

From Personal Action to Collaborative Play: Creating a Personal Learning Plan for Adults that Creates an Enjoyable Group Learning Experience

Paragraph Overview

I would like to continue my ongoing exploration of adult learning and what it means for learners to include a greater sense of fun and play throughout the process. An emerging goal of this examination is to more clearly understand how actions that I take contribute to making a group learning opportunity more enjoyable and engaging others in play along with me. For an action research plan, I would like to consider the way that I approach my own behavior around personal learning opportunities with respect to the following “Core Actions”:

- 1) what actions I take to prepare myself for the upcoming learning opportunity
- 2) what actions I take during the learning opportunity, and
- 3) what actions I take to build upon the learning opportunity after it is over.

As far as evaluating the current situation, I would like to examine the actions that I have traditionally taken at these three points of time in my own learning opportunities and identify how well those actions have taken into account how collaborative play happens. My planning and implementation process would then involve strategizing about the ways that I might adjust the Core Actions. The compilation of the Core Actions would take the form of a “Personal Learning Plan” - a practical recipe that I could use to guide myself into the actions that make the learning opportunity more playful for myself and others before, during, and after it takes place. Because of my ongoing interest in taking a theater-based perspective as a way of encouraging adults to embrace alternative points of view and find play in learning, I would consider how these principles might suggest the specific Core Actions that might be most effective. Evaluating the results would involve reflecting upon my own sense of enjoyment from the learning opportunity, considering which actions I had planned to take but did not/could not, and why; observing the ways in which I did successfully engage in collaborative play with others; and reflecting upon how my own understanding of the subject matter was deepened through the experience of collaborative play.

Building Constituency and Possible Starting Points

Because of the variety of learning opportunities in which I am involved recently, I would consider how to develop my action research initially thinking of myself as the main experimental subject (my current learning opportunities would be the following: graduate student at UMass, teacher/curriculum developer at a preschool/afterschool program, teacher of a once-per-month class about helping adults understand how to research/evaluate health information on the Internet, participant in UMass Exeter project in Synthesis class, ongoing student of community ed. classes in theater). Through this process, building a constituency would involve explaining to others about my intentions of finding collaborative play as well as asking others to grant permission to my experiments and offer suggestions about how to best involve them in the process. Also, further ways to build the constituency might mean eventually asking others to contribute ideas of collaborative play activities, provide feedback on my Personal Learning Plan, develop their own Personal Learning Plans, facilitate dialogues and discussions about the possible value of collaborative play, partner with others to build ideas about how individualized Personal Learning Plans might be coordinated to form communal Group Learning Plans, and work with more formal institutions of adult learning to integrate Personal Learning Plans into their own environments.