Slam Title: Getting out of the Way- The difficulty I had removing the teaching spotlight from myself and letting students take over their learning.
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Overview:
Who: Independent, multi-cultural learners and a frustrated, talkative instructor
What: Preparation for Co-operative Education course – Centre for Experiential Learning
When: September 2015 implementation
Why: Engage students meaningfully in the curriculum, and with each other in positive and collaborative ways & find creative ways to keep engaged in the content after years of instructing the course
How: Utilizing Team-Based Learning model - still valuing but using instructor’s expertise and knowledge less in the classroom.

Best Practices:

- Setting high expectations for student development and success right from the beginning
- Setting the tone at the beginning of the course-student ownership of the model and their own success
- Using ‘the family’ approach within the model/classroom - responsibility to support the ‘family’ (team). Not ‘parenting’ situations that arose when groups work together
- Problematizing the content and dramatizing the issues students needed to wrestle with to understand key concepts
- Focusing on peer education to correct ‘poor behavior’, with the appropriate tools and skills – sometimes more impactful than teacher correction
- Shining a mirror back to students for them to find answers together

Benefits

- Group cohesiveness (belonging)
- Quality of student learning
- Enhanced problem-solving and resolving issues competencies
- Shared resources (intellectual)
- Accomplishment of complex & challenging tasks
- Students valuing shared learning experience
- Decreased role of lectures (preparing/delivering)

Results:

Utilizing a Team Based Learning model and re-directing the focus from the front of the classroom to the knowledge and expertise the students have collectively has been challenging and rewarding.
There has been a re-definition of the role as ‘expert’, and it’s been humbling and worthwhile.

Overwhelmingly, students’ evaluation of the course/learning indicated they valued the model used, the teamwork skills they developed, and understood the importance of working (especially with others from different cultural backgrounds) as vital to their success both inside and outside of the classroom – important for the context of an experiential learning preparation course!

NOTES