

2008-2009 Marian Wright Teaching Circles

Final Summary
July 15, 2009

Early Childhood Leadership: Assessment, Documentation and Evaluation ~ Facilitator: Aviva Dorfman, Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education

The faculty of the Early Childhood Department and the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) has been meeting together in the teaching circle setting for three consecutive years. They continue to study topics of a shared interest and strive to establish and maintain collegial relationships across their units. This year, the group focused on assessment, specifically portfolio assessment as they are working to design a portfolio process for students at the ECDC.

Environment as the Third Teacher ~ Facilitator: Della Becker-Cornell, Director, Early Childhood Development Center

The goal of this circle was to research how to design early childhood classroom environments that provide a variety of sensory experiences in an aesthetically pleasing manner, using both indoors and outdoors as learning spaces. The book, "Designs for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments" by Deb Curtis was purchased and utilized by circle members to guide their work. In addition to regular monthly meetings, the group also took a day-trip to visit three separate childcare facilities in the Ann Arbor area.

Community Building in Teacher Preparation ~ Facilitator: Barbara Cherem, Assistant Professor, Education

This circle used the book, "Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs" by Linda Darling-Hammond as their focal point. The book study allowed for continued community building amongst faculty as they explored best practices in teacher education.

Critical Political Economy of the Current Global Crisis ~ Facilitator: Derwin Munroe, Lecturer, Political Science

The purpose of this teaching circle was to explore different ways to teach students about the multifarious dimensions of the current global crisis. Recent contributions to the academic literatures from economics, political science, global studies and sociology that addressed a range of topics were explored. Members of the circle read and discussed the following books:

Violence: Big Ideas/Small Books by Slavoj Zizek

Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle of the World Food System by Raj Patel

The Great Financial Crisis: Causes and Consequences by Jeremy Bellamy Foster

Peer Review of Teaching ~ Facilitator: Tom Ruediger, Instructor cum Assistant Professor, Physical Therapy

This teaching circle examined the barriers and opportunities to implementing peer review of teaching in the School of Health Professions and Studies. The faculty were able to develop a working draft of Peer Review Guidelines for SHPS, which was presented at the May governing faculty meeting. This endeavor was vital to the support of the university's commitment to excellence in teaching. To assist their work, the faculty utilized the book, "Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook," by Nancy Chism.

Exploring the Political Writings of Tariq Ali ~ Facilitator: Ananth Aiyer, Associate Professor,
Anthropology

This group of faculty focused their discussions on the political writings of Tariq Ali, 2008-09 Winegarden Visiting Professor. Tariq Ali has written on a variety of topics on issues from around the world, past and present, in literary, journalistic, and social scientific articles and books. His recent political works focus on the unfolding turmoil in Latin America and South Asia, including the changing roles of U.S. policies and imperial politics, and explores their impact on citizens in Latin America, Pakistan/Afghanistan, and the U.S. Faculty participants were engaged in exploring the pedagogical relevance of Tariq Ali's writings, and used it as a forum to facilitate faculty/student engagement and involvement during Ali's visit in 2009.

Budgetary information:

During the 2008-09 academic year, the teaching circles expended a total of \$2,080.50. Approximately \$630.00 went towards refreshments for meetings and \$1,450 went toward purchase of books and other materials (one circle has been granted an extension and will utilize their allotted funds prior to August 15, 2009).