

2011-2012 Marian Wright Teaching Circles

The Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching is pleased to announce that eight teaching circles have formed for the 2011-2012 academic year. It is not too late to join a circle if you see one that interests you – just contact the facilitator directly, at the email provided.

Making Children's Learning Visible ~ Facilitator: Della Becker-Cornell, Early Childhood Development Center, dellac@umflint.edu

As a Reggio Inspired program, the curriculum at the Early Childhood Development Center can be hard to define to families, our student staff, and the campus community. As we maintain our focus toward the kindergarten standards, describing our curriculum and being able to articulate its value in early childhood will be our focus for this Teaching Circle. After defining our curriculum, we will explore different assessment options to find the right tool that will help us document what we are teaching in the Reggio way. We want to make sure that children's learning is visible to all who encounter the ECDC.

Developing a FYE that Focuses on Teaching ~ Facilitator: Laura McLeman, Mathematics, lauramcl@umflint.edu

Based on their love of kids and/or their love of content, among other things, each year many students enter the university with an interest in pursuing a career in the teaching profession. Yet, the university does not provide an experience early on in the students' academic career that exposes them to the field of teaching. This is an important consideration since students who are interested in teaching may progress through years of coursework without the benefit of a classroom experience. This teaching circle will develop a proposal for a First Year Experience (FYE) that focuses on providing students who are interested in education with appropriate classroom experiences and exposure to multiple disciplinary lenses through which they can view the institution of education and profession of teaching. In particular, we will brainstorm goals for this FYE as well as discuss the logistics involved in incorporating within our FYE experiential learning within a k-12 classroom. Our end goal will be to have a completed FYE proposal to submit to our unit's curriculum committee and the General Education Curriculum Committee.

Parker Palmer Across Disciplines ~ Facilitator: Shelby Newport, Theatre & Dance, snewport@umflint.edu

After our participation in the TCLT Catalyst Course Design Program, a group of 2nd year Tenure Track Faculty (although not limited to this group) are interested in exploring the ideas of Parker Palmer further. In Fall 2011, we plan to read *The Courage to Teach* and discuss common threads at our meetings. Then we would find pieces of the text that could be directly applied to our Winter 2012 courses. We hope to find some common "take aways" that can be explored in a number of different classrooms. By exploring Palmer together we will have a better understanding and ability to apply his philosophy directly to our relatively "early" teaching careers. Along with the themes present in Palmer, we hope to be able to emphasize active learning strategies in the classroom, piggybacking on our work we did with the CCD project.

The cross discipline exploration could lead to an interesting cloth bag presentation next fall. It could also develop into a session at Lilly Conference, emphasizing how Palmer's ideas can be used in a variety of classrooms and areas and help to foster authentic learning and teaching experiences.

Mid-Program Assessment ~ Facilitator: Cristen Velliky, Communication and Visual Arts, cvelliky@umflint.edu

This teaching circle will focus on creating a new course (or assessment) that will help assess a student's progress towards graduation. The emphasis will be to create a two-year review that will be mandatory for BFA students (or other students, if applicable). The outcome would be to design a new course (or review process) that would provide screening and opportunity for addressing weaknesses in students'

foundations. This is especially relevant due to the conclusion of the Mott agreement, where our students have been taking the majority of their foundation classes on a different campus.

The hope is that by assessing the student's core competencies and/or deficiencies, we can better guide the student through the remaining two years of their program and prepare them for their Capstone course.

Once Upon A Time: The Use of Story Telling in Teaching and Learning ~ Facilitator: Amy Yorke, Physical Therapy, amyorke@umflint.edu

This teaching circle will explore the theoretical and empirical foundations of the use of storytelling in teaching. Storytelling has been a method of teaching in a variety of learning environments. Participants will consider and discuss the following:

- Definition of story telling
- Use of storytelling in a variety of instructional methods
 - Case based
 - Narrative based
 - Scenario based
 - Problem based
- Use of storytelling in an online environment
- Appropriate development of a story
- Facilitating storytelling in students

Members are interested in this aspect of teaching in order to improve course design and impact learning outcomes.

English Language Program (ELP) – Language Lab Development ~ Facilitator: Kathy Cornman, English Language Program – International Center, kjcornm@umflint.edu

We will develop the curriculum objectives, student learning outcomes, and assessment tools for the language lab. The issues will be to re-write the course description, define the critical lab components, and create a time-line for a fully functional lab. Our concerns are funding, time, and physical space. The project is to find the best way to use the available technology to reinforce the skills students learn in class. All members are interested in this aspect of teaching because it is important in current practices of language learning.

Exploring the Possibilities/Challenges of Creating a Master's Program in "Development Practice" with an Emphasis on "Urban/Regional Development & Social Justice" ~ Facilitator: Ananth Aiyer, SOC/ANT/CJ, aaiyer@umflint.edu

The U.N. has recently created the Millennium Development Program aimed at poverty alleviation and establishing new kinds of development practice for the 21st century. Although the Program has so far focused on rural areas, recently there has been discussion of applying the same principles and practices to areas/cities facing urban blight.

We feel this would be a good opportunity for us to discuss the possibilities (and potential problems/obstacles) of creating a Master level Program focused on "Development Practice" that would train cohorts of students in Development issues generally but also have an applied component. To that extent, focusing on issues related to urban/regional planning and development but with a "social justice" component will allow us to both train potential development practitioners and address issues related to urban redevelopment/urban blight in Flint and the surrounding areas.

Since the new strategic plan explicitly calls for a commitment to social justice, urban redevelopment efforts in the city, and engaged citizenship practices, this Teaching Circle will contribute to that vision.