

PLN Faculty Idea Exchange:

From Bonnie Botel-Sheppard: 9/27/09

I wanted to share something that worked well and provided an alternative approach in our PLN seminars and workshops.

Context: I was working with a group of elementary teachers in a Philadelphia school. It was a hot, sticky afternoon and the faculty looked exhausted when they walked in at 2:00 pm, knowing that they also had Back to School Night following a quick staff dinner after our workshop.

I had lots of fun things to do with reading/writing and vocabulary as requested. I had asked the teachers to bring their basals, literature--something to use as a way to apply their learning as we do.

Typically I ask teachers to experience the hands on activities and then select one or two to plan with their materials at the end of the session.

The Variation:

Instead of waiting until the end of the session for this application idea, I "chunked" (thanks for labeling this when we talked Bernadette!) the approaches and after EACH strategy presented I asked them to open their classroom texts and apply the idea on the spot- write up their variation for their students including manipulative activities like sentence making cards. They came back after each application time (10 minutes max) and shared and we moved on.

By the end of the 2 hours, they had 4 different (prepared) activities for their classroom the next day.

Their confidence grew and their excitement grew as we built up these activities that they could use the next day and beyond. As usual, I asked them to report about their experiences when we return in a few weeks for a follow up workshop.