

## What Will Stand the Test of Time?

*August 19, 2003*

I was moved today by a comment made by Armand Nicolai, a psychologist being interviewed by Charlie Rose. As he described Freud's work he said, "Some of it has really stood the test of time."

I thought of our work in dialogue education. What elements do I think will indeed *stand the test of time*?

**The Learning Needs and Resources Assessment (LNRA):** this is a tool for adult learning that will be here long after we are. The value of beginning the dialogue with learners before the course begins, and even before the course is *designed* has been proven.

**Learning Tasks:** structuring a unit into learning tasks (with some inductive work, solid research-based input, implementation and integration work for learners) is a concept and a skill that will stand the test of time. As more and more teachers move from telling to a focus on learning, the learning task will become a central part of the culture of adult education.

**Lavish Affirmation** is a concept and a skill that proves itself in the practice. I recall how reluctant teachers were initially to even consider this idea, never mind trying it. However, the effectiveness of it was the best argument. As we affirm learners lavishly, not in a stingy manner but *lavishly*, we not only see them grow, but we see *ourselves* develop in relationship to them.

**Design** is a concept and a skill, informed by the Seven Steps of Design, that will surely stand the test of time. *Who* (learners and teachers), *Why* (the situation), *When* (the time frame for the learning event), *Where* (the site), *What* (the content), *What For* (the achievement based objectives), and *How* (the learning tasks and materials) are all concepts that structure and focus learning.

**Accountability** is a concept and a principle that will stand the test of time. For a teacher to design so learners learn – not so he teaches well – is a very basic change. The focus on learning is at the heart of all dialogue education, as far as I can see.

**Small groups**, working together, to complete learning tasks and show productivity and learning – that's a practice that is here to stay. In our interconnected, global world there is little that gets done without teamwork and group effort. Respect, lavish affirmation, personal portfolios address the needs of the individual. The individual/community dilemma will not go away, however, until we can hold the opposites and honor both.

What else do you think will *stand the test of time*?