

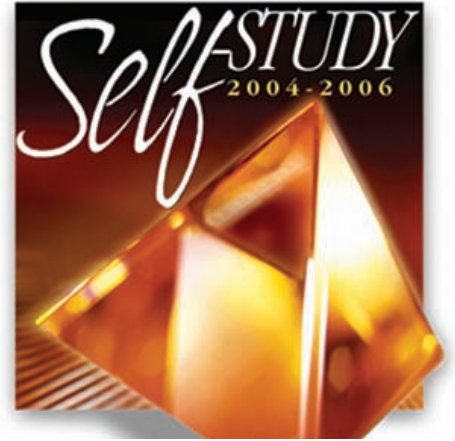


Saint Mary's
University
OF MINNESOTA

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A team of consultant-evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC) has completed its site visit for reaccreditation at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. The team was at the university on Oct. 23-25.



Sr. Francis Marie Thrailkill, president of the College of Mount Saint Joseph and visiting team chair, remarked on the outstanding hospitality extended to the team by the university community. She also commended the faculty, staff and students attending the open meetings: "There is knowledge, enthusiasm, and obviously an openness and an evident desire to make this institution even better through this process of self-study and the visit."

The team will make a written report with findings and recommendations to the Higher Learning Commission, and Saint Mary's will be notified of the HLC's decision regarding reaccreditation in spring 2007, following HLC board approval.

The five-person visiting team was comprised of university administrators and faculty from peer institutions and trained by the HLC. Prior to their site visit, the team was provided a detailed self-study document prepared by the university. Once at the university, the team visited with faculty, staff, administrators and students at both the Winona and Twin Cities campuses. The site visit was the culmination of two years of self-evaluation undertaken by the university for the purpose of seeking reaccreditation and for improvement in its operations.

The Director's Corner

Wishing For a Prosperous Year



When the clocks strike twelve on December 31st, people all over the world cheer and wish each other a very Happy New Year. For some, this event is no more than a change of a calendar. But for many others, the New Year symbolizes the beginning of a better tomorrow. With the start of the New Year we are all making new resolutions and goals. It is

on New Year's Day that many people accept that happiness is from the achievement of values. That is why we resolve to be healthier, more ambitious and more confident. We all want to enjoy the sense of purpose, accomplishment and pleasure especially when we feel that we are achieving the goals and values that we set for ourselves. It is the happiness that is the purpose of life and it's New Year's Day, more than any other day that makes the attainment of happiness more real and possible.

With the start of the New Year, the Master of Education program will continue to build a community of excellence centered on our unique vision and mission. As a university, teaching excellence is a central focus through the ambitious goal of "Top 20 by 2012." In order for us to successfully reach this goal, we are committed to providing outstanding teaching for all graduate students attending the university.

As a valued Alumnus and committed educator, we will be asking for your thoughtful insights, keen perceptions and engaging you in the process as we work toward institutional and program improvement so that we may continue to better serve future learners. As working partners, we look forward to beginning future initiatives together as we strive to meet the needs of educators.

We wish you much, Peace, Health and Happiness in 2007.

With warm regards,

Suzanne Peterson
Program Director



January 2007 Learning Communities

For the fourth consecutive year the M.Ed. Program will be starting learning communities in January. The learning community locations for January 2007 are Albert Lea, Anoka, and Apple Valley. All three of the learning communities have openings.

The M.Ed. Program will be starting several learning communities in the Fall of 2007. For more information on joining a learning community or attending an information session, please visit our website: med.smumn.edu.

Thoughts and Prayers

David Jackson, M.Ed. Facilitator, lost his father Harold S. Jackson on October 30, 2006. Our sympathy to the Jackson family.

Roger Reuvers, M.Ed. Facilitator, lost his mother-in-law, Barbara Jean (Schultz) Rondeau on December 17, 2006. Our sympathy to the family.

Loralu Meyers, M.Ed. Facilitator, lost her step-mother Ellen V. (Budion) Wildenauer on December 24, 2006.

Celebrations



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.

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Take twelve whole months. Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate, and jealousy. Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once. Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.

Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work. Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness. Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed. Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cup full of good humor.

Pour all of this into a vessel of love. Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness. You're bound to have a happy new year.

Author Unknown

Frances Ness, 2004 graduate of the Albert Lea Learning Community, married Jason Heilman January 14, 2006. Congratulations Frances and Jason Heilman!

Mark Drommerhausen, 2002 graduate of the Stillwater 2 Learning Community, accepted a principal position at Anderson Elementary School with Stillwater Public Schools. Congratulations, Mark!

Shawn Hovland, 2003 graduate of the St. Cloud 2 Learning Community, married Voni Thorsten November 4, 2006. Congratulations Shawn and Voni Hovland!

Pat Christiansen, Brenda Fischer, Marilyn Jacobson, Roger Peckover, Suzanne Peterson, M.Ed. Development Team, has had its research paper, "Self-Study Networks: Scaffolding the Generative Capacity of Teachers," accepted through competitive review for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in the spring of 2007. This marks the fifth consecutive year the team will be presenting program-based research at AERA.

Extended Thank You

The M.Ed. Program Office would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the alumni and facilitators who assisted in the Self-Study-HLC visit October 23-25.

Alumni who visited the campus and assisted:

Barbara Kittelson, Abe Rodemeyer, Jill Riesgraf, Jim Dusso, Stephen Pattee, Sara Zeimetz-Schaudenecker, and Tanya Dayland.

Facilitators who visited the campus and assisted:

Dave Jackson, Janel Schultz, Greg Lenn, Dennis Rickert, and Jan Olson.

Dr. Stephen Brookfield



On Friday, November 3, 2006, several M.Ed. Facilitators and Leadership Team members participated in a Faculty Development Conference with Dr. Stephen Brookfield, distinguished university professor at the University of St. Thomas.

He challenged us to use a variety of teaching and learning methods with adult education. From his next text, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, he modeled several techniques: Circle of Voices, Conversation Moves, and Circular. As a group we found several effective discussion techniques that are already being used in the M.Ed. Program and several that have potential for implementation into the M.Ed. Program.

Structured Pre-reading, Periods of Reflective Silence, the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ), and Ground Rules for Discussion were topics discussed by Dr. Brookfield which are presently utilized in the M.ED. Program. Other structured activities such as The Circle of Voices, Conversational Moves and Conversational Roles which were taken from his book were discussed and practiced with the group. These activities have potential for improving the discussion and reflective practices which are foundational in the M.Ed. Program.

He led us in many provocative discussions to which there are no simple answers. He suggested one of the best ways he knows to establish good discussion skills is to model these behaviors. We must initiate people into a culture of speaking, especially the introverted learner. He will invite colleagues into his classroom to show students how to comment from different authors' vantages, making connecting statements, and reframing the words of another participant. Establishing ground rules through the use of a Give, Want, Expect, and Need (GWEN) process also becomes an element of establishing quality dialogue environments.

He reminded us that "discussion is an untamable beast". We must be prepared for a discussion to go in any direction and be prepared to debrief both negative and positive discussions. A tool that he used to measure the emotional impact of any discussion is an exit Critical Incident Questionnaire. Report your findings back to your students at the next session. He affirmed the fact that on all responses the range of responses vary. Some who love one method of learning don't like others and vice versa.

His presentation was very affirming. It supported many beliefs that we hold in the M.Ed. program. Many processes that we used are similar to those that he shared.

Alumni, Facilitators, and students are encouraged to visit Dr. Brookfield's website at: www.stephenbrookfield.com – click on link "Workshop Materials, Power Points & Book Extracts." Then click on the "Discussion as a Way of Teaching". Those a part of the Saint Mary's University Community are encouraged to download files from his website on discussion.

Article written by: Jennifer Braun and John Headlee, M.Ed. Facilitators



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



Inquiry into Teaching and Learning Conference

One way for professional educators to celebrate learning and engage in professional development is to attend the annual conference on teaching and learning at Champlin Park High School. The conference invites educators to join seminar leaders in round table discussions, forums, or Socratic seminars where they will facilitate dialogues related to educational issues and topics that affect their daily practice. Conference participants will engage in reading, professional dialogue, and shared learning related to the action research learning of the seminar leaders. Participants will be expected to read materials that support the seminar leader's action research area for learning. GPDE 5134 is available for one semester graduate credit. GPDE 5135 is available for two semester graduate credits.

Don't miss this exceptional learning opportunity!

Recommended for: All Educators

Course Focus: Teacher Inquiry and Collaboration

Note: The conference is open to those educators who are not currently enrolled in the M.Ed. program.

Champlin Park High School, Champlin
March 31 (8 am - 5 pm), April 1 (9 am - Noon)
Contact Michelle Reuter at 1-877-218-4755 or mreuter@smumn.edu for registration information.

Inquiry in Education- GPDE 5134 (1 cr.)

Conference participants will engage in reading, professional dialogue, and shared learning related to the conference seminar leader's action research learning. Participants will access required readings on the conference website and participate in the conference sessions.

Connecting Inquiry to Practice - GPDE 5135 (2 cr.)

Conference participants will engage in reading, professional dialogue, and shared learning related to the conference seminar leader's action research learning. Participants will access required readings on the conference website and participate in the conference sessions. In addition to attending the conference, participants in GPDE 5135 will develop a reflective summary and plan that communicates their learning and shares a plan for their continued inquiry and development.

For more information on GPDE courses visit the GPDE Website: gpde.smumn.edu.

For more information on the M.Ed. Conference visit the M.Ed. Conference Website: medconference.org.

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

Being a teacher too often implies that the learning process is one way, teacher to student. The reciprocity of learning is easily overlooked by the casual observer. It is this very give and take between teacher and student that intrigues and keeps me lured into the adventure and ongoing challenge of teaching. Like any adventure, however, in teaching there is always the potential for disappointment and setback, as well as for success and personal satisfaction for meeting and dealing appropriately with the challenges. Still, as in life, the way which we as teachers choose to face our challenges determines what we will learn. As a young teacher, I quickly learned that the lessons imparted in the teaching process are often outside the realm of what one might have expected, and these inadvertent lessons can have a profound influence on one's life. One particular lesson for me came with the suddenness of a heavy blow; the impact has never left me.

A school is a place where the energy of youth reaches such a frenetic pace that it is often impossible not to gain a sense of euphoria that is fed by the energy. Although all students exude a vibrancy or vital energy that can be contagious, some have an indescribable zest for life that is seemingly palpable. The adventure of a classroom begins in the exploration of trying to understand the mix and complexities of personalities that form friendships and lasting connections. These very connections are important as they are instrumental in providing the framework for the exploration of subject matter, for the learning which will be pursued together as a class. It takes time for these intricate relationships to form, to evolve, but they become evident as the classroom community forms. While I find that each of my classes has its own particular uniqueness, I can still recall my encounter with a seventh grade class and particular student who stood out both as a challenge and an opportunity. I met this student during my fifth year as a classroom teacher.

When a young person stands outside of the roles stereotypically associated with good students, challenge coupled with opportunities present themselves in the classroom. Despite not fitting any obvious mold, these students have other traits that naturally make people gravitate toward them. The more I got to know this young man in my class, the more I enjoyed him. His grades were never much above the passing level and his behavior was often less than exemplary, yet he had the interpersonal skills and an uncanny ability to be with people that allowed him to move forward as a person. This young man's presence seemed to warm the class, even though there were times when he made random comments and needed frequent redirection. He brought the class to life, and his energy was communicable. Over the next two years I maintained contact with this student. We shared similar interests and the conversations flowed easily, naturally. He continued to drop by and visit before and after school. I always looked forward to our interactions when we would discuss our passions for the outdoors.

In spring, we tend to look for new life and a renewed sense of vigor. Instead, several springs ago, our school was covered in a pall. We had lost a student, the student I had taught and with whom I had shared many conversations. His death struck with a suddenness and decisiveness that left our entire community reeling. People were left unprepared and unable to comprehend the loss of a once vibrant and active young man. There was no description for what I and others were experiencing. Through the darkness and fear, the lesson began to emerge.

The lesson that there are not an infinite number of days on this earth truly became clear to me then. We must remember to live our lives with an energy reflective of this knowledge. It should not bog us down and hinder our ability to live freely, but rather it should serve as a reminder to slow down and recognize the gift of life and friends. I miss this student and thank him for the gift he imparted to me through the process of teaching, the gift of living for the day.

Online Insights

- www.edutopia.org/modules/assessment is a site from The George Lucas Educational Foundation, one will find authentic assessment ideas and examples.
- www.thewritingsite.org The Writing Site, provides practice in scoring or assessment of writing in grades 3-8.
- <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> This site allows the creator to have and edit rubrics with free registration.
- <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/rubrics/weblessons.htm> is part of a Webquest workshop guiding educators through rubrics.
- www.phschool.com/professional_development/assessment/ is a link at Prentice Hall School with highlights of performance assessment and portfolio-based assessment.

Elementary Science

Biome is Where the Art Is by Kelly Gooden, Science and Children, September 2005.

Gooden, an elementary teacher and adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida, has found her units taught on biomes to be successful in integrating life science, Earth Science, geography and also art. By using only torn paper and glue, her students are able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of biomes. Limited English proficiency or below-level literacy skills are successful demonstrating without being tested on their reading or writing skills. The unit meets National Science Education Standards.

Elementary Reading Assessment

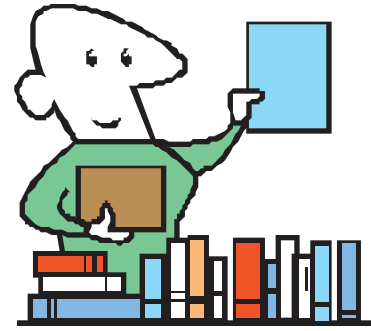
Focused Anecdotal Records Assessment, A Tool for Standards-based Authentic Assessment, by Paul Boyd-Batstone, the Reading Teacher, November 2004.

Authentic assessment of reading skills is defined, discussed and supported with workable examples using the author's Anecdotal Records Assessment (ARA). The author guides the reader through management, analysis and application of ARA. Also included are usable charts with reading verbs and helpful abbreviations.

Elementary Reading Assessment

Critical Reflection in the Elementary Grades: A New Dimension in Literature Discussions by Penny Silvers, Language Arts, July 2001.

In this action research project, with a social justice focus, this author realized how much her students were partners in the process. Raising her students' awareness of their own biases allowed them to address ways to handle them before they occur. "When one's assumptions are brought to the surface, identified, examined, discussed and self-evaluated, there is the potential for deeper personal understanding."



Secondary Writing

Teaching English in the World by Kenneth Lindblom, English Journal, September 2004.

Writing for the real world or writing for school, which one? Should they be different? "School writing is often disconnected from and unlike writing done for the world outside school. This disconnection has encouraged development of a separate set of rules for writing that operate only in school or among those for whom school writing is treated as real writing." This article gives suggestions for effective writing work, at a high school level that stresses the need for students to understand the difference of effective factors for writing. Lindblom cites Wiggins and his book, *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance*, which we have in our professional library.

Elementary Art

Learning to Question by Karen Ernst, Teaching Pre K – 8, November, December 1997.

Learning to question one's teaching strategies along with teaching critical questioning to students encouraged changes in the curriculum for this art teacher. Ernst has found that when her students are "invested in their work, they show they can look back, take pride, compare and describe the differences they see and feel."

**Master of Education in
Teaching & Learning**

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*“...the most
meaningful
and empowering
experience
of our lives.”*

Elementary Math

Maths on a Mat by Matt Skoss, Mathematics Teaching, Sept. 2005.

This teaching strategy combines kinesthetic learning and co-operative learning as it allows children to construct their own mathematical concepts and offers multiple representations of math ideas. The author felt inspired after reading a paper from the 1993 Mathematical Association of Victoria Conference. He made a mat from a large piece of woven plastic floor cloth with 10 x 5 squares, each 70 cm x 70 cm. Examples for using the mat, across all learning levels, include ideas such as geometric shapes, bilateral symmetry, functions, and graphing.

Assessment

The Trouble with Rubrics by Alfie Kohn, English Journal, March 2006.

Kohn discusses the pros and cons of using rubrics as the way to eliminate grading. After reviewing the use of rubrics, he believes that rubrics “actually help to legitimate grades by offering a new way to derive them” and that “rubrics are, above all, a tool to promote standardization.” Using this article, as a compare and contrast of rubric use, could be helpful in forming that valued foundation of assessment.

Grading to Communicate, by Tony Winger, Educational Leadership, November 2005.

Great questions leap out while reading this article:

- Does grading interfere with learning?
- Do grades provide accurate feedback?
- Do grades measure what we value most?

The author, an instructional coach and social studies teacher at a high school in Littleton, Colorado, addresses these questions with prior experience and with new ideas making connections to goals of student knowledge, skills, reasoning and understandings. Addressed are also the management of homework, late work and extra credit. “If we want to keep the focus on learning, we must not depend on grades to motivate our students.”

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