

Title: Seasons of Change: Faculty Moving from Disseminating Information to Educating

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Abstract

Project LEA/RN™ (Learning Enhancement Action/Resource Network), a staff development effort initiated to transform engineering education into an even more effective learning environment, was started in 1994 by engineering professors at Iowa State University in collaboration with College of Education faculty. This group began studying, developing, and incorporating into their courses the active learning techniques and inductive learning strategies that have proven successful in the K-12 educational system. As the Project has grown, teaching faculty and staff from most colleges of Iowa State University and from other institutions of higher education have joined the efforts. The cross-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation of these educators committed to improving student learning is resulting in significant successes. The leaders of Project LEA/RN™ gain insights to the effectiveness of the program by seeking insights from the experiences of the faculty learners involved in the change process. Data are regularly gathered from large group sessions, classroom observations, surveys of participants, and interviews with participants. Several themes have emerged from the data over the past four years including teacher/educator collegiality, growth in critical reflection, and growth in educators' perspectives of their own roles in the learning process.

This paper discusses our interpretation of the data on faculty experiences as a representation of teacher growth in what it means to facilitate learning. We view learning how to help others learn as a continuous journey of the subject matter specialist—one who gives information to students—in becoming a facilitator who helps students both grasp the heart of their disciplines and learn how to continue their own learning. Consistent with this conceptualization we present and discuss teacher growth as these seasons of change in thinking about the process of educating: challenge, experimentation, intentionality, worthiness, and community.