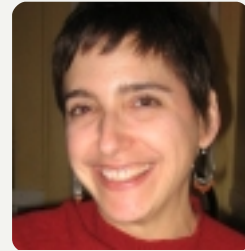


Patricia May Rosen

Educator and Consultant

Triggering change in education through people and the technologies that help us think together.



Please call me Tracy, most everyone else does!

Statement of Purpose

Introduction

This image of the sun, rising over the bridge epitomizes what I am coming to learn and understand about education, and also what I strive to do as an educator.



Sun rising over the Dom Luis Bridge by Thad Roan

It reminds me that while the destination is the ultimate goal, crossing the bridge - the journey - is a thing of beauty in itself. This is true for my own learning as well as how I teach.

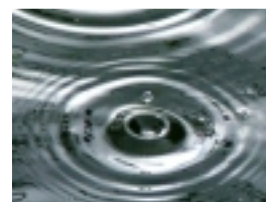
It makes me think about theories like emergent design and actions like jazz improvisation and how they apply to learning and teaching.

Like with the bridge, a structure is crucial. I need to know where my students are now and where they need to go, but what we do with what they already know and can already do and how we do it is where the beauty of education lies for me. I have the structure, we share the content, and it is through the interaction between those two sets that new learning emerges.

Background

I began to teach because I had discovered a passion for teaching kids how to read. Now, 10 years later, my passion has morphed into something deeper with a focus on how people develop thinking and literacy skills. This has grown out of my experience with working with elementary, high school and university students of all levels and abilities.

As an MA student in Human Systems Intervention, I learned that it was no longer enough for me to focus solely on individual needs, and so my focus has also grown to explore how thinking and literacy skills develop in individuals and groups across organizations within larger systems, and how each part of a system affects the others.



201 Corot #513, Ile des Soeurs, QC, H3E 1C4
t: 514 315 3755 c: 514 827 3141 e: patricia.rosen@sympatico.ca

Theories of Influence

I am also aware that as I explore and observe how people learn in organizations that my observation will have an effect on what I am observing – what I observe will change because I am observing it. This brings with it great ethical implications.

"Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox. "But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed."



My values insist that whatever I do I must do with no harmful intention, and so I am influenced by change theories and principles that I feel support this outlook, in particular emergent design processes like appreciative inquiry, jazz improvisation, conversation and dialogue theory, open systems theories, and participatory action research.

I believe that the only way to trigger authentic, sustainable change in a system is by including as many members of the system as possible in the process. I discovered this firsthand as an education consultant while facilitating sessions for educators in the Jewish school system in Montreal. The sessions that held the most meaning and resulted in real change of practice at the school level were ones that were developed through the needs of the participants, via pre-session surveys, and included people from all levels of the school.

The Brain & Web 2.0

I am also influenced by recent and current discoveries in how the brain learns. F-mri now lets us know that learning can continue to happen much later than was previously believed and that the brain can potentially reorganize itself around this new learning.

This excites me. I explored Gareth Morgan's metaphor of the organization as a brain in my final master's project last year. I pushed it further to include recent findings about how the brain learns and transferred those ideas to how organizations learn.

The brain can potentially trigger structural changes in itself around learning.

I posit that the very act of learning and making conscious, systematic choices around what is being learned and how it is being learned can effectively change organizational processes and structures. This is something I would like to continue to explore.

Web 2.0 technologies - wikis, blogs, and online applications for mind mapping and creating documents (to mention but a few) also excites me as tools for learning around thinking and literacy.

Students live with technology. I need to connect their learning to their lives through technology. This has great implications for all education, but I think even more pointedly for special education and inclusion as these tools can also create access points to learning for some where they previously did not exist. These applications can be used not only for pedagogy but for teacher planning, reflection, and learning as well.

Present Focus

My research focus is a 'mash-up' of what I have mentioned so far. At present, there is no official curriculum for students with special needs who have been assigned to Learning Centres in Quebec English high schools - no description of outcomes, objectives, or competencies. I currently have the task of teaching in a learning centre and developing a new program for a senior learning centre that will act as a bridge for students who can not graduate, but need to have support as they enter the work force and the rest of their lives.

I want to look at emergent design processes in special needs programming and how web 2.0 technologies can enhance or hinder learning throughout the process for students, teachers, and the school organization.

I would also like to further examine the learning organization in relation to recent advances in brain-based research and to explore the role of teacher in the process, as we continue to move away from teacher as a content expert and toward teacher as an expert in learning processes. This could potentially lead to recognized curriculum for Quebec's English High School Learning Centres.

Mapping process with AI framework

