

Deep Learning in a Digital World

Tony Glover Model of Collaboration

TONY: We look today at models of collaboration, and we saw examples from Mary Ward School of jigsaw learning, where students had done research into different aspects of their learning, and then the students pulled it together as one collaborative project. We looked at learning in terms of what might be called "problem solving team building," that where a student owns a problem, the other students contribute towards it. Then they follow a path towards a solution. So collaboration is very strong within the framework of self-directed learning.

It has to be a cultural thing. There has to be the respect. We saw a clip of an outstanding school from England, Rushey Mead School in Leicester. Again, the students were working collaboratively together in terms of assessment. And they need to be prepared for that kind of expectation. But once that's there, then once that's part of the culture of the school, then the students fit into that sort of process naturally.

The teacher advisor, above all, would be the person who would negotiate with those students on where there's the opportunity for collaboration, how they follow a particular path, and to ensure that you don't have a complete and unconnected diversity, which is the kind of scenario I think you were describing. The teacher has to be a life-long learner. And the teacher has to share in the learning process with the students. If the teacher sees himself or herself as being the owner of knowledge they're just passing onto the students, then there's a huge barrier. But a key element is to have the teacher with the mind-set that they're going to work through this piece of learning with the students, and it's going to be a collaborative venture. So it does mean some letting go. It does mean allowing the students sometimes to make mistakes and to learn from them. Because if you have confidence in your students, it can grow.

I can give you an illustration of that. We looked at the recording of a lesson where the teacher had given the lesson over to the students, and the students were leading the other students in terms of how you assess this piece of work. One of the points that that teacher made was that the teacher has to model the right sort of behaviours for those students to pick up. And if the teacher is collaborative in approach, is conciliatory, the teacher is constructive, the teacher is looking to engage the students, then the students themselves will pick that up and they will respond to that. So there is a challenge for the teacher, and there is a whole issue to do with teacher development, and how successful and how quickly you'll be successful in implementing this approach. It depends on where your starting point is, but I have, for sure, come across many teachers -- not just young teachers, some of the older ones as well -- who were open to new ideas, who

were open to the principles of being a life-long learner and a collaborative learner with the students. And if we've got teachers with that sort of approach, then self-directed learning can happen, can take root in the schools.