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Chapter 1 : Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage - blog.quintoapp.com

Building stronger communities through English language learning September 5, Ptah 0 Comments british, community, english, integrate, language Thousands of adults across England will benefit from a £6 million programme that will help them learn to speak English and better integrate into British life.

They share a certain amount of practices, common goals and common language. They have a social organization that includes formal or informal hierarchies, some idea of social service members helping each other, and a willingness learn from each other and to share that knowledge. The term community of practice is accredited to Etienne Wenger. Communities of practice are "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis. They are focused on a domain of knowledge and over time accumulate expertise in this domain. They develop their shared practice by interacting around problems, solutions, and insights, and building a common store of knowledge. Communities can be considered as problem-solving mechanisms which contribute to establishing policy agendas and offer mechanisms to facilitate processes for negotiation between different actors. They help develop and disseminate knowledge that is crucial in addressing the challenge of educational change, they may even come up with innovative mechanisms for implementing new strategies. Think back to National and the PLL engineers. Not a team, not a task force, not necessarily an authorized or identified group, they, nonetheless, exist in some form in every organization. People in CoPs can perform the same job tech reps or collaborate on a shared task software developers or work together on a product engineers, marketers, and manufacturing specialists. They are peers in the execution of "real work. There are many communities of practice within a single company, and most people belong to more than one of them. Membership is voluntary though some institutions in an effort to cultivate CoPs are violating this principle and making membership compulsory; The goals of a community are less specific and more changeable than those of a team or work group; Results are not easily discerned or measured; The community exists as long as its members participate. A team or work group ceases to exist once its goal is attained. Finding and engaging a good online community manager may help though. Often such attempts use technology in one or another way. Virtual communities of practice are loose or tight communities of practice that may be geographically dispersed, communicating through the use of Internet software usually a kind of portal that provide collaboration and information tools email, online discussions forums, videoconferencing, CSCW tools, etc. A well designed portal that provides both functionality and a sense of "social presence and being there" may help. When groups of users interact intensively through some medium, they progressively may constitute a community. The community feeling does not automatically emerge because groups use electronic communication, it takes a lot of time, a lot of interactions. It requires sharing goals and, whatever that means, sharing experiences. If and only if there is a potential for a COP, one way to foster it is to work on factors that prevent its emergence. In particular time is a critical factor, individuals should be protected from other competing demands. Mentoring programs may be useful to introduce new members into a community of practice Knowledge management refers to management techniques and information technology to capture, store and share knowledge Organizational learning relates to the capacity of an organization to learn and that depends on variables that also make communities of practice happen. See situated learning and collaborative learning. Instructional designs like the knowledge-building community model with its computer supported intentional learning environments depend very much on the emergence of community practices. Collaborative Writing-to-learn designs that engage learners in various forms of exchange and confrontation. Various forms of project-oriented learning, etc. Engagement refers to the way in which members take part in the activities of the community together. They are the borders that, though unintentional and not pre-defined, determine whether one will belong to the CoP or not. The boundary is created as a result of common practice. This is where learning happens so long as the divide between experience and competence is not too wide, where new

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ideas are developed and old ones challenged, and inspiration occurs. The down side is that divisions and misunderstandings also occur at the boundaries within a learning system. Transparency allows those at the boundaries to understand the reasoning behind a practice. Negotiability describes the extent to which the communication is two-way and allowing for the bridging of CoPs or competence and experience. Our identities determine with whom we will interact in a knowledge sharing activity, and our willingness and capacity to engage in boundary interactions. In the same spirit, learning is then defined as identity transformation. Connectedness is built upon shared histories, experiences, reciprocity, affections and mutual commitment. Expansiveness allows an individual to belong to multiple CoPs and easily engage in boundary interactions. Effectiveness enables inclusive social participation. Since a community of practice is a learning community where becoming a full practitioner is part of the discourse, the COP itself is a permanent negotiation of what it is about. Learning projects that explore or fill in gaps in the knowledge and practice of a community increase the commitment of participating members. Focus on topics important to the business and community members. Find a well-respected community member to coordinate the community. Make sure people have time and encouragement to participate. Build on the core values of the organization. Get key thought leaders involved. Build personal relationships among community members. Develop an active passionate core group. Create forums for thinking together as well as systems for sharing information. Create real dialogue about cutting edge issues. Good brokers are essential to the evolution of a CoP, though their position within the boundaries often mean they are unrecognized and undervalued. Artifacts, Documents and perhaps even vocabulary that can help people from different communities build a shared understanding. Boundary objects will be interpreted differently by the different communities, and it is an acknowledgment and discussion of these differences that enables a shared understanding to be formed. Wenger suggests three types of interactions to be encouraged. Boundary practices are specific practices that develop when the constant maintenance of a connection between two CoPs is required. They can in turn establish their own boundaries. Peripheries include services and activities that can be of use to newcomers and outsiders, to introduce them to the community without burdening it. Representatives of each subcommunity can then act to bring together the subcommunities into a larger whole. Here is a longer quotation from Schlager et al. Learning opportunities occur primarily through informal interaction among colleagues in the context of work. New practices and technologies are adopted by the CoP through the evolution of practice over time. Thus, a CoP can be an effective hothouse in which new ideas germinate, new methods and tools are developed, and new communities are rooted. The CoP can help professionals gain access to, and facility with, ideas, methods, content, and colleagues; help novices learn about the profession through apprenticeship and peripheral participation; and enable journeymen to become valued resources and community leaders through informal mentoring and participation in multiple work groups.

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Chapter 2 : Community of practice - EduTech Wiki

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Richard DuFour The idea of improving schools by developing professional learning communities is currently in vogue. People use this term to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education—a grade-level teaching team, a school committee, a high school department, an entire school district, a state department of education, a national professional organization, and so on. In fact, the term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning. The professional learning community model has now reached a critical juncture, one well known to those who have witnessed the fate of other well-intentioned school reform efforts. In this all-too-familiar cycle, initial enthusiasm gives way to confusion about the fundamental concepts driving the initiative, followed by inevitable implementation problems, the conclusion that the reform has failed to bring about the desired results, abandonment of the reform, and the launch of a new search for the next promising initiative.

Ensuring That Students Learn The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools. But when a school staff takes that statement literally—when teachers view it as a pledge to ensure the success of each student rather than as politically correct hyperbole—profound changes begin to take place. The school staff finds itself asking, What school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels? How could we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own school? What commitments would we have to make to one another to create such a school? What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress? When the staff has built shared knowledge and found common ground on these questions, the school has a solid foundation for moving forward with its improvement initiative. As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community: What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? The answer to the third question separates learning communities from traditional schools. Here is a scenario that plays out daily in traditional schools. A teacher teaches a unit to the best of his or her ability, but at the conclusion of the unit some students have not mastered the essential outcomes. On the one hand, the teacher would like to take the time to help those students. If the teacher uses instructional time to assist students who have not learned, the progress of students who have mastered the content will suffer; if the teacher pushes on with new concepts, the struggling students will fall farther behind. What typically happens in this situation? Almost invariably, the school leaves the solution to the discretion of individual teachers, who vary widely in the ways they respond. Some teachers conclude that the struggling students should transfer to a less rigorous course or should be considered for special education. Some lower their expectations by adopting less challenging standards for subgroups of students within their classrooms. Some look for ways to assist the students before and after school. Some allow struggling students to fail. When a school begins to function as a professional learning community, however, teachers become aware of the incongruity between their commitment to ensure learning for all students and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when some students do not learn. The staff addresses this discrepancy by designing strategies to ensure that struggling students receive additional time and support, no matter who their teacher is. The school quickly identifies students who need additional time and support. Based on intervention rather than remediation. The plan provides students with help as soon as they experience difficulty rather than relying on summer school, retention, and remedial courses. Instead of inviting students to seek additional help, the systematic plan

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requires students to devote extra time and receive additional assistance until they have mastered the necessary concepts. The systematic, timely, and directive intervention program operating at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, provides an excellent example. Every three weeks, every student receives a progress report. Within the first month of school, new students discover that if they are not doing well in a class, they will receive a wide array of immediate interventions. First, the teacher, counselor, and faculty advisor each talk with the student individually to help resolve the problem. In addition, the school offers the struggling student a pass from study hall to a school tutoring center to get additional help in the course. Any student who continues to fall short of expectations at the end of six weeks despite these interventions is required, rather than invited, to attend tutoring sessions during the study hall period. If tutoring fails to bring about improvement within the next six weeks, the student is assigned to a daily guided study hall with 10 or fewer students. The guided study hall supervisor communicates with classroom teachers to learn exactly what homework each student needs to complete and monitors the completion of that homework. Parents attend a meeting at the school at which the student, parents, counselor, and classroom teacher must sign a contract clarifying what each party will do to help the student meet the standards for the course. Stevenson High School serves more than 4, students. Like Stevenson, schools that are truly committed to the concept of learning for each student will stop subjecting struggling students to a haphazard education lottery. These schools will guarantee that each student receives whatever additional support he or she needs. A Culture of Collaboration Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote a collaborative culture. Despite compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice, teachers in many schools continue to work in isolation. Other staffs join forces to develop consensus on operational procedures, such as how they will respond to tardiness or supervise recess. Although each of these activities can serve a useful purpose, none represents the kind of professional dialogue that can transform a school into a professional learning community. The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement. Collaborating for School Improvement At Boones Mill Elementary School, a K-5 school serving students in rural Franklin County, Virginia, the powerful collaboration of grade-level teams drives the school improvement process. The following scenario describes what Boones Mill staff members refer to as their teaching-learning process. They also ask the 4th grade teachers what they hope students will have mastered by the time they leave 3rd grade. On the basis of the shared knowledge generated by this joint study, the 3rd grade team agrees on the critical outcomes that they will make sure each student achieves during the unit. Team members discuss the most authentic and valid ways to assess student mastery. They set the standard for each skill or concept that each student must achieve to be deemed proficient. They agree on the criteria by which they will judge the quality of student work, and they practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently. Finally, they decide when they will administer the assessments. After each teacher has examined the results of the common formative assessment for his or her students, the team analyzes how all 3rd graders performed. Team members identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning and begin to discuss how they can build on the strengths and address the weaknesses. The entire team gains new insights into what is working and what is not, and members discuss new strategies that they can implement in their classrooms to raise student achievement. At Boones Mill, collaborative conversations happen routinely throughout the year. These discussions give every teacher someone to turn to and talk to, and they are explicitly structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers—individually and collectively. For teachers to participate in such a powerful process, the school must ensure that everyone belongs to a team that focuses on student learning. Each team must have time to meet during the workday and throughout the school year. Teams must focus their efforts on crucial questions related to learning and generate products that reflect that focus, such as lists of essential outcomes, different

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kinds of assessment, analyses of student achievement, and strategies for improving results. Teams must develop norms or protocols to clarify expectations regarding roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members. Teams must adopt student achievement goals linked with school and district goals. Removing Barriers to Success For meaningful collaboration to occur, a number of things must also stop happening. Schools must stop pretending that merely presenting teachers with state standards or district curriculum guides will guarantee that all students have access to a common curriculum. Even school districts that devote tremendous time and energy to designing the intended curriculum often pay little attention to the implemented curriculum what teachers actually teach and even less to the attained curriculum what students learn Marzano, Schools must also give teachers time to analyze and discuss state and district curriculum documents. Few educators publicly assert that working in isolation is the best strategy for improving schools. Instead, they give reasons why it is impossible for them to work together: As Roland Barth wrote, Are teachers and administrators willing to accept the fact that they are part of the problem? We didâ€”because we find working alone safer than and preferable to working together. A group of staff members who are determined to work together will find a way. A Focus on Results Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. The focus of team goals shifts. The results-oriented professional learning community not only welcomes data but also turns data into useful and relevant information for staff. Teachers have never suffered from a lack of data. Even a teacher who works in isolation can easily establish the mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and percentage of students who demonstrated proficiency every time he or she administers a test. However, data will become a catalyst for improved teacher practice only if the teacher has a basis of comparison. When teacher teams develop common formative assessments throughout the school year, each teacher can identify how his or her students performed on each skill compared with other students. Individual teachers can call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies, and talents of the entire team. Freeport Intermediate School, located 50 miles south of Houston, Texas, attributes its success to an unrelenting focus on results. Teachers work in collaborative teams for 90 minutes daily to clarify the essential outcomes of their grade levels and courses and to align those outcomes with state standards. They develop consistent instructional calendars and administer the same brief assessment to all students at the same grade level at the conclusion of each instructional unit, roughly once a week. Each quarter, the teams administer a common cumulative exam. Each spring, the teams develop and administer practice tests for the state exam. Each year, the teams pore over the results of the state test, which are broken down to show every teacher how his or her students performed on every skill and on every test item. The teachers share their results from all of these assessments with their colleagues, and they quickly learn when a teammate has been particularly effective in teaching a certain skill.

Chapter 3 : Use of Curriculum Mapping to Build a Learning Community

Building Community through Language Education In Their Words Our Teaching Interns describe their experience in our program, how it impacted them, and made a difference for their students.

Sometimes the mall, but mostly Walmart. That is where I most often run into the international students who enroll in my college writing classes. One time, I picked up two grocery-laden students at the Walmart bus stop and gave them a lift to their apartment. Another time, I chatted with a student working at Walmart as he manned the self-checkout aisles. Once I even ran into a student at 5: I recognize the appeal of Walmart for international students. The store is easy to access by public transportation, stays open 24 hours a day, and offers the lowest prices in town. Yet, I worry about these Walmart trips. For a variety of reasons, international students may not venture far into the community. Many spend the majority of their time on or near the college campus. This is a loss for both the community and the students. Language teachers can help remedy this situation. In this article, I make a case for incorporating off-campus activities into second language instruction at the college level. I begin by describing the benefits of facilitating off-campus learning experiences for international students. I conclude by highlighting some areas to consider when designing an off-campus experience for students. My aim is to encourage other English language teachers to consider how they might utilize their community to support student learning. Benefits of Ad venturing into the Community Getting outside the classroom and into the community takes some work. Thus, teachers need to understand from the outset the potential gains from the investment. Benefits of off-campus learning experiences include support for acculturation, opportunities for authentic language use, and avenues for aligning teaching with how the brain learns. This change is bi-directional, impacting the various cultures and people involved in an intercultural exchange. Such change is not always easy. Acculturation and acculturative stress are often cited in discussions of immigrant and refugee experiences; more recently, these terms have increasingly been applied to the experiences of international students as well Akhtar, ; Jung et al. Acculturative stress can affect international students due to the range of challenges they face at the university, including language barriers, cultural differences, incidents of racism, new academic demands, and feelings of loneliness. Alleviating acculturative stress is an important task for universities that recruit and enroll international students. Robust networks of social support are key; having strong, supportive relationships at home and in the host country has repeatedly been shown to lift some of the burden associated with intercultural adjustment. Thus, promoting belongingness appears to be a worthy goal for those of us who work with international students. Beyond helping students feel that they belong on campus, we might also try to help them feel at home in the wider community. Bonds to the community may have ameliorative effects of their own; indeed, Burke and Mahmood have identified a number of characteristics correlated with decreased acculturative stress among international students, one of them being community involvement. These studies suggest that community activity positively affects acculturation and should motivate us to consider how to bring learning into the community. Authentic Language Use Getting students into the community can also present students with authentic language experiences. Contemporary approaches to second language teaching emphasize the benefit of using authentic texts and tasks in the language learning classroom. Language teachers reason that students will be better prepared and more motivated if their instruction is comprised of authentic materials and situations. See Gilmore, for a comprehensive review of research on authenticity in second-language instruction. The hope is that authentic input better approximates and therefore better equips students for future communicative interactions. Out-of-class experiences present authentic learning environments in which students can experience everyday language in action. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks can be designed that involve the people, texts, and situations found on-site, enabling students to take advantage of the resources for language learning within the community. Connecting students with these resources can launch them into the intellectual and socio-emotional work of real-world language use. Research on how the Brain

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Learns Finally, community-based experiences can allow teachers to use strategies that account for how the brain learns. Two factors he describes are particularly prominent in out-of-class experiences: According to Sousa, the brain is a novelty-seeking machine, constantly on the lookout for new stimuli to capture its attention. To be responsive to this characteristic, Sousa suggests, teachers should use variety in their teaching. Out-of-class activities can provide this multisensory input. Through taking advantage of the range of stimuli in off-campus environments, language teachers can capture learner interest and promote more resilient learning.

On Gourmet Cupcakes and Juice Elixirs In spring semester , I sought to take advantage of the benefits of out-of-class learning through venturing outside the classroom with my international students. I wanted to enrich the course by providing my class with novelty and variety; an engaging, authentic language experience; and contact with the broader community. Thus, I began brainstorming some possible out-of-class sites that we would visit in conjunction with a unit from the course. I settled on two locally-owned businesses situated in downtown Mankato. Their proximity to each other, accessible location, and local roots made them appealing options. I reached out to the store owners to gauge their interest in hosting modestly-compensated on-site lectures for my international students. And with that, the community collaboration began.

Out-of-Class Content As I planned our visit prior to the semester, I discovered a food and globalization unit in our course textbook. The potential connection to our class field trip was a good one. These trends would make interesting fodder for class discussion and could be part of a broader discussion of culinary developments around the world. Food trends, then, would be the focus of the lectures. Bluebird Cakery contributes to the upscale treat movement in the US. Give us a little history on your business. What is the central menu item at your store and why this item—what was the motivation behind it? What is the process of acquiring, storing, and using ingredients at your store? Any challenges associated with this? How does your menu reflect food trends in the US? In-Class Connections Meanwhile, in the classroom, we discussed other international food trends. We watched a video clip on the US fast food market in China. Additionally, students were introduced to the major writing assignment for the unit. The assignment placed students in a hypothetical rhetorical situation with a specific audience, purpose and genre. It maintained the food orientation of the unit, as illustrated here by an excerpt from the prompt: You are a food columnist for a newsletter for international students. Each week, you try new foods and then use the column to make recommendations to your readers about foods they should or should not try. Your column helps international students learn about new foods that they might see in the United States. Write a column in which you review a U. This might be a product that you purchase at a grocery or convenience store or sample at the locations we visit for our class field trip. This assignment requires hands-on research. As a food reviewer, you must actually sample the food you are reviewing and take detailed notes on your experience. In class, we practiced the evaluating process that the assignment required. As a group, we made a list of characteristics that college students might value when selecting a snack food. Areas such as health, cost, accessibility, variety, flavor, and convenience were discussed. Students were then each assigned a snack cracker and asked to evaluate the cracker on each characteristic. Afterward, they shared their evaluations with the class. This experience alerted students to potential areas to consider when sampling WYSIWYG or Bluebird products, or other snack foods they might select for the assignment.

Venturing Out On a brisk January morning, our class bundled up and headed downtown for our back-to-back food lectures. Students were prepared to take notes during each lecture and to sample products in preparation for the unit writing assignment. The WYSIWYG owner described launching a health-focused business partnership after she and her co-owner both lost their young husbands to cancer. This experience motivated them to become proponents and providers of health within their community. The success of that venture opened the door to expanding to Mankato. Within each lecture, the food itself received special attention. The lectures focused on ingredients, sourcing, inspiration for menu items, and ideas for future products. A juice company employee showcases the juice during the lecture. At both sites, food sampling was a key component. At our first stop, students sampled juices made from beets, carrots, spinach, kale, green apple, cucumber, celery, and ginger; they then undermined this health boost at our next stop by sampling Australian-style cupcakes swirled with

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buttercream frosting, including customer-favorite Wedding Cake and sweet-and-savory Salted Caramel. The lecturers explained the influences, motivation behind, and popularity of these products. Meanwhile, students took lecture and product evaluation notes. Each student was also encouraged to pose one question to the lecturer at the conclusion of the presentations. Students pause for a photo between taking notes and sampling products. Back in Class In the days following the visit, class time was used to learn about the structural features of an evaluation. Lecture content was integrated into these lessons to maximize the benefit of the out-of-class experience. The class applied this content to practice using a quotation or story as an opening. Finally, they selected a quotation from the list and practiced this introduction approach themselves. The latter was projected to live 2. To show students the variety of introduction approaches that could be used when writing about the same topic, the class also practiced using questions, personal stories, and current issues or controversies as a beginning for a WYSIWYG Juice Company review. I gathered examples of each approach from student work and posted them on our course management system to supply students with a side-by-side comparison.

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Chapter 4 : Get blog.quintoapp.com news - One City Project | Building Community Through Language Edu

Community Building is developing authentic relationships between people. The word authentic is extremely important because people rarely communicate authentically. The process bond participants into community at a deep emotional level through learning how to communicate differently.

They must be built with a vision for how individual educators can support the achievement of each student through an articulated, seamless curriculum. Schools in District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties, a district close to the capital city of Columbia, South Carolina, are building their learning community using the tools provided in curriculum mapping. The history of the district shows how curriculum mapping was used to build a cohesive learning community. This chapter describes the support beams, processes, professional development, critical elements, obstacles, map development, and ways the process was sustained. The key points of the blueprint, presented as a closing summary, will remind readers of how important mapping tools can be in building a collaborative learning community through the development of a cohesive curriculum. History of the District School District Five is composed of nineteen schools that serve almost 16, students from child development through adult education. District schools are located in three distinct communities: Irmo, Chapin, and Dutch Fork. Historically, the communities were relatively homogenous in socioeconomic and demographic aspects. Equal resources have been provided for all schools, and excellence was expected and achieved. Schools in District Five led the state on all standardized measures of achievement for many years. In recent years, however, District Five has seen dramatic demographic shifts. A housing project in nearby urban Columbia closed, and many residents relocated to suburban areas, including the area served by the district. Those population shifts produced more heterogeneous schools and resulted in different challenges. One school moved from 15 percent of the students receiving free and reduced-price lunches to more than 50 percent in a few years. Such changes challenged district leaders to address new curricular and instructional issues to ensure that high expectations and student achievement remained strong. District leaders searched for solutions and found that curriculum mapping provided useful tools to help build a strong, cohesive learning community. For instance, curriculum mapping is like a tool belt because it contains or holds information about what a teacher really teaches: The belt is the calendar that organizes the tools. The belt buckle allows for adjustable pacing throughout the school year. The content hammers in the standardsâ€™the nails. The mapping tool drills in essential questions for authentic probing and learning. The pliers skills hold the content, standards, and assessments together. The screwdriver turns content into knowledge. The measuring tape can be used to assess student buildings products. A Tool Belt for Teachers. As part of that two-year staff development initiative, instructional leaders noticed some serious disconnects between what was expected of students and what they were taught. Each teacher decided which standards to address and what experiences to provide. The lack of horizontal consistency across schools and vertical continuity within schools created a major barrier to quality. In addition, once teachers in School District Five developed district standards and aligned them to state standards, the volume of standards was immense. In the 7th and 8th grades alone, more than 1, standards existed in the core subject areas! The district needed a plan for building a strong, cohesive curriculum. As both the volume of standards and the demographic differences grew, a sense of isolation also emerged among teachers and administrators. Educators needed to connect with colleagues as they struggled to change teaching practices so they could meet more comprehensive standards. Teams of teachers were challenged to think through the mind of a child rather than with the child in mind. In other words, they were asked to envision learning opportunities as if they were individual children moving from kindergarten to 12th grade in the district. What experiences would students have? What would connect learning for them? The resulting plan had to include specifics so that educators could examine the total structure and establish a strong community of learning. The Leadership Roles Instructional leaders recognized that a process that brings individuals together to reflect and share information must support the learning community across diverse

schools within a school district. For many years, a hallmark of School District Five had been instructional leadership provided by teacher and administrator teams. Teachers, working side-by-side with administrators, made decisions that affected student learning. One way educators have retained this collaboration is with leadership teams. Teachers and administrators representing all grade levels and all schools meet monthly to make decisions regarding teaching and learning across the entire district. These leadership teams provide instructional leadership by involving stakeholders and moving all schools as a unit toward their goals. By using a building metaphor, instructional leaders decided the district needed support beams from school to school to build a new sense of community. One of the support beams was consistent expectations undergirded by sufficient resources to meet the needs of schools with more challenges. A second support beam was guidance for teachers in managing an overwhelming curriculum. A third was greater connection among content areas so students could see the relevance of lessons. To construct the support beams, leaders needed to foster a sense of cohesion among teachers, and teachers needed tools for sharing information quickly with one another. To connect the beams, smoother transitions were needed at critical junctures, such as elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. To cement skills at benchmark grades and to increase student comprehension, educators believed a deeper commitment to teaching reading in all content areas was critical. The leaders saw curriculum mapping as a tool to address those needs, because it built a renewed sense of community by using instructional reflection and professional collaboration. Process of Implementing Curriculum Mapping Continuing the construction metaphor, the leaders realized that a new structure could not be built without plans a blueprint and a vision of what the structure architecture would look like. The district needed to identify a vision for the community, develop research sites, engage the architects, clear the land, establish a foundation, and use tools to construct the community. When the leaders learned about Dr. After considerable research through professional journals, conferences sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development ASCD , and telephone interviews with other district leaders, such as in Ankeny, Iowa, the District Five leaders decided to study the feasibility of implementing curriculum mapping. Thus, a vision was created. In School District Five, involvement of stakeholders is a standard for every initiative. The leaders recruited two highly skilled principals, Michael Lucas secondary level and Claire Thompson elementary level , to mastermind a blueprint for building the learning community. In “”, the district selected 62 teachers, representing various grades, subject areas, and schools, who would work with Lucas and Thompson in a graduate-level course to study the feasibility of implementing curriculum mapping. Jacobs see Curriculum Mapping Resources and Bibliography, pp. The teachers studied various designs for District Five maps. They interviewed experts to refine their design. In a workshop with the class in January , Dr. Jacobs provided her strong help with the design. The graduate course participants became the chief architects of the community-building initiative. They tested the ground to see if it was ready to build on by using mapping in their own classrooms. They sought resources to support an articulated curriculum. Course participants understood clearly that if they determined the ground was not ready, the district would not use curriculum mapping. As architects, they could decide to use different tools. At the end of the graduate course, however, the architects decided to move forward with building the community in all schools using curriculum mapping as the major tool. In fact, they decided to build a community across all schools rather than implement mapping in only a few schools as a pilot project. They recognized that with more than 1, teachers, this initiative would be no small undertaking. The architects carefully designed the process, identified the tools needed, and pledged a three-year commitment to the building process. The graduate course participants used the template developed in Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment “ Jacobs, a shown in Figure 2. More than 1, teachers used this to record their initial maps; an example from an actual school is shown in Figure 2.

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Chapter 5 : What is Service Learning or Community Engagement? | Center for Teaching | Vanderbilt University

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There are many variations and each have their usefulness for different applications. According to Kerissa Heffernan, there are six general models.

Discipline-Based Model In this model, students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences regularly. In these reflections, they use course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding of the key theoretical, methodological and applied issues at hand. This model presumes that the students have or will develop capacities with which to help communities solve a problem.

Capstone Course Model These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Capstone courses ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their course work and combine it with relevant service work in the community.

Service Internship Model This approach asks students to work as many as 10 to 20 hours a week in a community setting. As in traditional internships, students are charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community or site. However, unlike traditional internships, service internships have on-going faculty-guided reflection to challenge the students to analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories. Service internships focus on reciprocity.

Undergrad Community-Based Action Research Model Community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the student who is highly experienced in community work. This approach can be effective with small classes or groups of students. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities. This model assumes that students are or can be trained to be competent in time management and can negotiate diverse communities. The course instructor serves as the advisor for the directed study option. Such arrangements require departmental approval and formal student registration.

Ways to Integrate Community Engagement into an Existing Course There are many ways to integrate community engagement into an existing course, depending on the learning goals, the size of the class, the academic preparation of the students, and the community partnership or project type. Below are some general tips to consider as you begin:

- Some course objectives can be met when the entire class is involved in a one-time service project. Arrangements for service projects can be made prior to the semester and included in the syllabus. This model affords the opportunity for faculty and peer interaction because a common service experience is shared. One-time projects have different learning outcomes than ongoing service activities.
- Option within a course: Many faculty begin community engagement with a pilot project. In this design, students have the option to become involved in the community-based project. A portion of the normal coursework is substituted by the community-based component. For example, a traditional research paper or group project can be replaced with an experiential research paper or personal journal that documents learning from the service experience.
- Required within a course: In this case, all students are involved in service as an integrated aspect of the course. This expectation must be clearly stated at the first class meeting, on the syllabus, with a clear rationale provided to students as to why the service component is required. Exceptions can be arranged on an individual basis or students can transfer to another class. If all students are involved in service, it is easier to design coursework i.

Class sessions can involve agency personnel and site visits. Faculty report that it is easier to build community partnerships if a consistent number of students are involved each semester. This type of class involves students in research within the community. The results of the research are communicated to the agency so that it can be used to address community needs. Action research and participatory action research take a significant amount of time to build relationships of trust in the community and identify common research agendas; however, community research projects can support the ongoing research of faculty. Extending this type of research beyond the confines of a semester

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may be best for all involved. Upper class students can explore ways their disciplinary expertise and competencies translate into addressing community needs. Other community-based classes within the department can prepare the student for this more extensive community-based class. Community engagement projects with one or more partners may span different courses in the same semester or multiple courses over a year or longer. These projects must be broad enough to meet the learning goals of multiple courses over time, and because of this they may have a cumulative impact on both student learning and community development that is robust. Such projects may be particularly suited to course clusters or learning communities within or across disciplines, or course sequences, say, within a major, that build student capacity towards advanced learning and community action goals.

Chapter 6 : Creating Community ~ Lesson Plans | One World, One Heart Beating

iv Building a Learning Community teacher professional learning in the United States and countries whose students out-performed U.S. students on international assessments revealing significant practices.

Begin with what They have; Build on what They know. But of the best leaders when their task is accomplished, their work is done, "We have done it ourselves. This may be projection about someone else in a participants life, often a father or mother. It is often a demand based on dependency for the facilitator to move the group faster or differently and it happens in chaos. Facilitators learn to take any attack in stride and not react so the group can become a group of all leaders. Facilitative Interventions Interventions vary considerably with each group depending on their behavior. There are probably at least different interventions that may be used under given circumstances. These always impact the process, because they are often based on fear. The group is not consciously aware of what they are doing with their norms. The facilitator task is to expose the norms. The norms of a closed groups stops the process. The facilitators initiates an exercise to explore their norms. This group listed 26 norms, many peculiar to this group. They expressed amazement as this unfolds. Knowing the norms facilitated letting go of many norms. Following the norms exercise, they engaged each other in healthy confrontation. Sometimes a group gets stuck and can not move forward. This may be group emptiness and this is not stuckness. If stuckness is for another reason, the facilitator must attempt to find the cause. Fields work just below the conscious level and are not usually known by a group. The facilitators must try to uncover the field and name it to resolve the stuckness. In Melbourne Australia a workshop was very flat from the start. This group did not have any energy. By mid afternoon we found it. The state of Victoria had gone bankrupt the week before. The government was overturned and more than 1, workers fired. In addition, the new government took away benefits of many other government employees and made drastic payroll cuts. This was the field impacting almost everyone in the group, either directly or indirectly. The subject was mention by a facilitator and they started talking about it which broke the stuckness and restored energy. Certain interventions must be done immediately to keep group safety. Once this is lost, it may take many hours to get back. A facilitator must be careful to not manipulate the group, but also must keep the atmosphere a reasonably safe place. Some examples of behavior that can create an unsafe place are: A facilitator must stop unsafe behaviors quickly by using a proper intervention. Interventions are about balance and awareness in the group. Instant interventions are mostly about keeping a safe environment. The following will present a middle of the road case that gives fewer interventions than many workshops. Many details are limited to conserve space. Workshop starts with the introduction and reading of the story. The group goes into typical pseudocommunity with talk about the story. Speaking more personal with I statements will help us build community. Also, the we statements imply that all people agree with what is said and I really doubt that all of you agree with some of what has been said. The first project starts. It is about the window being closed and not enough air in the room. People open the windows. Noise from the streets starts entering the room and those sitting by the windows have problems hearing. The project continues by shutting the windows with agreement that enough air has come in the room and the windows can be opened at the breaks. Also adds, that they are doing normal pseudocommunity but that we did hear expression of at least one expression of differences by Mary Ann. The group starts back into pseudocommunity and quickly get into another project. This time it is the design in the carpet on the floor. One person says it is highly distracting to them and they want to cover it up. The debate continues for about 20 minutes, then it starts to change toward a person that is playing a victim role. She asked the group to have three minutes of silence because she does not like the debate. The group agrees to the silence, reluctantly. After about one minute the lady pulls out a tape player and turns it on, playing some music that breaks the silence. The group explodes and in rapid fire she is attack by other participants for asking for silence, then playing music. We are into chaos. This event is now over. Lets go on by completing the silence and decide where to go doing our task. That is chaotic behavior and the

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opposite of Moved to Speak. The group comes back and continues chaotic behavior with some real chaos. Why do you just sit there. Tell us about Scott Peck or something. Later a person says they are uncomfortable in this large of a group and would feel better if we broke into small groups. Discussion follows with some agreeing that small groups would be better. Facilitators are ready to stop the organization if necessary. Only two other hands go up. End of another project. They remain quiet for about a full minute, the longest pause in the afternoon. The afternoon ends at 5: PM with the group starting to slow down. As we break, a facilitator says: You did make an attempt to organize yourself out of it and that never works. The only way out of chaos is emptiness. Emptiness is a letting go process. You might like to think about this tonight. See you in the morning. It seems that no one knows what to say or wants someone else to say it. They finally start and go right back to no space, taking automatically and not listening. They get into some real chaos. It seems the group norms are now starting to act out more and it has more to do with their communications skills more than anything else. We allow it to continue and develop. We call a break at During the break, we facilitators decide to do a "norms" exercise. We divide the group into groups of five and give them several norms we have seen acted out. Then ask them to write down as many as they can in the next 20 minutes. They are doing a great job, getting some really good ones. They report the norms to the large group and they have We discuss each one in a positive way and there is not much to say about some of them. For example, one is that they are expected to know everything and if asked a question, they are to bluff the answers if they do not know it. We had seen some of this that was causes inauthentic talk. We start the workshop back up at They start a philosophical discussion about how to communicate and it is a lot of head stuff, but good and authentic. The conversation becomes lively and they discuss expectations of each other and discover there are many that no one know about. The authenticity is getting better. There are a few You statements directed to several people. They react and defend themselves. There are a number of these and it is getting just a little hot. Its time for the noon break.

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Chapter 7 : What Is a Professional Learning Community? - Educational Leadership

Discover opportunities for real-world practice, cultural events, and learning resources. Teacher Support - One City Project Teacher Support Teacher Support One City is committed to expanding the availability of language programs in the Greater Seattle area.

A few years ago, a group of teachers from Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School attended a week-long summer institute of The Responsive Classroom sponsored by Origins of Minneapolis, Minnesota. We have learned so much more about the RC philosophy than we initially set out to discover. We have found many opportunities to increase our focus on the language we are teaching, in addition to strengthening our sense of immersion community. Integral to the implementation of this philosophy is the understanding and belief in the seven principles of the RC approach Northeast Foundation for Children, , p. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum. How children learn is as important as what they learn. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. There is a specific set of social skills that children need in order to be successful academically and socially. Knowing the children we teach individually, culturally, and developmentally is as important as knowing the content we teach. Knowing the families of the children we teach is important to knowing the children. How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence. The MM provides a time and space on a daily basis for practicing those important social skills. The meeting format includes four components: All of this takes approximately 20 minutes. As immersion educators, we are perhaps doubly inclined to ask, Where do we find the time, how can we add one more thing? In the case of immersion education, however, the time and space created to talk, question, listen and hear others during MM provides many opportunities for the authentic use of the immersion language, and also offers children the chance to belong, to feel cared about and to have fun using their immersion language. As a result of our experience in immersion education through. When students come to know each other, as they do in MM, they are more able to take the learning risks needed for literacy. They practice speaking and listening each day as they greet each other and share personal news. They learn how to ask interesting questions and give thoughtful answers, how to tell a story, to summarize and condense information, and to describe details. Crawford, Nauman and Rottman, , p. Greeting sets a positive tone for the classroom and the day. Being greeted provides a sense of recognition and belonging which meets a universal human need. Greeting gives children a chance to practice the art of offering hospitality. Country- or region-specific greetings in the immersion language Multicultural greetings from around the world Use of informal language to greet friends and intimates Use of formal language to greet authority figures Customs and unique behaviors when greeting SHARING The second component of MM is sharing. Sharing helps develop the skills of caring communication and involvement with one another. Sharing encourages habits of inquiry and thought, important for cognitive growth. Sharing provides practice in speaking to a group in a strong and individual voice. Sharing strengthens vocabulary development and reading success. While children are sharing and asking questions of one another, the teacher is continuously assessing their use of language. This assessment then becomes the basis for future language instruction, in the form of mini-lessons, or by having students focus their attention on a particular grammatical structure during subsequent meetings. For example, if students are consistently using incorrect verb endings for questions and replies, this becomes a mini-lesson, and in subsequent meetings students are asked to focus on their usage. The same can be done with the usage or lack thereof of common phrases and expressions in the immersion language. These aims are in line with the strategies set forth by Miriam Stein, Ph. During an individual share, immersion students thus have the opportunity to develop a variety of language skills, such as: Another helpful strategy we like to use is to post common questions and answer phrases in the meeting area, e. In addition to individual sharing, structured whole-group shares can also be used by the teacher to focus on and practice specific aspects of language. In a structured share, the teacher poses a prompt or question and the entire class is given the opportunity to

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respond. The grammatical focus will depend on the age and language needs of the students. Some examples might include: Group activity also fosters active and engaged participation. Group activity encourages cooperation and inclusion. The following is a partial list that can serve as a springboard to the endless possibilities that exist in immersion classrooms: Songs, poems, riddles, chants.

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Chapter 8 : The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)

Storytelling as Community Building. Watching the third graders during storytelling night is enough to convince anyone that these children have become a community of learners. Dyson and Genishi () have written: The storytelling self is a social self, who declares and shapes important relationships through the mediating power of words.

Learn how to build relationships because the relationships you have with coworkers, the community, and your adversaries are ideal for achieving your goals. What is relationship building all about? Why do we need to build and sustain relationships? When do you build and sustain relationships? How do you build relationships? An step program How do you sustain relationships? Relationships are the building blocks for all community organizing activities. Whether you want to organize a volleyball game or get rid of unfair housing practices in your town, you will need lots of good relationships. Because the relationships we have with our coworkers, the communities we serve, and even our adversaries are the means for achieving our goals. It is our relationships all added together that are the foundation of an organized effort for change. We need lots of people to contribute their ideas, take a stand, and get the work done. It is also the people who motivate us to reach our goals. As community builders, we care deeply about people and caring is part of our work. It is our caring for others that motivates us to work as hard as we do. It is often the health and happiness of our children, neighbors, and coworkers that we hold fixed in our minds as we push ourselves to overcome obstacles and take on challenges that can feel overwhelming. If you are the official leader, or an active citizen without an official title, you will be most effective if you establish many strong relationships around yourself in the community. In this section, we will talk about building and sustaining relationships and give you some practical tips and general guidelines. However, if you are charming, witty, or talented, these guidelines may help you, too!

Organizing a block party Suppose you want to organize a block party. What kind of relationships do you need to make it happen? Who will help you plan the block party? It would be much more fun, not to mention easier, to work with a few neighbors to make this block party happen. How do you get local approval and cooperation? In many towns, you need the city council or government groups to approve block party permits. Having a friend or two in local government might help you figure out how to work your way through the bureaucratic hoops to get your permit. Who else might lend a hand? If you already have a relationship with your corner grocery store owner, she might donate some watermelon or drinks for the block party. If you know your neighborhood firefighters, they may be willing to bring over a fire engine for the children to climb on. Do you have a friend who is a clown? Who will come to the block party? Last, but not least, in order to have a successful block party, you want as many people from your block to come as you can get. If your neighbors know you or anyone else on the planning committee, they will be much more willing to overcome their shyness and show up. Overall, the more people you know, the easier it will be to organize a block party and the more fun it will be for everyone.

Fundamental reasons to build relationships: Community building occurs one-to-one. You need to build relationships with people one-to-one if you want them to become involved in your group or organization. Some people become involved in organizations because they believe in the cause. However, many people become involved in a community group or organization, just because they have a relationship with another person who is already involved. We need relationships in order to win allies to our cause. In order to get support from people outside our organizations, we need to build relationships in which people know and trust us. Our relationships give meaning and richness to our work and to our lives. We all need a community of people to share the joys and the struggles of organizing and making community change. A little bit of camaraderie goes a long way. What kinds of relationships are we talking about? Every relationship is different, but they all matter. If you smile and say hello to the school crossing guard on your way to work every day, you have formed a relationship. That crossing guard may be the one who will be watching out for your kids or grandchildren when they are old enough to walk to school by themselves. The guard will remember you and your warm smile when escorting your child across the street.

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Your relationship with the crossing guard may be quite different from the relationships you have with people involved in your neighborhood park-cleaning committee. The more relationships you have, the better. You never know when they will come in handy. A local gang member might be just the person you need to help you organize a group to build a new playground in your neighborhood. Whether they are government officials, school teachers, business people, elders, gardeners, children, people with disabilities, homeless people or whoever else--building friendships will pay off in ways you may never have anticipated. You are at the center. Imagine a wheel in which you are at the hub or center and each spoke represents a relationship with another person. Does that sound egotistical? It takes a lot of spokes to hold the wheel together and the wheel is what helps move the initiative along. There is enough room in the group for everyone to create their own wheel of strong relationships. The point is that you have to take the time to set up and sustain relationships. If you wait for others to establish relationships with you first, you may spend a lot of time waiting. Community builders approach relationships with integrity. We form relationships because we genuinely like someone, because we have something to offer that person, or because we share some common goal. You do it all the time. If you take an extra five minutes to ask the person who is stuffing envelopes how they think the baseball team is doing this year, you will have built a stronger relationship. Some relationships require more time than others. You may want to meet for lunch once a month with all the other directors of youth organizations in your town. You may need to meet twice this week with a staff member who has some built up resentment about the job. You may want to call your school committee representative every now and then to check in about issues of common concern. As community organizers with few resources, we are often under enormous pressures that distract us from paying attention to relationships. We feel the urgency of achieving important goals. Often, however, relationships are the key to solving a problem or getting the job done. Building and sustaining many solid, strong relationships is central to our work as community leaders. Relationships are the groundwork. Often building relationships is the groundwork that must be laid before anything else gets done on a project. The bigger the project, the more relationships you will usually need as a foundation. For example, if you are organizing a coalition of community groups that will work to create a multicultural arts center, it would be a good idea to get to know people in each organization before trying to get them together to work on the project. When you plan a project, you need to include the time it takes to build relationships into your plan. People need time to build trust. Whenever people work together, they need to have trusting relationships. When trust is missing, people usually have a difficult time functioning cooperatively. They worry about risking too much. Disagreements seem to erupt over no important reason. At the least people want some return for their investment. They have to feel like you know them as a person, understand their interests, and will not let them down. For example, you can jointly sponsor an evening of cultural sharing. If the evening is successful, you will have gained some shared trust and confidence on which to build. You can plan several similar events that will build trust over a period of time. If things are not going well, back up and try an easier challenge. If you begin to hold discussions on the multicultural arts center and people show signs of apprehension rather than excitement, slow down the process. Take on an easier challenge until strong relationships are better established. If you already have a good relationship with the grocery store owner in your neighborhood, you will be in a better position to help solve a dicey conflict between him and some neighborhood teens. If you have already established a relationship with your school committee representative, she might be more willing to respond to your opinions about special education funding. Establishing relationships in a crisis It is not impossible to establish relationships during a crisis, and often a crisis can bring people together. Call for help and people will rise to the call. You can build relationships when you are in need, because people often want to help. An step program Here are some tips for getting your relationships off the ground. Some of these ideas we learned in the first grade but, as adults, we sometimes forget. Build relationships one at a time. Fortunately or unfortunately, there are no short cuts. Be friendly and make a connection. Try to find something in common:

Chapter 9 : Through the Lens: Community Building at Red Bird

Many researchers have found that high-quality and long-term DLI programs promote academic achievement and high levels of language proficiency for both language groups. Despite the evidence, leaders from the field of bilingual education have identified urgent research questions and barriers to research in dual language education.

Tonights show discusses the importance and science of getting out into the great outdoors to learn and explore in nature. The panelists include experts in survival and wilderness skills. In particular, we discuss how being in nature as a group inspires teamwork and builds community. Matthew Talbot Having grown up in the English countryside, Mat has had a passion for all things outdoors from a young age. When Mat was diagnosed with dyslexia at age 11, exploring and adventuring in nature was his sanctuary from school. His frustrations with the services for young people continued after school too, as he was met with difficulty finding an apprenticeship due to the legal restrictions placed on year-olds on building sites. Despite his confidence taking a knock at school, Mat never gave up and has always been an incredibly hard worker. Combining this energy with his passion for outdoor education, adventuring and teamwork, he has travelled the world completing extreme fitness and endurance events both on land and sea. The ethos of this company is to learn how to work together as a unit in nature, and build community. Mat has also co-founded, with his partner Louise, a functional fitness company called the Uprising , which encourages young people to get outside and working together to solve problems and complete challenges. Mat also has a great interest in ancient history and all of his endeavours follow his desire to reconnect people with their roots, lead a simpler way of life and engage with the environment around them. She combines woodcraft skills with a deep understanding of and respect for nature. Sue delights in working in the wilds in all weathers with groups including individuals who have never met before, forming caring, cohesive groups. Her gift is in giving them the freedom to reinvent themselves. Sue attended the first ever Forest School in Britain as a child, which was grown out of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry. Her experiences of being in a school that facilitated a love of nature inspired her to major in Botany at Royal Holloway University of London gaining a 1st class honours degree and coming away with a deep interest in plant-animal interactions and animal behaviour. She joined Surrey Wildlife Trust developing training programmes for wardens and rangers of priority habitats. After working in nature conservation, mainly as the biodiversity coordinator for Surrey, for 14 years, Sue returned to her childhood experiences. With 22 years of survival skills teaching experience, he has now trained thousands of people and inspired the creation of many other survival schools. He has taught Ancient English woodland crafts since Thomas is passionate about getting young people involved in the outdoors and works with schools as well as running a successful family camp in the outdoors since His book about his teaching is due to be published in early Thomas conceived and ran the Wildheart Gathering in collaboration for 8 years. He has practiced meditation and yoga for 35 years and trained as a martial artist since the age of 8 and is currently training in Le ho Ba fa. She has travelled extensively around Africa, Thailand, the US, Canada and Peru, learning and living with indigenous people. Prior to this, Katie studied towards a PhD in the philosophy and sociology of teen mental health concluding that there needs to be a fundamental shift in the environment with which we raise our children in the West. As well as rigorous academic training, Katie helped to set up and run a youth club in Devon, UK, which is still thriving. She has worked in forest schools, an organic farm and, in the past, has been involved in endurance events such as marathons and long-distance cycling. Katie noticed, both personally, and with the groups of children that she spent time with in nature, that being free to play outside is essential to learning, bonding and connecting with each other and our own indigenous wisdom. For full archives of this show and programming schedule, please visit: Find us on facebook: