



Twin Valley School District

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RIVER DAYS

New Teachers in Twin Valley School District Receive a Lesson in Learning

Elverson, PA – Each year, newly minted teachers graduate from our colleges and universities, excitedly looking forward to their first position working with students. In the Twin Valley School District (TVSD), new teachers undergo an Induction Program which is an integral part of a teacher’s first year and provides them with a systematic structure of support that helps them become familiar with their school and district, refine their practice and better understand their professional responsibilities.

During the first three days of induction, new teachers, mentors and administrators share district and building initiatives and focus on teaching and learning. This year’s group at TVSD were introduced to Dr. Brian Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning and Creating Dynamic Responsive Classrooms, as well as having the unique opportunity to look back to their own school days and remember what it was like to learn a new skill...this particular “lesson” was learned on the river...the Schuylkill River to be exact.

New teachers, mentors and building administrators went on a canoe trip to learn team, communication and relationship building. The goals were to help new teachers (and mentors), learn to create a safe and trusting environment in which learning can occur; to remember what it felt like to have to learn a new skill – with the vulnerability, trust and excitement that comes with conquering something new; learning to listen to teammates and to take instruction; and most importantly, to dialogue and reflect on the “act of learning” and what those implications are in the classroom.

Although the river water was somewhat low, the weather was perfect for this field trip experience. While most of the group had some paddling experience, there were some who needed help from the guide which resulted in a reflection by one teacher that it was a perfect example of the guided practice of teaching students. Students often struggle to do it their own way, see the need for help, receive the help and apply it to a learning situation...we learn by doing rather than hearing.

Many in the group expressed an interest in continuing the program, as well as expanding it throughout the district so that colleagues could also experience the difference between talking about collaborating and actually developing skills and relationship applications to the learning process.

PHOTO CAPTION: One of the Induction groups led by TVSD Curriculum Director Dr. Kimberly Donahue (second from left), prepares to participate in an active learning opportunity on the Schuylkill River.

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Twin Valley School District is an equal opportunity public education institution that is committed to excellence in education. In partnership with parents and the community, the District aspires to prepare students for challenges in an ever-changing world.