

Leadership Clinic Design Workshop Final Report

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What impressions do you come away with from this 2nd LCDW?

The second LCDW left me with several big impressions.

First, it was so renewing to meet so many people passionate about and dedicated to environmental education. Every one of the participants was there to make a difference in their home community and was focused to make it happen. Capacity building will continue to expand in the areas represented by these participants. I know that I was not the only one affected by this underlying spirit. The success of the LCDW was started with this passion and enriched the experience for everyone who was involved - planner, resource person and participant alike.

The overall structure of the Leadership Clinic Design Workshop took a step forward with this workshop. The lessons learned as a result of the first LCDW were applied in the planning for this workshop and built on its strengths with modifications and new innovations. The result was a high quality product. The agenda flow allows for the Clinic model to unfold as the sessions progressed. Overall, I felt the participants left having a strong sense of the foundational principles of Leadership Clinics, what a Clinic looks like and how to have a Clinic at home.

Finally, I was extremely impressed by the planning team. During the pre-planning we made some significant changes to the agenda and to sessions. That planning went along smoothly, although a bit crunched at the end. The most impressive part was how the team worked together during the workshop itself. Several of the sessions were changed while they were being delivered because of time constraints. One session was completely dropped and a new one created that took into consideration the needs of the participants. New innovations were designed onsite to allow for better networking opportunities. Collectively, the team was flexible, adaptable and very supportive. They created a LCDW that truly set the bar higher for the next planning team. It was not only a pleasure to be part of it but it was truly exhilarating.

In what ways did the workshop influence and/or change workshop participants?

The ultimate effect of workshops, such as the Leadership Clinic Design Workshop, is not fully noted until months after the event. However, there were still some noticeable changes at the workshop itself.

One of the most exciting comments I heard at the clinic was made by a self-proclaimed kinesthetic learner. She said that participating in learning, at the LCDW, that was done in creative kinesthetic ways gave her permission to be creative in how she does

presentations. This comment shows that modeling a process or technique helps to provide an opportunity for participants to really understand it and its effects.

Leadership Clinics and Design Workshops are meant to be models as much as a place to get information. Participants begin to critically think about how to use the processes, tools and technologies incorporated at the workshop in their own lives. Participants reacted very positively to the sessions and then wanted to figure out how to use them. While visiting teams during the Team Planning Sessions, it was obvious that they wanted to use the processes and technologies not only in their own clinics but also in other areas of their professional lives. Listening to these comments showed me that they were certainly influenced by the model and wanted to tap into its potential for their team.

I believe that the flexibility and adaptability the planning team modeled also had an effect on the participants. They realized, through their own real-life experience, that the Leadership Clinic model is dynamic and it can be molded to fit a one day model, such as WI is using, or a multi-day bus tour, Columbia Basin's version.

Finally, it is hard to attend a gathering of hardworking, passionate environmental educators and not be impacted. The networking and "cross-pollination" enriched everyone there, planning team members and participants alike.

Do you believe participants will be able to successfully implement their own clinics and how can NEEAP continue to assist them?

Even though many of the participants had never attended a LC before, they came with an open mind. Each team had at its core at least one very committed person who had attended a clinic previously. The team liaisons did a great job adding members to the team. Also, this LDCW had very focused worksheets to guide planning in the Team Planning Sessions. These proved very effective in helping the teams make progress and discussing their own events. For these reasons and because the group experienced the workshop together, which is the glue for the team, I believe that the teams will be able to host successful clinics.

The type of clinics that these teams are considering has quite a range of structure. The planning completed at the LDCW showed that the teams were able to adapt the model presented to them and make it their own. That ownership will be the driving force behind completing the planning and hosting a clinic.

NEEAP should continue to be the support and catalyst for the team planning. Follow-up communications can continue to offer help. Direct contact with team liaisons in a few months could prompt questions or requests for help. The help was offered at the LCDW and it needs to continually be put out there for the teams.

Note: I have already had a conversation with the WI team regarding their clinic and the role a facilitator can take. I offered continued support as they needed it.

What should NEEAP do in the future to disseminate and improve on the Leadership Clinic Model?

The LC Manual is an excellent tool to help people get a feel for and understand the Clinic model. However, it has been proven over time with other materials, that the best understanding and ultimate use of them is gotten through a workshop. With that in mind, I believe the best way to disseminate the model is through continuing workshops that model the model while teaching about the principles of the Clinic. Teasers at conferences, such as the ones being done at the NAAEE and NAI conferences this fall, are a great way to interest people and let more people know about it.

Each time a Leadership Clinic or the Design Workshop is presented will give NEEAP opportunities to refine and further develop the model. Since the model is dynamic and participant driven there should never be an end to the refinements. I know, after having participated in different roles in Clinics and Design Workshops, that the fundamental structure of the model is sound and that it works!

Ultimately, I think there is a great market for this type of model in the world beyond environmental education. Planning and working in a team setting is becoming the norm for corporations and non-profits, yet professional development in those areas are still primarily done through traditional models. Sharing this model with those sectors could change the complexion of what professional development looks like long term.