

Dear Watershed Community,

Yesterday I sat down to have lunch with one of our students, and we got to talking about what was ahead for each of us that afternoon. He told me about the classes he had coming up; I talked about the meetings I had scheduled that afternoon. Then the discussion took a really fun turn. We started discussing the differences – and similarities – between classes and meetings. We asked each other, “What if we didn’t call them ‘classes’, but rather ‘meetings or workgroups’?” How might that reframe how we all approach them?

When we think of “classes,” certain images and expectations come to mind (in the most conventional classes):

- Of a teacher who knows all the answers, and students who are there to receive.
- Of a predetermined sequence of experiences with a predetermined end.
- With the primary outcome being student learning.

When we think of “meetings” (at least productive meetings!), we think of:

- A workgroup with a common goal, perhaps with a leader, but with different members contributing ideas, helping to build solutions.
- No predetermined end, because we build the answers together.
- With the outcome being all participants learning – and that learning is happening in service of working on a bigger issue/challenge.

How might we rethink our work together if, instead of having a “Geometry class” and a “Borders class,” we were members of a “Geometry workgroup” and a “Borders workgroup” that had meetings that afternoon. Maybe it’s just me, but that feels different! And, I think it feels more true to what we aim to do in our courses at Watershed.

Thanks for coming along on my little intellectual excursion (of semi-formed thoughts).

And thank you to my lunch partner yesterday for sparking and contributing to these thoughts!

Warmly,

Tim