

Sabbatical Report (Fall 2009 sabbatical)

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The focus of my Fall 2009 sabbatical was to complete most of the requirements toward becoming a Master Trainer with the Center of Dependable Strengths (CDS) in Seattle, Washington. In addition to completing certification requirements, I planned to complete a number of objectives related to adding breadth—and depth—to my knowledge of Dependable Strengths® (DS).

(For insight into the Dependable Strengths curriculum, please refer to my sabbatical application.)

Below, I will list the Master Trainer certification requirements, noting which ones I was able to complete in the fall. When I applied for the sabbatical, I stated that I would not be able to complete every requirement during my leave, yet I am pleased to report that I made significant progress toward my goal.

a. Possess DS Master Instructor (Level 3) certificate.

Completion plan: (Almost) Done! This requires me to facilitate DS outside of my normal constituency at least twice: the first was completed during my sabbatical at the University of Washington Career Center with UW alumni; the second will be completed in a June 21-25 training at the University of Oregon.

b. Receive recommendation for advancement to Level 5 by a present Master Trainer.

Completion plan: Done! I received a letter from Allen Boivin-Brown, President, Center for Dependable Strengths, in December 2008.

c. Co-facilitate two 5-day DS Instructor Trainings with Master Trainers.

Completion plan: Done! I co-facilitated the first workshop in Eugene on August 15-18, 2005. I co-facilitated the second training during my sabbatical at the University of Washington on October 26-30, 2009. This experience was the highlight of my sabbatical! Co-facilitating the five-day training with Allen Boivin-Brown, Sharon Allen-Felton (Counselor, Bellevue Community College), and Jerald Forster (Professor Emeritus, University of Washington) was both exhilarating and exhausting. They are phenomenal trainers and I gained valuable insight into effective facilitation/training strategies from observing their diverse styles and approaches. I appreciated their extremely positive feedback on my facilitation skills, as well as their constructive feedback on areas in which I can improve. The debriefing sessions each day were rich and productive, as we processed group dynamics and individuals' needs.

d. Act as the “lead” trainer and chair debriefing at least one day of these workshops.

Completion plan: Done! I completed this at the October 2009 UW training.

e. Submit report on this experience to CDS.

Completion plan: In process...I am currently writing this report.

f. Supervise and co-facilitate at least two DS workshops with a new DS instructor whom I have trained.

Completion plan: This requirement is being re-evaluated by the CDS Board and may not be required.

g. Submit a report on these experiences to CDS.

Completion plan: See (f).

h. Serve on a DS Executive Committee project or committee for an arranged period of time.

Completion plan: Done! I completed this requirement by attending two Executive Committee meetings during my sabbatical leave, as well as assisting in preparing for the 5-day October workshop. I am now an Ex-Officio member of the CDS Executive Board.

i. Make an original contribution to CDS based on my unique strengths.

Completion plan: Done (and ongoing)! The CDS Executive Board asked me to “develop a model for being a state leader for Dependable Strengths – the Oregon state CDS Representative...” as my original contribution. After numerous drafts and two board meeting discussions during my sabbatical leave, CDS and I signed an initial agreement in December 2009. I am now the “Oregon Representative” for the Center for Dependable Strengths.

j. Interview with CDS Executive Committee.

Completion plan: My plan is to attend this interview no later than August 2010, even though the Board has given me until December 2010 to attain this goal.

k. Receive approval for Master Trainer certification by the CDS Executive Committee.

Completion plan: My goal is to complete this final step no later than August 2010. See (j).

In addition to completing most of the Master Trainer certification requirements (listed above in a-k), I planned to accomplish the objectives listed below.

Training Experiences

In addition to co-facilitating the October 26-30, 2009 training, Allen Boivin-Brown had suggested three possibilities for co-facilitating other workshops during my sabbatical period. However, two of the possibilities never materialized. Luckily, the third one was offered and I co-facilitated a two-day workshop at the University of Washington Career Center for UW alumni. Collaborating with, and learning from, two Master Trainers was a fabulous experience—Sharon Allen-Felton (Bellevue Community College) and Vic Snyder (UW Career Center) provided positive and constructive feedback on my training style and I gained insight into facilitating DS with highly educated job seekers (most of the alumni had graduate degrees). This experience also gave me an outline and ideas for conducting similar workshops for local job seekers, Lane alumni, etc.

DS Contacts

Before submitting my sabbatical application, I contacted the following people who consented to speak with me during my sabbatical leave.

- Sharon Allen-Felton, Bellevue Community College. As it turned out, Sharon and I facilitated the five-day training together as well as the two-day alumni workshop. Thus, I gleaned vast insight from her as to how she uses DS at Bellevue and she provided valuable feedback to strengthen my facilitation skills. Because of the extensive work Sharon has done to integrate DS into the curriculum and services at Bellevue, she will continue to be an important contact for me as I expand my use of DS at Lane.
- Anne Scholl-Fiedler, Director, East Coast Regional Center for DS. Anne and I spoke briefly in the fall, but had our most in-depth conversation two weeks ago; now that I am in the “Oregon

Representative” role, I had much more in-depth questions for her about her trainings, promotions, and connections to CDS. Like Sharon, she will be an ongoing contact and resource for my work.

- Tami Palmer, Associate Director, Washington Occupational Information System. I did not connect with Tami during my sabbatical, but will in the future, when appropriate.
- Sara Fortin, Midwest Regional Center for Dependable Strengths. I did not connect with Sara during my sabbatical, but will in the future, when appropriate.
- Dean Summers, CDS Administrative Manager. Dean and I connected numerous times during the fall, both in-person at board meetings and trainings, and by phone. He is an incredible source of DS history and operational details; his insight, materials, and information have already helped me tremendously in crafting and implementing the Oregon representative position. I just received three emails from him last week!
- CDS Board of Directors/Executive Committee. In addition to the trainers mentioned above, I received positive feedback and support for my work from other DS Master Trainers whom I met at CDS board meetings: Katie Hearn-Zang, Vic Snyder, Bob Pack, Jerald Forster. All are excited about my continued involvement with CDS.
- Dependable Strengths Conference, Seattle. In actuality, I “kicked off” my fall sabbatical by attending the annual DS Conference last August. During the conference, I made numerous contacts with other trainers and instructors, as well as attended workshops related to using DS in organizations, using DS with social service populations and using the “Articulating Strengths Together” process (a new application of DS). This activity was not listed in my sabbatical application.

Readings and Research

In my sabbatical application, I provided a long list of readings and materials I planned to review to strengthen my knowledge of DS. I am pleased to report that I finished most of these readings, *except* for those shown in *italics* below:

- DS website and related links—www.dependablestrengths.org
- Research papers on DS and *Positive Psychology*.
- DS news articles on DS website.
- Bernard Haldane’s books: *How to Make a Habit of Success*, *Career Satisfaction and Success*
- Career Planning and Adult Development Journal, Fall 2003, Volume 19, Number 3.
- Videos to view—History of DS, Theory of DS, Jean Haldane, *DS in Elementary Schools*, South Africa DS Project, *DS and Organizational Development*

Additional Projects and Plans

- In my sabbatical plan, I proposed to “begin developing my ‘original contribution,’ by creating the role of CDS State Representative as a model for other states.” I did not plan to complete this in the fall; however, my involvement with CDS became a major focus of the Board’s fall agenda. In December, I signed an agreement with CDS and am now the “Oregon CDS Representative.” What that role will actually entail, outside of my work at Lane, will evolve over time, although I already have two activities planned to promote DS in the state: 1) I am presenting a DS workshop at the March 2010 Oregon Career Development Association conference and 2) I am planning Oregon’s first five-day DS Facilitator Training which will occur on June 21-25, 2010 at the University of Oregon.
- Another objective, during my leave, was to “investigate opportunities and develop contacts for future DS trainings/workshops, locally and regionally.” During the fall, I met with Cheryl Buhl, Director of the Oregon Career Information System; Krista Chronister, Assistant Professor, UO Counseling Psychology program; and Deb Chereck, Director, UO Career Center. All are

supportive of my goals to promote DS in the state and I will continue to connect with them as future plans evolve. There is still much more I want to—and need to—accomplish toward this goal.

- Another objective in my proposal involved “exploring opportunities to promote and integrate DS within Lane’s programs and curriculum.” Early on in my sabbatical, I realized that this objective was better accomplished once I returned from leave—starting in winter term—when I was actually on campus to connect with colleagues! I’ve begun conversations with Counseling faculty, as well as the First-Year Experience Project Team, about how DS could be integrated into our work. I expect these conversations to continue; my goal is to not only expand my own use of DS, but also to encourage other faculty to become DS Instructors. At Bellevue Community College, for example, the DS curriculum has been used effectively with “undeclared” students, as well as students on academic probation.
- During the fall, I planned to “craft a ‘strategic business/marketing plan,’ for promoting and conducting DS trainings as a Master Trainer.” This objective was not met, yet it will be important for me to create such a plan in my role as the CDS Representative in Oregon. This will be developed outside of my Lane work.
- Finally, I stated the goal of “developing a realistic timeline for completing the remaining Level 5-Master Trainer certification requirements.” When I set this objective, I had no idea that I would be so far along at this point; thus, a detailed timeline is no longer necessary.

In conclusion, my Fall Sabbatical was a valuable experience, both personally and professionally. I have much more confidence as a DS instructor/trainer and I look forward to expanding applications of the Dependable Strengths curriculum, both “inside” and “outside” of Lane.

As I stated in my sabbatical applications, the “best” way for me to share my sabbatical work would be to provide a “Dependable Strengths®” workshop to Lane employees, so that colleagues could experience this process firsthand. Thus, I would appreciate any ideas about how and when I could make this happen.

Thank you to everyone on the Professional Development/Sabbatical Committee for providing this sabbatical opportunity and supporting my professional growth!