.

Bringing in issues of context and transfer makes things more complex at all levels. This reinforces the importance of who is invited to the planning table and who is not. There will be jockeying between those who are there, about what you are going to teach as well as the process itself. This will continue throughout the planning process. It is part of the natural flow and probably *should* be there.

This is true particularly when you invite in somebody, like me for example, as an 'expert'. I am invited because it is an area where I have expertise; I study it; I write about it. But some of the least effective professional development is where you don't negotiate with the expert, about how his/her input might meet the needs of the group and how you might want to use it.

How that negotiation occurs will be affected by a range of factors — not least of which will be 'power', where, for example members of the team are Principals, or Regional Directors, or leaders of other kinds, who are used to having and using power in their own contexts. This may be an even more significant issue in Australia than it is in the US, since the power invested in Principals here is relatively greater. Consider this. If context is important, if power is critical (together with the knowledge of how to use it), and if you use power in negotiation as a given, then you need to be very aware of the skills that you have to operate in that situation. How do you work the planning table? How will you make sure it works *for* you? How will you change things when it is not working? How do you make it *OK* to change it?

Tactics and strategies

In the *Training and Performance Sourcebook*, Yang (1999) suggested tactics that planners might use to address issues of power. These included:

- reasoning
- consulting
- appealing
- networking
- bargaining
- pressuring, and
- counteracting

Each of these has its own connotations in terms of power and exerting influence. Are there some with which you feel more comfortable than others? Are there times when you would need to choose to use a different strategy because of the situation that you are in? For example, take the case I referred to earlier of my disagreement with Colorado's Governor over the grading of schools. How will I deal with that, since I am responsible for part of the training program for Principals?

I anticipate that I will be *counteracting* — not in a non-verbal or negative way, but by asking people in very direct ways to address very critical questions about what is happening in their schools; how they deal with it. I will then use that contextual information in my teaching. As a result, the *Understanding People* course that I teach will look very different, in terms of the experiential base that I use, as compared with how I taught it last year. I have to incorporate what is happening, in order for those classes to mean anything in the context where they are teaching and leading. The theory will mean nothing to the participants unless I attach it to their world of practice. And if I attach it in the same way that I did last year, it will not work.

ABOUT ETHICS

As soon as you move into 'power' issues, you move into questions of ethics. And ethical perceptions vary. Taking the Colorado case of grading schools again, I am sure that the Governor sincerely believes that what has been done is highly ethical and 'right'. He believes that schools will be better as a result of the policies that have been implemented. Others disagree. But who is 'right'?

The answer is that it is not really a question of right and wrong. More often it might be a question of several 'rights', which can be highly paradoxical.

When you think about this, you will find that you cannot separate the contextual variables from the issues of power, or negotiation, or transfer.

Think about what I've been arguing. And think about how it connects back to your own context, where you work; how it connects to what your role is; where it might connect to a meeting that you have tomorrow or next week. How might you use it?

TRANSFER

For transfer to happen, you need to have contextual knowledge. If you are the person who plans a professional development program, not only do **you** need to know it, but the people coming to the program also need to know that they will have to move the content information or material into the context in which they are working.

This can be difficult. What often happens when you move teachers or Principals into a room is that they take in the information but don't think about it in their setting while they are at the workshop. When they get back to their schools they don't have time even to think about the information, let alone passing it on. Sometimes it gets applied, and sometimes it does not.

Let's think this through systematically. What do we need to do to assist with effective transfer?

I would say that as providers of professional development opportunities, we have to ensure at least that when people come into leadership positions they do so knowing that context is critical; knowing how to read it; knowing how to understand it; and knowing how to use it.

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Participants at sessions will also be asking themselves:

> '*How do I relate this to my staff, so that when I send them off to learn about something new, they will also be consciously taking into account the context where they will apply their new knowledge?*'

Transfer goes back to the notion of application — turning round after a professional development session and saying '*OK. So what? What am I going to do with the things I have learned?*' It will be complex and multifaceted. It will involve negotiation of outcomes throughout the process. Outcomes that were anticipated prior to professional development taking place may need to be renegotiated in different contexts after the event. After three or four months they may need to be renegotiated again.

There is no neat progression. I cannot present a professional development program and say 'Here *are seven outcomes or principles that I am going to teach these teachers, and they are going to go back to their schools and do them.*' From the beginning of the process, throughout the presentation and beyond, I will be involved in negotiation. This means that the outcomes for one set of schools may be very different from the outcomes for another set.

That is not the way that we normally think about professional development. Generally we have a given set of objectives and assume that everyone will interpret them in a particular way. The beauty of transfer is that it gets you out of thinking about the here and now, and incorporates issues of differing contexts.

However, transfer is often left to chance. People who come to professional development activities seem to expect that having completed the session they will return to their schools and somehow — 'magically' — it is all going to happen.

Transfer needs to be planned. There is no magic. If there was, you would not need to deliver the session. You would give them a pill, tell them to swallow it, and say '*Go home and you'll do exactly what I want you to do.*'

Assistance is needed in transfer when the session's participants get back to their contexts. It may be needed by the individual learners, by the group, by the organisation, and/or by the broader community for these changes in practice to be accepted. Even when you are implementing a specific idea or way of doing business in a school, there are levels that may need some help.

For example, when you think about changing a secondary school curriculum you have to deal with a group of parents who know what high school looks like. They have been to high school themselves. They may well be convinced that changes you are trying to make, or new ways of doing things that their kids bring home, do not fit with their idea of what high school is about, nor what they want for their children.

Widespread resistance to new practice from parents may discourage teachers from implementing that new practice. Or you may have highly entrenched teachers in groups who are relatively powerful within the school. They may vote with their feet and simply choose not to do what is being asked of them by way of change.

On the other hand, you may have individuals who accept what you are teaching them and move it rapidly into their practice.

Take a simple example of lack of transfer. In delivering a professional development session, I find that I have to use my Powerpoint presentation with a computer different from the one on which I was trained. Which button do I push? I cannot apply the knowledge that I have, in the new situation. Given my use of computers, the processes are novel enough for me to carry checklists with me. I needed those checklists from the moment when I left my training session and returned to my office. The trainers expected that I would be able to implement my learning in my own context immediately, but without those checklists I would have been lost. Now, in a new context, those checklists are not enough.

I am a bright person, but in that sphere I am a novice, and unless I have something designed for me as a novice, you might as well hang it up

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Think of the situation in my Faculty when we have computer training sessions. If we have five staff members there, we are using five different systems. That sort of situation is not uncommon in schools. Take it a step further, to where you are trying to hook up with parents, using technology as the thing you are trying to teach. You will have parents who are highly computer literate who can connect immediately, without problems; you will have others who don't have a clue or who cannot afford to connect, even if they wanted to.

So, if we are trying to integrate technology, or some other change, into our practice and achieve transfer, what is needed to assist in the process? I think about this in terms of a framework with three elements:

1   The 'When'
2   The 'How' — Strategies
3   The 'Who' — Key people to be involved.

The When

Transfer often has to begin before the program ever takes place, because if you are introducing some new way of operating into a school, you need to prepare the ground. Let's say you are introducing student use of new technology. Perhaps some teachers don't have immediately available the technology that they require. They are going to get it in six months, and will be expected to remember what you've taught them about it now. That's not an unusual scenario. The person doing the planning has forgotten about the context for these teachers — s/he hasn't thought that there are key things missing in his/her expectations about what is   going into place.

There have been systems in the USA, for example, that attempted to introduce parent conferencing on the internet, a facility that includes providing daily access to all the available information about their child — their absentee rate, their grades, what they are doing. This sounds fine in principle; in practice, it means that all that information has to be entered, and before you even start to do this there is a key variable to consider: the teacher's time. Entry of data can become an enormous issue, as can parent's time in accessing that data.

There is another issue with this particular type of initiative. Children are often more skilled with new technology than either their teachers or their parents. What's been found is that if kids don't want their parents to have access to that data they will work out the buttons to press in order to prevent it.

The How — Strategies

The message here is that when you are preparing to implement new systems, you must think about who needs them, the context in which they will be using them, and the strategies you need.

Do you need, for example, a better incentives or reward system than you have? For example, you may be talking 'teaming, teaming, teaming'. And how are they being rewarded? 'Individual, individual, individual'. That doesn't work. The message you're giving is that it's the individual style of operation that's valued. Develop your reward system to match what you're trying to teach them.

The Who — Key people to involve

Any number of people may need to be involved in the transfer process — teachers, administrators, supervisors, council members, regional officers — it depends on the context and on thinking about what the content means. Groups will vary by interest, context, the way they work, and what they see as their objectives.

The key is to get them to think of transfer as their starting point. Change is what you want, and that will help you determine what you might do before during and after the program.

The group I worked with in Melbourne in 2000 was composed mainly of people who were both practitioners and leaders. One of my aims was to get them to think more systematically about their planning of professional development than is often the case.

Getting them to take on a few new concepts and words was my main aim for this particular group. They were practitioners, but they were also leaders of groups. My observation is that having

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analytical frameworks for leaders is critical. Their staffs can't move fast enough to get through their days. What their leaders can do is give them a framework for planning. That is what I modelled for the group on the day, outlining the framework that I have presented in this paper, including supportive readings, and providing the participants with group tasks to complete, which would allow them to develop their understandings in their own contexts.

To extend my modelling of the approach in this paper, I should critique my own performance with that session. In that regard, I would, in retrospect, have asked the APC to provide the readings to the participants beforehand, asking that they annotate them prior to the session. This might have come as a shock to some of them. Taking into account the usual way we do professional development, probably only a few of them would have done that sort of pre-reading and preparatory annotation. However, given what I have discussed in this paper, during the session I was able to point out how valuable it would have been for them to do the reading before they came. Session reading time could have been used for other purposes.

I was not dealing with novices. It would be valuable to work with the same group again, to build on what came out of the initial session. If I do return to Australia, and if I am asked to work with that group again, I will know what I can take for granted about their high level of experience and background knowledge. I would certainly ask the APC to provide them with materials beforehand. I would probably frame things more specifically, perhaps asking every third person to do something different. Then they would be mixed together as groups on arrival and work together during the session, bringing together their different perspectives.

This reflects a change in my thinking for that particular group. For them it represents a change in how they think about, and plan for, professional development. They now have an appreciation that 'before' makes a difference.

Another thing I might do is ask the APC to identify upfront a number of critical programs on which people are working — perhaps in a given geographical or administrative area — and have, say, a group from that region bring to the session the material that they have put together about their project so far. Groups from different regions might be able to work across boundaries in looking at their material.

The other thing I might ask, even on a two week visit here, might be to have the same group

twice, a week apart, so that the professional development could be much more intensive and my resources could be used most effectively.

All of this constitutes a 'mini case study', illustrating the principles I have outlined, and demonstrating the need to tailor and change programs throughout the process (and beyond) if professional development is to achieve its maximum potential value.

I don't think this way automatically. I don't think any of us think this way automatically. And yet what I see in terms of practical results and change from such an approach is impressive.

As an example, I taught a group composed almost entirely of working professionals in an intensive three and a half week class at the University of British Columbia. It involved a lot of evening work which put them under considerable pressure. By the end of that class eighty per cent of the participants were working on projects that they were actually implementing. That was not because I had said they had to do it; it came of them being there for that intense period of time. I did set up some options for them, but they chose to do it this way.

At the end of this program on professional development I asked the whole class what came out of the discussions. Issues of context and power were what they identified as having learned about the most.

A cycle of intensive learning combined with practice, combined with more intensive learning seems to work well. Without purposely planning for that, and doing it, we do not seem able to achieve our objectives. It does not happen by accident.

This demands that participants think differently about their own involvement and commitment in professional development. It asks them to do things differently. They must ask themselves:

- Can I give that much time?
- How do I give it?
- How do I give it in two weeks rather than a year?
- Would it be more worthwhile to give the time in a two week period, and if not how do we do it and how do we intervene?

They must also be prepared to do pre-reading and preparation before coming to the program, to think and work between sessions, and to follow up in terms of transfer in their home bases after the program is complete.

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EVALUATION: MEASUREMENT OF PD OUTCOMES

What do you do to measure long term effects of professional development, and how do you align it? What questions do you ask?

A well designed program that ensures transfer has evaluation and needs assessment built into it at every step. We are not talking about evaluation as some kind of separate entity. We are talking about integration and we are talking about a cycle.

If you look at the Before, During and After framework as we have been doing, and if you take out the word 'transfer' and replace it with the word 'evaluation', you can use that same framework. Transfer becomes evaluation, and vice versa. Evaluation becomes needs assessment and needs assessment becomes transfer. It all begins to roll into one. It is no longer linear.

Consider this in relation to an example from one of the groups in my Melbourne session. Their task was to explore ways of ensuring transfer of learning for a program they were designing. Once they had discussed the issues, they would be asked to put them down in some written or graphic form and use these materials to help explain their concepts to the rest of the participants. Other groups would do similar things, and eventually all of the results would be shared and considered. The groups used butchers paper and discussed issues from a variety of perspectives. They also considered the implications of operating in different contexts.

I have selected just one of the groups to illustrate what I am talking about. Like the other groups, they split their plan into Before, During and After stages, and the outline they came up with looked as follows.

The Before stage

Prior to implementing their program they proposed:

- as part of a needs audit, to survey their stakeholders
- to form focus groups to obtain more specific information
- to establish a representative and skilled planning group
- to resource the process, including an adequate appropriation for continuous evaluation.

They recognised that information gathered at this stage could be used and re-used in different ways — for planning, for supporting applications, and as part of the overall evaluation process.

The During stage

During the program the group saw it as important to ensure that:

- the program should be relevant to practice, and that this should be carefully monitored at all stages
- the program presenters/deliverers should be highly credible in the eyes of the participants
- the learning from the program should be supportive and positive for the participants
- the knowledge, skills and experience of the participants should be acknowledged and catered for
- a mentoring approach should be built into the program
- there should be continuous evaluation of the program during its implementation phases, as well as refinement of the program as required — based on the evidence from that evaluation

Central to their planning here was the concept of **using** the data that they collected, both as they collected it and in the future. It would provide food for thought and reflection as part of a flexible approach to planning, presenting and adapting program elements.

The After stage

In the period following the program, the group saw a number of desirable ways to provide ongoing benefits. These included:

- continuing support for the participants in their 'home base' contexts (which might include some or all of the other suggested points below)
- a mentoring program
- multiple entry extension programs
- insider learning
- establishment of local networks
- encouragement of Principals to provide support
- provision of resources to support ongoing learning by the participants, as well as their work towards transference at their local levels
- some form of summative evaluation to help pull together threads and publicise results.

We are not talking about evaluation as some kind of separate entity. We are talking about integration and we are talking about a cycle.

Technology offers challenges no less to the professional development provider than it does to the teacher in school. It offers opportunities particularly in terms of facilitating our planning, delivery and evaluation

The group emphasised the need for reflection to be accepted as a central part of this approach, throughout the process. This would require not only a conceptual shift for participants and administrators, but resourcing to ensure that it happened — particularly in terms of time.

This is one group's view. There were considerable differences in other groups' results, as there would be in any discussion among professionals given such a task. For example, it was pointed out here as one specific comment that not everybody wants either to be mentored or to be a mentor. Some people prefer to learn alone. Others talked of the importance of observation and interview regimes to check on what changes were made and how they fared in practice. Others sought to spell out more precisely the need to define ways of renegotiating directions, content or delivery at particular stages.

FINAL COMMENTS

For an approach based on interactivity and transference to work, certain things need to be kept in mind.

If the approach is not part of the current system, which is highly likely, the responsibility for making it work will lie largely with the designer. Some responsibility, however, also rests with the participants. People come to professional development activities with expectations; as stakeholders in the program and its outcomes, they need those expectations to be clear, accurate, and as far as possible realised. It is they who will have to work for transference of learning once they return to their own contexts.

One basic element from the designer's point of view is to ensure that the brochure is totally up front and clear — about proposed content, objectives and expectations on the part of the providers. From the presenter's point of view, this needs to be taken on board, but in the knowledge that in practice changes may need to be made along the way to meet emerging need — and with the agreement of the stakeholders.

There is another factor to take into account. Not all participants actually intend to seek or work for transference. They may be more intent on personal development and learning. They may not even want to talk about change, in either a personal or more general sense. We cannot make assumptions about motivations and actions, however much we might see a particular approach as desirable ourselves.

For many of the participants the real learning will not be at the session. Their real learning will be embedded in the practice of carrying out their job. This should come as no surprise, since we know that primary learning with adults tends not to be through formal approaches. We should acknowledge this as a positive and build on it.

We should encourage people to start from where they are; ask them to let us know what they know, and draw out of them how they go about their learning (whether they realise that consciously or not). They will know what happens for them in learning, even if they have not verbalised or generalised from it..

Let's not make assumptions about our 'ageing workforce' either. A tired teacher is not a tired learner. As adults, teachers remain learners; as professionals they remain focused on professional learning. There are innumerable instances of experienced and older teachers seeking out and revelling in learning about new aspects of their profession — perhaps about the learning patterns of teenagers, or the needs of children who leave home, or about exploring new areas of student welfare, or about taking on the use in increasingly sophisticated technology in their practice.

The future, and the role of technology

Technology offers challenges no less to the professional development provider than it does to the teacher in school. It offers opportunities particularly in terms of facilitating our planning, delivery and evaluation. It is a powerful tool in our bag — providing a vehicle for learning, but not the learning itself. We can use it to help achieve our prime purpose — to focus on the learning that participants gain from professional development activities, and on the extent to which they can transfer that learning back into their own contexts — with benefits for their own practice, for the practice of others, and for the students who will benefit from improved opportunities in their learning environment

In developing on-line courses, it is interesting to note that the important thing is to use the technology for its strengths, remembering at all times the person who is the target of the teaching or the on-line professional development. The same guidelines apply as I have outlined throughout this paper — identifying a need, planning to meet that need, and adapting programs to meet the need on an interactive basis. In a context of working to build learning communities, technology increasingly will help us extend our horizons in achieving that end.

APC Monograph Number 5

Rosemary Caffarella — *Developing Effective Learning Programs for Adults*

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The challenge in designing and delivering professional development is to come up with a high quality product that not only has an impact on the participants at the time of the activity, but also transfers into their practice — and that of others around them.