

Learning Brain Expo – San Francisco CA. January 18 – 21 2008.

Making Complex Content Easy. Duke Kelly M.A.

This session was described in the programme as follows – **P – Highly Practical.**

‘This session will use academic content as a vehicle to demonstrate several powerful tools for transforming complex, abstract content into relevant, attainable pieces of information. This session is appropriate for educators of any level. Participants will leave with lesson plans ideas for implementation in a variety of content areas and a high level of energy.’

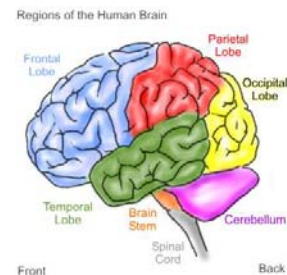


Duke Kelly exudes energy, wit and charisma. The session was fast paced, fun, and interesting. Music was a major factor all the way through the session, unsurprising given that Duke is Rich Allen’s business associate. Music tracks were relevant and well organized, lined up and ready at appropriate times on an iPod. Music was used when we came in, during movement from one activity to another, to link the learning, used in the background as we engaged in the activities and as we went out at the end of the session.

He skilfully modelled a Maths’ lesson on the Binary number system in which we took on the role of the



student , putting ourselves in their learning zone. The learning was two fold as at the same time he was also modelling to us his adaptable 5 part model of teaching using brain friendly techniques. His main aim to demonstrate that more effective lessons lead to higher scores, increased learner interest, enjoyment of learning and a **happier teacher as a result.**



This model is as follows –

1. Engager – Quick fun game to engage the learner. Needs to be simple, fast, quirky to grab their attention and get them in a suitable state for learning.

2.Frame - In this part of the lesson answer the most relevant question that the learner will be thinking - Why should I listen to this? What am I going to learn? Make it relevant. Hook them in.

3.Activity - Make the learning an active process. Include kinaesthetic movement. Paired work, groups (Kagan fours would be perfect), include investigation, choice, creativity. We made our own grid to work in - saving time for the teacher and also keeping us actively engaged



- instead of maybe possibly stressing that we had a worksheet to fill in. During large parts of the session we had ownership of the learning - e.g. choosing the numbers we worked with. We spent at least fifty per cent of this part of the lesson out of our seats - collaborating with others.

4. Debrief - Bringing back together - discussion - making sure everyone is on the same page.

5.Story - Try to include a story or metaphor to make the learning real to the students. Make the learning have a purpose and relevance. This will help with the retention of the learning. A quirky story will hook them in even more.

This 5 part model did not particularly contain anything new. But it did confirm and add weight to what I already know and believe are the essential ingredients of an outstanding lesson. One of the major ones - teacher enthusiasm, total belief and involvement in what they are delivering. Duke Kelly had this in bucket loads. He certainly engaged me in the session and as a result I wanted to participate. This 2 hour session flew by - in fact I was disappointed when it came to an end. Now on reflection I can remember every part of the lesson - and Maths really isn't my thing! As one of the posters in the room aptly said 'Lively learning lingers longer'.

I would certainly want my staff to go to a Duke Kelly session, to see best practice in action, gain practical ideas for their own practice and to be inspired! I certainly was!



Rachel Johnson.