Partnership Council Engaged in Strategic Planning of Future Initiatives

This past year the Partnership Council has been engaged in a book study on partnerships and has looked at data collected from our partner needs assessment survey to identify what our partners need to create a strategic vision and plan for what we can do to create and sustain effective partnerships in the region. Based on this work, we envision a shared purpose in collaborating to promote activities that are mutually beneficial to all.

MORE NEWS

Exploratory Latin Club-Update

Assistant Professor Amanda Wall previously developed the Exploratory Latin Club which is open to students in grades 3-5 at Sallie Zetterower Elementary. Topics addressed included Latin vocabulary related to categories like colors, numbers, parts of the body,

Partnership Coordinator, Dr. Christine Draper
and people in the family. Students also learned about ancient history, geography, and mythology. In 2015, almost fifty students participated, with forty taking the Exploratory Latin Exam which is sponsored by Excellence through Classics, an affiliate of the American Classical League. Last year, funding from the Partnership Council provided the exams as well as books and materials. For 2016, the Exploratory Latin Club is now supported by a Bridge Initiative Grant from the Committee for the Promotion of Latin, which is part of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South.

Aussie Funk Jam/Didge Evolution

Didge Evolution presented two events on Thursday, January 21, 2016. From 4:00-5:15, they presented "Aussie Funk Jam". This was a hands-on workshop where the musicians taught participants several skills for playing the didgeridoo (an Australian Aboriginal instrument). About 60 people...
attended the workshop, with over 50 of them being undergraduate and graduate music education majors. Several public school teachers also attended and several Department of Music Faculty participated. The participants learned how to make a basic sound on the didgeridoo, make bird and animal calls, produce a drone, and produce rhythmic patterns.

At 7:30pm, the musicians performed a concert as "Didge Evolution". This concert was very well attended (estimated attendance = 80), including GSU students, faculty, staff, and community members. The concert was heavily promoted by the music teachers at Sallie Zetterower Elementary and Langston Chapel Elementary. At the conclusion of the concert, the musicians answered questions from the audience, and then talked with some audience members informally. Overall, Associate Professor Laura Stambaugh believes this event was a success and worth repeating in the future. She sends thanks to the Partnership Council and the Campus Life Enrichment Committee for supporting this event.

The College of Education has begun piloting a year-long residency model during the final year of teacher candidates' preparation. This approach was piloted in the Early Childhood program at Marlow Elementary, Dual Certification program at Guyton Elementary, and in the Special Education program in multiple schools this past year. A year-long residency provides the opportunity for teacher candidates to be placed in the same school and usually with the same classroom teacher for two consecutive semesters. This extended experience provides teacher candidates with the opportunity to see how educators organize the school year and manage their classrooms on a daily basis from the beginning of the school year until the end. The teacher candidate is an integral member of the instructional team for the assigned classroom during the entire school year.

Penny Kittle- Reading and Writing Professional Development Workshop
This past semester Assistant Professor Mete Akcaoglu and Associate Professor Lucy Green, both faculty members in Georgia Southern's Instructional Technology program, partnered with Ms. Amy Smith and Mrs. Denise Bork at William James Middle School to investigate how a Game Design and Learning (GLD) course helped 6th grade science students develop skills in system analysis and design, decision-making, and troubleshooting. Students selected for the program had to score in the top 25% of their class in math and science and had already mastered many of the 6th grade science standards. These students also expressed an interest in technology, coding, and game development. Students met once a week with Dr. Akcaoglu and Dr. Green in the library media center. The children designed and developed their very own video games using Kodu, a free game design program.

Associate Professor Michelle Reidel and Instructor Heather Scott recognize that helping middle and high school students learn and practice reading and writing skills is no easy task. It is especially difficult given the strong resistance to and disinterest in writing many adolescents exhibit. To teach the advanced writing skills embedded in the Core, teachers not only need to enact a wide range of pedagogical supports, they also need resources and skills to address adolescents’ disengagement from writing. Over the last 10 years, Penny Kittle has taken up this challenge in her work as a teacher, author and literacy advocate. Kittle’s work focuses on empowering adolescents to develop both their love of reading and their voice as a writer.

Drs. Reidel and Scott invited Penny Kittle to deliver a one-day workshop on January 4, 2016 for faculty members, in-service teachers working in our region, and pre-service teachers attending Georgia Southern University. In this workshop over 60 participants learned how to engage adolescents in authentic reading and writing experiences where the teacher models the craft in front of students. We extend a huge thank you to our sponsoring agencies: Thomas Koballa-Dean of the College of Education, Bulloch County Schools, Department of Teaching & Learning, Department of Writing and Linguistics, College of Education Partnership Council, and the Department of Graduate Education and Research. This is the first of what we hope are many more professional development opportunities for the region.
In our daily lives, we are faced with situations that ask us to analyze and/or design systems to solve complex problems. For example, when people visit a new country or a city, a common system analysis and design task is to understand the transportation system and figure out the best, safest and cheapest ways to travel around. Despite the widely-recognized importance of this type of complex problem-solving as a higher-order thinking skill, K-12 students do not get many chances to solve complex problems at school.

However, when students are given the opportunity to work on these challenges at school, they can accomplish amazing things. The results of this project were exciting! Participating students significantly increased their system analysis and design skills, confirming that learning game-design leads to an increase in students’ complex problem-solving abilities. During GDL, students got hands-on experience in handling complex and open-ended design challenges. They were able to design, analyze and troubleshoot their very own games while working to develop the life-long ability to solve complex problems. Two of the students who participated in GDL, entered their video games into the Training and Motivation is a service project designed to teach 4th and 5th grade learners metacognitive monitoring strategies to enhance their self-regulated learning skills.

A total of 35 students were enrolled in the after school Brain Train Club which met for one hour once a week across four weeks. Students were randomly assigned to either the metacognitive monitoring training and an extrinsic incentive group or the comparison group, which engaged in activities unrelated to the project.

Assistant Professor Antonio Gutierrez collected baseline and posttest data related to students’ performance on a multiple choice test and their item-by-item confidence in performance judgments. These two metrics were subsequently used to calculate students’ calibration accuracy by comparing confidence judgments to actual performance. The incentive for the experimental group involved receiving at least 80% of the items correct on the test. During the fourth and final week, students who met this criterion in the experimental group received the incentive and the students in the control group received the strategy training.

Results revealed that students in the experimental group exhibited improved performance and calibration accuracy at posttest when compared to control group students. Moreover, students in the experimental condition adjusted their confidence ratings to more adequately match performance. Thus, the compact, one-hour metacognitive monitoring training is effective at enhancing key self-regulatory skills and learning outcomes. Dr. Gutierrez is currently working with Nevils Elementary to provide training to teachers so they can adopt this training regimen in their
school technology fair and will be competing at State. Dr. Akcaoglu and Dr. Green hope to expand the program to the spring semester, as well as to other schools in the area.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

**EdCamp**
Georgia Southern will host **EdCamp@Georgia Southern** on Saturday, April 23rd from 8:30 am-12:00 pm. EdCamp is a simple, unstructured way for teachers to gather and share their knowledge and resources with each other. Unlike traditional professional development, there are no presentations, no lectures to listen to, and no irrelevant content. EdCamp is discussion-based, and topics for discussion are chosen by participants. Below is a link to a short YouTube video providing a brief introduction to the EdCamp model.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gr7teMAk-hA&feature=youtu.be

For more information about EdCamp please contact Michelle Reidel at mreidel@georgiasouthern.edu

**Echoes and Reflections**
On Tuesday, June 7th from 9:00 am until 3:30 pm Georgia Southern will host a one-day workshop designed to support educators as they teach about the Holocaust. Echoes and Reflections is a comprehensive Holocaust education program that delivers professional development and a rich array of resources for middle and high school teachers. Echoes and Reflections prepares educators to teach about the Holocaust in a way that stimulates engagement and critical thinking while providing opportunities for students to see the relevance of this complex history to their own lives.

The workshop is **FREE but space is limited to 50 participants**. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. To register complete the registration form via the link below:

http://goo.gl/forms/NyThvME5gm

For more information please contact Michelle Reidel at mreidel@georgiasouthern.edu

**School Request Form**
Attention school partners! Faculty are able to provide a wide range of support, such as professional development, program evaluation, data analysis, and grant writing. Additionally, they may be able to fulfill other requests from the school system. For assistance in building a partnership, please complete an online form at: http://bit.ly/1V8UXsa.

The Partnership Coordinator will review the information provided and then contact you to get more insight into your specific needs and identify potential partners. Thank you in advance for your interest.

Sincerely,

Christine A. Draper
Partnership Coordinator
College of Education
Georgia Southern University

cdraper@georgiasouthern.edu