Midcareer and Senior Faculty: How Small Investments in Renewal Create Big Impacts for Institutions and Students

Background Information

About the Graylyn Teaching Renewal Retreat
- Held annually: 2011-15
- 115 participants
- 19 colleges and universities
- Data collected
  - End of retreat evaluations (anonymous)
  - Impact survey: Fall 2014 (N=46)

Set at the beautiful Graylyn International Conference Center in Winston Salem, NC (http://www.graylyn.com/)

For more information, visit: http://tlc.wfu.edu/signature-programs/

Retreat Structure
- Opening and closing sessions on legacy
- Peer mentoring sessions (working groups)
- Personal coaching
- Workshops
- Book discussions
- Times for reflection
  - Yoga/tai chi
  - Walking
  - Meditation
  - Breaks
- Shared meals and cocktail hours at end of the day

Teaching Renewal Retreat for Advanced Career Faculty
June 9-11, 2015
Graylyn International Conference Center
Winston-Salem, NC
Underlying Framework

Libby Falk Jones (2005) offers guidelines for faculty renewal initiatives based on her experience at Berea College. She identifies six “crucial principles” in designing for renewal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Graylyn Retreat</th>
<th>Your Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-exploration, sharing of experiences, and reflection must be central at every session. Short readings and theoretical materials could support each session, but our time together must draw deeply on ourselves.</td>
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<td>2. Session leaders should come from both inside and outside the college. We wanted to ground the seminar in available talents as well as enrich it with outside expertise</td>
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<td>3. Sessions must be involving and experiential, the pace calm and slow. The impulse to overfill the time must be resisted.</td>
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<td>4. The tone of each session must be open, honest, and supportive</td>
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<td>5. Participation should be voluntary; the group should reflect diversity in field, gender, ethnicity, belief, length of time at the college. Group size, including planners as full participants, should be 12–16.</td>
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<td>6. The number of sessions should be great enough to allow for the creation of community, but not so numerous as to become a burden (p. 132).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 – 9:00</td>
<td>Breakfast Buffet (Monday night overnight guests only)</td>
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<td>8:30 – 9:30</td>
<td>Retreat Check-In</td>
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<td>9:30 – 10:15</td>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, Logistics</td>
<td>Seminar Room</td>
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<td>10:15 – 10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 – 12:00</td>
<td>The Legacies of Our Careers</td>
<td>Seminar Room</td>
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<td>12:00 – 1:15</td>
<td>Lunch Buffet</td>
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<td>1:15 – 1:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>1:30 – 3:00</td>
<td>Working Groups</td>
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<td>3:00 – 3:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>3:15 – 4:30</td>
<td>Workshop: Stories of Teaching</td>
<td>Seminar Room</td>
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<td>4:30 – 5:30</td>
<td>Room Check In</td>
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<td>5:30 – 6:30</td>
<td>Cocktail Reception</td>
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<td>6:30</td>
<td>Dinner at Graylyn</td>
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<td>7:30 – 8:30</td>
<td>Tour of the Graylyn Estate</td>
<td>Meet in the Dining Room</td>
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What We Learned

Questionnaires Administered

- **Post-Retreat Evaluation** (administered all years)
  - What was the most valuable part of this retreat for your own personal growth and renewal?
- **Follow-Up Survey** (administered 2015; 5-point Likert scale; N=46)
  - Attending the retreat has changed my teaching methods
  - Attending the retreat has changed how I feel about my teaching
  - Attending the retreat has made me aware of the importance of work-life balance and overall well-being
  - Attending the retreat has had a lasting impact on my career

Themes

**Post Retreat Evaluation**
- Peer support and sharing of ideas
- Time for self-reflection
- Safe space where participants feel valued
- Framing around legacy
- Building efficacy and research-based understanding around teaching and learning

**Follow Up Survey**
- Importance of peer support
- Opportunity to reflect on legacy/future
- Feeling of renewal
- Equipped with specific strategies to improve teaching and work-life balance

Narrative Comments

- “Having taught for so many years I was too comfortable in my teaching. I viewed things only from my perspective and not from the students point of view. I lectured a lot, did not do much with other disciplines; now I do. I keep up on the teaching research now as well.” - Participant 26
- “I will forever be reminded that I was not alone in wanting to finish my career from a strong and vital place…” -Participant 22
- “I didn’t resign in the summer of 2012 as I had planned to do--and I’ve now taken on additional responsibilities at the university. In short, it turned me back from the edge.” - Participant 4
- “Positivity, self-worth, legacy, passion. Note that there is no one specific skill or workshop element at play, but is was the overall effect/impact; especially the opportunity to work with colleagues from other disciplines and universities for just a few days, which provided the spirit of renewal.” -Participant 2

Tips for Moving Forward

- Create safe spaces (cross-department or cross-institution)
- Utilize and emphasize peer support
- Maintain space and pacing for reflection
- How will you communicate value/caring/ support?
- Legacy as a framework for renewal
Bibliography


