

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Planning – Preparing to Change

1. Focus on what you DO want to have happen
 - a. A lot of times the problem disappears as you work toward the goal
2. Picture the end in as much detail as possible – what is the GOAL (the desired state of affairs) and keep this in mind. throughout the process. It is easy to get stuck on a method and forget the purpose.
3. Anticipate wild success
4. Give yourself permission to do things differently – even breaking norms and going counter-culture is ok and may even be needed.
5. Count the cost and decide if it really is worth it. Do cost-benefit analysis for both changing and staying the same.
6. Ask yourself, “How will I know when I’m ready to change?”

Getting Started

1. Make one change at a time – start NOW.
2. Start with either the most important, the easiest, or the most fun project. It doesn’t matter, as long as you start.
3. If it is difficult to start, consider starting with something small so you have a quick success. That builds momentum.
4. Do something every day on the project – even if it is just 5 minutes of planning your next steps.
5. Wait actively – write notes, make plans, gather materials, create outlines, list steps.
6. Don’t make it harder than it has to be. It’s great to think through everything, but if that leaves you overwhelmed to the point that you don’t move forward, then it’s too much. Jump in and adjust as you go. (You will have to make adjustments along the way, anyway.)
7. Try something and then evaluate. Adjust. Do this to experiment.
 - a. E.g.: Create a short video lecture to explain one difficult concept and see how students respond to it. Evaluate the technology, the time spent, the quality, etc.
8. When a person gets stuck or has a mental block, shift gears. If that does not work, think about other times when the person has felt this way. Could there be something else going on here?

Practical Reminders

1. You can change qualitatively (WHAT you are doing) or quantitatively (HOW MUCH).
 - a. If what you are doing is not working, change both—do LESS of what you are doing and start doing something different.
 - b. If what you are doing is not working, DO NOT DO MORE of it!! The rut will just get deeper.
2. Think in 10 minute tasks (or 25 minute tasks).
3. Break the overall goal down into sub-goals, then sub-sub-goals as needed
4. Your plan should be specific enough that you can write a to-do list RIGHT NOW and know your next steps.
5. Look for changes in intensity, frequency, and duration. Any of these, even in small measures, is important feedback.
6. Don't make it harder than it has to be!!
7. Believe the best about people involved.
8. 80/20
9. Be aware that any change you make impacts other people and systems, too, sometimes in ways you cannot anticipate.

Maintaining Change

1. Create a flexible plan.
2. Reward yourself along the way.
3. Remember this happens within the context of a changing environment.
4. Change feels WEIRD! That is just because it is different. Even better is uncomfortable.
5. Partner with someone who can ask questions, keep you on track, and give feedback.
6. Expect things to get worse before they get better. Learning curves are real but are overcome with time and persistence.

Healthy Thinking

1. Be honest with yourself about ALL your thoughts and feelings. Write them down, say them in the mirror or in the car. Getting them out there takes away 80% of the power.
2. Evaluate the thoughts and feelings that create barriers. Examine them. Are they helping you or keeping you from reaching your goals?
3. Look for common thinking errors—catastrophizing, overgeneralizing, all-or-nothing (black and white), microscopic thinking (mental blinders to parts of the situation), giving away power (victim thinking), shoulding and musting, personalization. Challenge these errors and replace them with healthy thinking.