

Social Media info for DCNTP Board, 1-14-13

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DCNTP's Overarching Goal: Develop a communication structure among beginning teachers that requires low maintenance on the part of the DCNTP, but results in high participation.

Objectives:

- 1) Connect new teachers with one another across the districts, so that isolated beginning teachers might have the support of those in like positions. (Lone pre-K is small, rural district, for example)
- 2) Provide BT's with enough to encourage their growth, but not overwhelm them.
- 3) Allow beginning teachers to communicate with DCNTP
- 4) Create a system that's both authentic and sustainable.
- 5) Create a structure that can teach us how to build similar communities with mentors.
- 6) Apply in real ways to BT Seminars, like "backchannel chatter."

1st Option: Twitter (thanks, Ruthie!)

From Ruthie: I think it could work for us. Here's the run down:

- It all revolves around either the people you follow or hashtags. Hashtags are essentially a labeling method to link different tweets together by a common theme. They are what I have found to be most important.
- It is easy to follow people, but you have to manually build a network that can take a while. I find it hard to build a strong network since you don't really know whom to follow unless you already know them (which isn't the point of twitter) or you are always on twitter and start to notice people that you seem to connect with.
- You CAN search for hashtags that are of interest to you, but using the twitter website you can only search for them; you can't technically follow hashtags.
- I think the key for us to use twitter revolves all around starting our own hashtag. I have searched, and #DCNTP doesn't seem to be in use already – PERFECT!
- If we were to start having our BTs and facilitators tweet using #DCNTP we could build a network quite quickly. It does require our new 'network' to use an outside program/app that is compatible with twitter. This is called tweetdeck.
- Tweetdeck is a free program that allows people to have a column system for watching what you follow. IT ALSO ALLOWS PEOPLE TO FOLLOW A PARTICULAR HASHTAG. This is what makes it easy for us. It would allow all of us (facilitators, BTs, mentors, district council members, Superintendents, principals, board members, etc.) to follow #DCNTP and be constantly updated with what is being talked about in our consortium. It would also allow facilitators to post a question or thought to BTs that have set up their accounts to follow the #DCNTP hashtag, and they could tweet back.

From Tracy (all of the following, but first, her's on Twitter);

- DCNTP encourages BT's to join Twitter and give vision of the project, what they could do, and encourage them to join through newsletters and seminars.

- Once they've joined Twitter, have them give DCNTP their Twitter handle, which we can then post to the website.
- With some guidance and a little interaction, we can encourage the use of this tool to talk with one another. Reminders of the page on the web where you can find others.
- We could do check-ins which could serve as formative assessment for us to see their needs.

****If the above works well, we could then specify a time, perhaps once a month, when we could have a moderated chat.**

****At some point down the road, DCNTP could launch its own account and get followers.** (This returns us to Ruthie's points, above. This, however, creates greater expectations and increased "care and feeding.")

[Tracy sees this option as the most ideal for our current situation.]

2nd Option: Facebook group: Benefits: Allows us to create a private space on facebook where beginning teachers interact. We could pop in and facilitate if we wanted to, but mostly this is to create a space for them.

- 90-95% of BT's are probably already on Facebook page.
- This private Facebook page is different from public Facebook pages that other organizations have.
- Gives the opportunity to post updates and the like. It is private.
- Care and feeding: Reminders to visit the site, to post, so that it is available. Could be communicated through BT seminars.

****Tracy can point us to the right resources for any of these options, though she has not run the Facebook page. Has run own page, and brand page for NTC.**

3rd Option: A Linked-in group. Fairly similar to Facebook group, but also ties you to your profession by supplying info in your field.

- Easy to create, invite BT's to it, so it is private, can also be a place where we can share news, and also has a place to engage in conversation.
- Fairly self-directed, and doesn't require a moderator, though we can do so, and we can participate.
- NOTE: Everything that is published there is public, unlike Facebook groups.
- Probably 50-75% of BT's are on Linked-In.

4th Option: Check in with Alyson Mike about the sorts of tools that NTC now has available.

The *Learning Zone* has some opportunities for BT's, including *Exploration*, a guided discussion area for beginning teachers.

Get insights of beginning teachers about which of these they would like.

Find a couple of early adopters, perhaps both mentors and beginning teachers.

We need to think of our DCNTP Website as the Island, and the structures above are boats that allow participants to get there.