



March 28, 2024

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Just a brief note to thank the Educational Training Board of Ireland for the opportunity to explore, for sixteen years, what makes a difference in the lives of students and teachers in terms of the design of learning experiences. It has been incredible to work with an organization that was willing to stay with a change effort over time...to actually act on the research of what makes a difference in the life chances and learning chances of students. And in particular I want to thank Joan Russell for staying with the project and like a conductor, dealing with the interactive complexities of dealing with change over time.

It's one thing to carry out research, a far more complex issue to enact that wisdom that emerges from research. As far as I know, this is one the longest and largest systemic change efforts focused on teaching and learning. For understandable reasons, politics and personalities tend to get in the way of sustaining change efforts over time, the ETBI was chess-like in working together to make it happen.

So, for me, this was magical.

I also was more than moved and surprised by the collective thank you that was organized by the 'team' of the ETBI...the board of directors. What you pulled off, to say thank you, was heartfelt. As I said, when I left the University of Toronto, it was if I had never worked there, so the juxtaposition was suddenly evident. I should go back and see if they can compete with you created...heh!

What made it even more special, was including my wife, Jan Davies in that thank you. She really is a 'heart' person who always supported me in being involved. As some of you know, we met when I was invited in to teach her grade six (12-year-old) students. She said that her students liked me and so she asked me to have coffee. And, here we are, 52 years after I started teaching.

So, on behalf of Jan and myself, thank you sincerely for making the shift to the end of one's career so memorable.

Respectfully and with joy,

Barrie and Jan

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