

GSU Tripartite Meeting
9:00 a.m., December 6, 2007
Minutes

Attending: Dianne Bath, Pat Parsons, Caren Town, Jody Woodrum, Eileen Bayens, Judi Repman, Kathy Albertson, Marlin Baker, Barbara Mallory, Stephanie Kenney.

Welcome and Introduction of Members and Guests- Dianne welcomed members and prospective members and asked each person to introduce themselves and share the thing we like most about teaching.

Article Discussion - Caren Town - "The Teaching Presence"

Dianne introduced the discussion, pointing out that the purpose of this and future discussions is to help participants gain a deeper understanding of the NNER and the Moral Dimensions. Caren then led a rich discussion which included the following observations. The "teaching presence" is really describing an important disposition of teaching and is reminiscent of Logan's book, "Teaching Stories" and John Powell's books, "Fully Human, Fully Alive" and "Why Am I Afraid to Tell you who I am?" How do you capture the "teaching presence" on a rubric? It is important for administrator to capture this; however, some feel we will never capture the mystery of it. We should not disconnect the head/hand/heart; however, this connection is lost in rubrics. Perhaps this is one reason why Kessler describes the "teaching presence" as illusive. Some of the teaching presence behaviors come with maturity. Certain practices a teacher engages in can cultivate these abilities. In the meantime, teachers must address the issue of time/what must be covered that day and balance that with. Shared many strategies to engage students and connect with students and their world. If teachers really love students, they will teach them well. When teaching, it is important to really listen and not just respond to dialogue going on in my head or listen just for the expected answer. Re. really listening and responding to students' needs, the following rule of thumb was suggested: Would this teacher teach the lesson in the same way if students weren't in the room? When students know that whatever they say will be taken as worthy, they will be more likely to participate. A final concern was raised regarding the challenge of creating a sense of community when teaching on line. Judi is attending a NNER seminar in Hawaii regarding this topic. She will report on the seminar at our February Tripartite meeting.

Equity Self Study (Draft handout) As part of our 2007 Annual Report NNER asked us to do an equity study at our setting. In completing this self-study, the Tripartite committed to doing a survey across our setting (school, university, community) in order to determine a baseline on each of the equity issues. As a result of a discussion at our last Tripartite meeting, Dianne and Jody have prepared the "GSU Equity Survey" draft. Dianne provided the background and purpose of the survey and asked for feedback. It is our starting point to address the equity issues listed in the NNER Equity Study. Jody reported that the Bulloch Co. Commission on Human Services is currently conducting focus groups to identify services needed and quality of existing services. Several of their survey questions will provide useful information for us as well.

Regarding the format of our survey, Caren suggested that there needs to be more information included as an introduction to NNER and this document. She suggested that we add a brief description of NNER and a link to our web site. We might also include the names of the Tripartite members so that the readers will have a point of contact. We decided the best way to present it to public schools is through discussion among key people in each building, and at the university through email. Dianne will make the modifications suggested in today's meeting. For next meeting, we will look at the draft and decide how to present it and what to do with the information

Community Engagement Ideas and Thoughts

Dianne asked who/how we should involve the broader community. Suggestions included adding a representative from the Library, and other people who represent larger groups in the community, e.g., faith based, PTO, students, Chamber of Commerce, and law enforcement. Our meeting location might be the community library or the Averitt Center. What are the conversations we will have with them? Our survey results should guide this discussion, focused around the four moral dimensions. We will pick up this discussion at our next meeting. Kathy mentioned the idea of community blogging.

Local Initiatives (Keyed to Moral Dimensions) - We need to know if our members are engaged in activities around any/all of the four moral dimensions. Dianne invited members to share their current initiatives. Barbara Mallory described the work on the new Leadership Program design. One aspect in the redesign is "modeling democracy" which has become central to the design of the new Leadership program (Stewardship). Kathy described how her "Writing Project" encourages student voice in writing. Eileen Bayens described how she and her faculty at Stilson will work with the new crop of student teachers to develop in them a real sense of their being a part of the community and how they can really leave a mark on the school and community. Eileen will keep Pat in the loop as she progresses with this so that Pat can share this model with other principals and clinical associates (Stewardship). Marlin Baker described how he has begun to –attend the weekly grade-level meetings of his teachers; as they discuss what they are doing in the classroom he then helps them make connections across grade level discussions. His being present at these meetings also allows teachers the voice to express concerns (Nurturing Pedagogy).

Updates:

Portal Partnership - Dianne provided the background of the Portal Project. She and Stephanie are facilitating the renewal of that Partnering for Portal network. Much progress has been made on infrastructure issues. The continuing major issue is the development of a community center.

LODS (League of Democratic Schools) - Stephanie provided an update. Stilson and PLC are members of the Eastern Region of LODS. Eileen reported that Stilson is sending two new people. Jody asked that these schools come back from the January conference and redeliver.

LTPS (Leaders of Teacher Preparing Schools) - Eileen gave an update of the recent Seattle meeting and described how the training in partnering is impacting her practices, e.g., working effectively with student teachers while maintaining their academic integrity. We discussed how we could continue this kind of training beyond this last NNER cohort. Jody requested that university and schools work together to continue the work. **We will continue this discussion at our February meeting.**

iNet (Handout and '08 events) Dianne provided the future topics of iNet teacher conferences.

Next meeting: Friday, February 8, Midtown Café upper level