CURSO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

HOW CURSO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGED TO PROMOTE VALUING PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
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I’m a Salvadoran missionary living in Peru, serving in SIL with initial training for Latin-Americans who want to serve in Bible translation or Literacy.
Instructions:

- Let's form small groups 2 or 3
- Think about an experience in which you felt you needed help or support from others while you were learning a language.
- Share your personal experiences in small groups and then reflect on how that experience would have been different if someone else had helped you.
This course is a training for Latinos interested in serving in the translation of the Bible. They are basic introductory courses in linguistics, phonetics and acquisition of language and culture. This course was maintained for years as a traditional training, meaning that the teacher simply gave their presentations and tested them on content, with little direct participation of the students or group interaction. But, in order to help them prepare to be missionaries, we wanted to change the way we teach the courses. Two years ago we started to train the facilitators to used a Dialogue Education model, based on the writings of Jane Vella and Global Learning Partners which is designed for adult learning based on their needs and the resources they bring to the classroom from their previous experiences.
In 2017 we started with previous course facilitators, divided into groups by the 3 subject areas, using an online learning platform, since they are scattered throughout the Americas. Our goal was to develop communities of practice so that members of the CoP could provide support and grow as a team that learns from and encourages one another. They had weekly assignments that required them to write and respond to what others wrote, and we also tried to have virtual CoP meetings once a month.

Since then we have tried using Team Drives from Google, but that limited participation across subject matters, so we moved to having a space on the Curso Fundamental Google Drive for each course. But trying to get the community to comment on other people’s course development in other countries is hard to convince people to do, because most of us have being taught to be competitive and not to care about our peers because we need to spend our time on our own projects (to get a better grade than my classmate).
We continue to try out other tools that can help us have more interaction between our members. I have started WhatsApp groups and Facebook groups, trying to encourage real Communities of Practice. But so far, our facilitators just want to use plans that others have made without thinking about their own situation or asking for help from others in the CoP.

We have continued to mentor these facilitators and new ones as they plan for specific courses, and are making good progress individually, but still want to improve their involvement in helping one another.
TEAM LEARNING AMONG THE STUDENTS

- In each Curso Fundamental there is now greater participation of the students and interaction in small groups. They are no longer perceiving the training as a competitive environment, but as a place for collaborative and mutual learning. Facilitators are generating spaces in which each participant feels valued and an important support to the rest of the team of which he is a part. They are beginning to see mission, not as an individual activity but one that values the growth of all.

- Within the Language and Culture Acquisition course we focus on cultural differences among the group--staff and students--and the wealth that each brings to the group. We have the advantage that we often have teams of facilitators as well as students from different countries, but we all need to learn to function as a team.
COLOMBIA AND MÉXICO

- It began by presenting the cultural richness that God allows to have in the course and seeing the positive and negative aspects that our cultures can have and using a tool that demonstrates how we solve problems differently, helping us to value the different perspectives and preparing them to learn differently, cooperatively, in the course.

- In the current course that we are supporting for Mexico, we are working with teams of facilitators for each course, generating cooperation and support in learning together through the accompaniment of another person as the education mentor through dialogue. Now they are preparing their sessions based on these principles and using work teams where it is favored to learn together and not the competition, but to grow as multicultural teams where we learn from the perspectives and experiences of the rest.

- Giving way to better missionaries ready to serve and support their colleagues.
REFLECT

- **Time:** 20 Minutes

- **Instructions:**
  - Begin your table discussions by together listing suggestions in how can we improve our CoP’s to turn in a real of support and encouragement groups?
  - What suggestion do you have to help us in order to build a better CoP?
  - What insights you have about the role that we have as a trainers that can help to train a much better missionaries?