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Sustaining the Spirit and Your Teaching

Each issue of our Alumni Newsletter will bring real-life teachers building spirit, creating and sustaining purpose, and honoring the capacity to give within their classrooms or community. The Mission and Vision of our

Master of Education in Teaching and Learning Program is the foundation of our newsletter. The building of the reading material will come from our alumni. We want to hear from you – hear of your successes and your challenges, and how your commitment to honor the spirit at work with your students, staff, and school community continue to reflect our Program's Values and Vision.

This issue will focus on engagement with differentiation by providing articles and websites for more in depth work. The next issue, January 2007, will focus on assessment, so send in your real life stories dealing with assessment in your classrooms. The second issue for 2007 will be online in April and lesson study along with meaningful end-of-year activities will be our focus. Contact medalumni@smumn.edu for forms and directions to add to our newsletters.

Survey Says....

A few months ago, the M.Ed. Program Office conducted a survey with our current students. We asked them how they heard about Saint Mary's University Master of Education in Teaching and Learning Program. **The most popular answer was: Alumnus of the M.Ed. Program.** Thank you for sharing with others your wonderful experiences.

We shared with you in the last "Alumni News" that we will be starting 12 new learning communities this fall. For a complete list of learning community locations and a list of upcoming information sessions, please visit our website: med.smumn.edu.

The Director's Corner



"Top 20 by 2012"

Under the leadership of our new President, Brother Craig J. Franz, FSC, PH.D., teaching excellence is becoming a central focus of the university through the ambitious goal of "Top 20 by 2012." This initiative is a commitment on the part of all at the university to have Saint Mary's known as one of the top 20 teaching universities in the county by the year 2012. To reach this goal all staff members will need to commit themselves to improvement and innovation. We are committed to providing outstanding teaching for all students attending the university, both at the undergraduate level and the graduate level.

This is an ambitious goal. It is a goal, however, we believe with the leadership from Brother Craig Franz that we can realize in our centenary year, 2012. Working towards being one of the top 20 teaching institutions in the country is indeed ambitious, but we also know that it is attainable if we all work together.

With this goal in mind, I am asking you as Alumni to work with us as a university, and more importantly, with the Master of Education Program. In the upcoming year we will be sharing with you through our *M.Ed. Alumni News* information as to how you may become involved, including how you may share your talents both with adult learners and with learners connected to the undergraduate program. We will be engaging you in updates and information regarding what is happening to strengthen our teaching at Saint Mary's as we work towards our "Top 20 x 2012" goal. We will be asking for your insights and engaging you in the process so that, collectively, we can achieve our goal together. In order for us to continue to grow programmatically, it is teachers like yourself, persons committed to student learning and effective teaching, we hope to engage in further conversation and dialogue as to how we can continually meet all needs of educators.

In President Brother Craig's inaugural address, he shared the following:

"Great learning comes from great teaching. As mentors, guides, instructors, coaches, encouragers, arbiters, counselors, animators, examiners, inquisitors, probers, enliveners, and helpers, teachers are the ones who encourage us to achieve the incredible by attempting the barely believable."

Please join the university and the Master of Education in Teaching and Learning Program in our commitment to making Saint Mary's University one of the very best teaching institutions. In order to make this happen, we value you, our alumni, as working partners, and look forward to accomplishing future initiatives together.

Suzanne Peterson
Program Director



SMU Ranked 30th by U.S. News

Saint Mary's has once again been recognized as a top tier institution according to U.S. News & World Report magazine's new "America's Best Colleges" rankings for 2007. The annual listing of more than 1,400 schools is available online at www.usnews.com.

Saint Mary's is tied at 30th among the 70 institutions in the "Master's Universities -- Top Midwestern" category. This category is for institutions that provide a full range of undergraduate and master's programs but offer a limited number of doctoral programs. The university's ranking is up from last year, when we tied at 37th.

The U.S. News rankings are based on several key measures of quality including: peer assessment, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources and alumni giving.



Would you like to share a celebration with the alumni community? Perhaps you have received an award, earned a promotion, published an article, finished a marathon, recently engaged or married, or had a baby. We would love to celebrate it with you. OR...if you know of a fellow alumnus who has accomplished something noteworthy and would like to share it with us, we would like to hear about it. We would also enjoy hearing from our facilitators - past and present. Please send your celebrations, or the celebrations of others, to the M.Ed. Program Office at medalumni@smumn.edu.

SMU is Best in the Midwest

Saint Mary's is one of 163 schools receiving the "Best in the Midwest" designation from the Princeton Review, a national college-ranking program.

Each year, The Princeton Review profiles colleges and universities that "uphold the standards of the Best Midwestern College distinction and provide students with a wide breadth of excellent schools to consider." Results are based on student opinion surveys and data collection from 656 schools. For more information, please visit the following website: www.princetonreview.com. The website gives a profile of Saint Mary's, along with student opinions and useful college selection features.

Corey Schneider, 2005 graduate from the Eagan 2 Learning Community married Heidi Rebischke May 27, 2006 in Minnetonka.

Jill Anderson, 2006 graduate from the Anoka 7 Learning Community, and her husband Aaron, welcomed the birth of their son, Brady James Anderson on June 2, 2006.

Michelle Saxton, 2006 graduate from the Minneapolis 7 Learning Community married Nicholas Keenan July 22, 2006 at Maple Grove Covenant Church.

Jeff Fink, GPDE Instructor, recently had his manual "Breaking the Cycle of Disruptive Behavior" published by Diane Gossen (www.realrestitution.com). It was written in order to stop the ineffective cycle of merely removing students from the classroom. The guide offers schools a philosophy, a direction, and a format for helping students who struggle with their behavior become more successful.

Suzanne Peterson, M.Ed. Program Director, **Pat Christiansen** and **Roger Peckover**, M.Ed. Associate Program Directors, and **Louise Covert**, M.Ed. Facilitator were published in the Academic Exchange Quarterly. The Article is titled "A Constructivist Pathway to Teacher Leadership".

For the fourth consecutive year, members of the M.Ed. Development Team were fortunate enough to have their research writing accepted for presentation at the AERA Conference that was held in San Francisco, California. The contributing authors were: **Roger Peckover**, **Suzanne Peterson**, **Pat Christiansen** and **Marilyn Jacobson**. The professional paper presented is titled: "Self Study: Structuring Interdependence and Generativity to Construct the "Public Good.""



✓ Educators! We Need Your Stories

Saint Mary's is creating a page-a-day calendar for teachers and would like to include stories and anecdotes from our alumni, students, and faculty. Please go to www.smumn.edu/educator-stories to share YOUR stories. We want to hear them!

Education Minnesota 2006



The Education Minnesota Professional Conference, "We Can Do It!" is scheduled for October 19-20 at the St. Paul River Centre.

The annual conference attracts 10,000+ teachers, student teachers and other educators. It's the only two-day comprehensive professional development opportunity in the state.

The Graduate Programs in Education of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota are pleased to announce that we will be in attendance at the Minnesota Conference, and we invite you to stop by and visit our booths #439, #441, #538 and #540 on Thursday, October 19 from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Northwestern Wisconsin Education Association Conference

The Master of Education in Teaching and Learning Program of Saint Mary's will be attending the 16th annual NWEA Conference scheduled for October 12-13, 2006. The conference will be held at Memorial

High School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. There are approximately 4,000 educators that attend this conference. We invite you to stop by and visit our booth.

Thoughts and Prayers

It is with great sadness to share with you that **Marilyn Peplau**, M.Ed. Facilitator, lost her father-in-law, Karl F. Peplau on July 6, 2006 resulting from pneumonia.

Our deepest sympathy to **Joe Epping**, M.Ed. Facilitator. Joe lost his wife, Paula Epping on September 10, 2006 after a long battle with cancer.



"A good teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others."



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Visit the M.Ed. website for information on alumni happenings, course descriptions, learning communities and websites.

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Fall 2006 Seminars

Reading Comprehension in the Elementary Classroom

Anoka: October 7

Reading Comprehension in the Secondary Classroom

Minneapolis: October 7

Rochester: November 4

Motivate the Mind and the Body

Minneapolis: October 28

Winona: November 11

The Basics of Action Research

Apple Valley: November 4

Coaching For Instructional Improvement

Winona: October 7

All Seminars are held from 8:30-12:00.

Real Life Teacher Story - Differentiation- Honoring a Story Dealing with Instruction

“Hmmm, I don’t know, Regis. I’ll need to take the 50/50.” “Okay, computer, please take away two incorrect answers. The computer has taken away A and C, leaving you with B and D.” “Regis, I will say B and make that my final answer.” “You are correct! We are now moving on to the \$150,000 question.”

This very familiar scenario sounds like a segment from the popular TV game show, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, but actually it was a special education grade school student talking himself through a science test. In an effort to take the test independently, this student would simulate being a contestant on Who Wants to be a Millionaire. Using echolalia, he navigated himself through the questions on the test by reciting verbatim the lines used by the show’s host, Regis Philbin. In both the special education and regular education classrooms, instructional accommodations were made so that this particular student could demonstrate his knowledge of the content in a way which was most conducive to his learning style.

Across the room that very same year sat another male student who struggled with anger management issues, learning disabilities, and an emotional/behavioral disorder. He came from a self-contained EBD program and arrived at our school without any past academic records; the administration’s best efforts to obtain these documents were unsuccessful. The physical and emotional needs, when compared to the first student, were worlds apart, but all educators in their classrooms were called to be efficacious, and in both cases their learning needs were just as great.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle in meeting the needs of these two students was determining how they best learned. Then, as a professional educator, how could I align my teaching practice, classroom management and classroom environment with their preferred styles of learning as well as consider the needs of the other students in my classroom? This is a task most educators find themselves considering at the beginning of each and every school year.

To help both of these two students, information was provided through data collected from “point sheets” and student incident logs which were kept on both of them. The point sheet was done as a way to monitor student behaviors throughout the day and allow input from educators outside of my own classroom. Points earned were used toward the “purchase” of small prizes from the EBD teacher’s classroom store at the end of each week. The student incident log was used to document any problems that would arise throughout the day. The date, time and description of any incidents were logged on the form and kept in my desk. Both of these sources provided a great deal of information about times of difficulty and potential situations that required close adult monitoring. This was determined by watching for patterns that emerged on the data collection forms.

Every school year children enter their respective classrooms as a puzzle waiting to be solved. It is my belief that every child is placed in my room, under my care and instruction, for a reason. I am granted one hundred eighty days to figure out what that reason is, and the clock is ticking. I once believed that having a classroom with nice neat rows and quiet students meant that learning was taking place. I have come to realize that learning is demonstrated through a variety of different means, most of which require me to be vigilant and seek ways to understand each child’s unique learning style.

Online Insights

- http://www.teach-nology.com/litined/dif_instruction/ Provides educational literature in support of differentiated instruction.
- www.teach-nology.com At the main page, enter 'differentiation' in the search box and it will lead to articles and tutorials dealing with differentiation.
- www.differentiatedinstruction.com/ Offers differentiated instructional resources, a Staff Development for Educators site.
- <http://school.discovery.com> A Discovery Education site.

Early Childhood

Beyond Gaming: A Technology Explosion in Early Childhood Classrooms by Nancy Hertzog and Marjorie Klein. Gifted Child Today, Summer 2005.

Hertzog and Klein provide examples of how they have integrated technology into their early childhood program at University Primary School, which is affiliated with The University of Illinois. Their goal was to incorporate technology to “engage young children in creative and critical thinking.” Their results were more than expected.

Elementary Teachers

Invitations to Understanding: Explorations in the Teaching of Arts to Children by Nadine Kalin and Sylvia Kind. Art Education, May 2006.

A Saturday Art Program, part of an undergraduate art education course, titled Explorations in the Teaching of Arts to Children, offers valuable insight between theory and practice. “Through interaction, observation, reflection, and reading, teachers interrogate their taken-for-granted notions of art learning and teaching.” The use of observation, documentation and reflection gives teacher “opportunities for understanding beyond the surface of an activity” or lesson.

It All Adds Up: Connecting Math Homework to the Community by Gail Zimmerman, Responsive Classroom Newsletter, August 2006.

Does math homework need to be worksheets or pages of problems from the textbook? Zimmerman says “NO”. She gives some simple yet practical examples of how to use items in your students’ homes or neighborhoods to assist with understanding math skills. Examples are given for kindergarten and first grade, second and third, and fourth thru sixth grades. Some of the examples are adaptations from Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4 – 14, A Resource for Parents and Teachers by Chip Wood.

It’s in the Bag, by Maribelle H. Betterton and Lynne C. Ensworth. Teaching Pre K– 8, April 2006.

Thematic literacy bags were a successful and effective project for integrating language arts, learning styles, multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction for these two elementary teachers. The project became an all school project as older students assisted in the creation and decoration of 35 bags using seven themes.



All Teachers

[Grading and Differentiation: Paradox or Good Practice? By Carol Ann Tomlinson. Theory into Practice, Summer 2005.](#)

Tomlinson, the well-known author of differentiation, addresses key concepts and assumptions in both areas – differentiated instruction and grading – and how teachers can and should apply both. “Differentiated instruction is a philosophy of teaching purporting that students learn best when their teachers effectively address variance in students’ readiness levels, interest and learning profile preferences.” (Tomlinson, 2001, 2003) “Grading is the assignment of symbolic numbers or letters at the end of a specified period of time, that will serve as a summary statement of evaluations made of students.”(Marzano, 2000).

[Adapting Your Teaching to Any Learning Style by David G. Ebeling. Phi Delta Kappan, Bloomington, Nov. 2000.](#)

According to Ebeling, teachers have two choices – to teach as they have and hope for success or to adapt their teaching to meet their students’ needs and learning styles. A 4 step plan is listed with clear suggestions and nine possible adaptable techniques for increasing student understanding, the ultimate goal of all teachers. Ebeling is the author of Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms, 1993.

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Middle School Teachers

Using Multilevel Young Adult Literature in Middle School American Studies by Marshall A. George and Andi Stix. The Social Studies, January /February 2000.

An experienced social studies teacher, close to feeling burnt out, decided to change his instruction in American Studies class. With the help of a staff developer, this teacher changed the physical and emotional environment of his room to make it more child centered, and began to integrate young adult literature into his American studies classes. This allowed students choice and allowed the teacher to teach to small groups using cooperative learning strategies. As a result, he is a better teacher, meeting the various needs of his students, and teaching to their learning styles.

Secondary Teachers

Planning Differentiated, Multicultural Instruction for Secondary Inclusive Classrooms, by Delinda van Garderen and Catharine Whittaker. Teaching Exceptional Children, January/February 2006.

Discussed in this article are the components of differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and multicultural education and how they can be combined to assist teachers with meeting the individual needs of students with different backgrounds in the general education curriculum. Included are illustrations – plans, samples, and templates – that teachers could use.

Busting Myths about Differentiated Instruction by Rick Wormeli. Principal Leadership, March 2005. Differentiated instruction is often misunderstood, so Wormeli (author of Summarization in any Subject) addresses ten of the most common misperceptions in an easy to read format for educators beginning to consider using differentiation in their classrooms.

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