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CCT 693
Evaluation of Change
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PROCESS REVIEW

Coming into this course, I had no idea what to expect. The title of the course, Evaluation of Education, was vague and unclear. Peter immediately introduced us to the notion of Action Research, another phrase and concept that I had no point of reference to draw from. We were quickly “tossed into the fire” of actively participating in action research regarding the diversity of the CCT program. I slowly began to understand, that in order to learn and understand the complex and dynamic nature of action research, one has to “do it” rather than “discuss it”.

The first assignment -- developing an action research plan for the enhanced diversity within the CCT program -- provided a solid foundation, in which to venture off onto our own projects. The basic premises of action research-constituency building, dialogue and reflection – tools to implement change, now seem rooted in common sense. However, at the time, I had never really stopped to think about it in those terms. I have since grown. I will now, in any future situation that requires inspection and possible deep-rooted change and evaluation, begin with the understanding that the “relevant” constituency is crucial to success. Crucial in so many ways....with the right constituency assembled, the leader of the action research can preserve energy, as various tasks may be delegated appropriately. This will allow for a longer, more energetic run by the leader and seriously reduce the risk of “one man show burnout”.

I now understand the importance of “buy in” from the contingency, as a means to help insure that the change will be accepted. It was at the point of developing my “Enhanced diversity within CCT” oral presentation that it hit home to me that the contingency should be included in the discussion early on, even if they do not necessarily agree with your perspective. Otherwise, later on, it proves much more difficult to successfully demonstrate one’s perspective, if the constituency had not been given a voice, at the onset. I was able to transfer this newly discovered aspect of the process to my final project, in that I devised a multifaceted way to bring the relevant players to the table, for discussion and mobilization.

I found that this class offered a superb atmosphere for utilizing classmates as a valuable resource. Many opportunities arose throughout the semester, where we were able to discuss the direction of our projects and bounce ideas off each

other. The atmosphere of the class made it a comfortable place to offer new approaches to one another and critique each other's ideas and directions. This peer involvement nicely supplemented the support that we received from Peter.

I did a decent job organizationally, throughout the course. I was able to manage my time and pace myself with keeping up with the readings. The readings proved to be valuable resources in terms of offering new tools that we could then be applied to our projects. The readings were also a very important supplement to my overall understanding of the concepts and issues regarding evaluation and action research, and they kept me on track with considering a wide variety of tactics to utilize in the design of my final paper.

My PD Workbook was all-inclusive and served as a portable office. Other than the class readings, I was able to divide and organize all pertinent class related information into this workbook. Because of this system that I put together, I was able to quickly retrieve and review any course related paperwork. Similarly, the method that I utilized for organizing my computer files worked well, and I felt rather secure about the emailed backup system that I utilized throughout the course.

The primary area that I could improve upon for the future is the level or degree of free writing that I participated in. I do believe free writing to be a valuable tool, in terms of clearing one's head and generating new ideas that you may not have realized that you had. For some reason, even though I see its worth, I often have trouble putting thought into action, and making the time to do it. I hope to make a conscious effort to improving my frequency of free writing.

I did try to look for relevant clippings regarding evaluations that were chronicled in the press, but even though I was generally keeping my eye out for such articles, my follow through of forwarding them to Peter was again lacking.

Now, as the semester closes, I can say that the concepts of evaluation and action research are clear and relevant in my pursuit of gaining support for family friendly work environments. I believe that my understanding and respect for these areas of research will now be incorporated in my future work on this topic. I understand where my strengths are in terms of overall organization and ability to stop and reflect on my approach and progress. As I move into Synthesis, next spring, the foundation has been solidified for my continued research in a field for which I am very passionate!