

2009-2010 Marian Wright Teaching Circles

The Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching is pleased to announce that 9 teaching circles have formed for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Christianity and Socialism ~ Facilitator: Tristin Hassell, Philosophy, thassell@umflint.edu

This circle will address the question of paradox versus parallax. That is, how faculties cope with the teaching/training of students whose ideology/ practices are entirely different to that of the faculty. In this relationship, how is one to distinguish honestly between accommodation and collaboration? This circle will look at these broad questions through the lens of the complex relationship (in both theory and practice) between Christianity and Socialism. This will require an in depth analysis of thinkers including Zizek, Milbank, Hegel, and Heidegger, and also an enquiry as to how this dubious relationship is dealt with politically and economically on the ground. The specific case studies are likely to focus on America, Britain, Chile, and Nicaragua.

Teaching and Learning Opportunities for a Healthy Policy Institute ~ Facilitator: Suzanne Selig, Health Sciences & Administration, sselig@umflint.edu

Health Policy is a broad field which encompasses an understanding of the policy development process at all levels of government. Health policies impact every aspect of health promotion, disease prevention, and disease treatment that comprises the health care “system.” This is a timely topic with discussions of health care “reform” underway. There is an interest among the members to investigate further development and understanding of the multiple facets of health policy for learning and research. The topic to be addressed is: What is the value of developing a Health Policy Institute at University of Michigan-Flint?

Teaching Capital(ism) ~ Facilitator: Adam Lutzker, Economics, alutzker@umflint.edu

This teaching circle will focus on the history of debates over the concept of “capital” in the political economy tradition. The goal is to help teachers that study capitalism to negotiate the complexities of the concept. While Karl Marx is the central theorist of this tradition, there exist both prior tradition of classical political economy (Smith, Ricardo, etc) and a continuing series of debates among later theorists over the meaning, significance, and essential features of capital. The teaching circle will focus on the emergence of the capital concept, its relation to the labor theory of value, and the new manifestations in popular, academic, and bureaucratic discourses as metaphor (cultural capital, human capital, and social capital).

Bridging Disciplines: History and the Social Sciences ~ Facilitator: Derwin Munroe, Political Science, dmunroe@umflint.edu

The social sciences are traditionally divided by different topical interests, methodologies, and research practices. Interdisciplinary research sought to systematically integrate temporal analysis, interpretation of meanings and symbols, and causal analysis. The objective of this Teaching Circle is to survey the assumptions, logics, epistemologies, and research practices that define the social sciences, and those that lie at the intersections of disciplines. The exercise is critical for enhanced research and teaching within the disciplines, but also to build a shared understanding of how teaching in the social sciences may be integrated and to develop a common language that may aid in the assessment of tradition of the philosophy of history and of the social sciences to explore the problems and prospects of an integrated understanding of the social sciences.

Integration of Scholarly Activity with Teaching and Learning: Boyer's Model at Work ~

Facilitator: Jennifer Blackwood, Physical Therapy, jblackwo@umflint.edu

Most members of this teaching circle are early in their academic careers at the University of Michigan-Flint and are interested in incorporating the areas of scholarship of application, integration, and teaching into their instruction. This circle seeks to foster peer support to assist new colleagues as they develop into productive faculty members and scholars of teaching in the university setting. Potential topics of discussion include:

- The use of Boyer's model of scholarship and how it applies to our teaching methodologies.
- Active engagement techniques: are the students listening, processing, or sleeping with eyes open? How can we improve upon this?
- Reflective teaching and learning: Not just good for the student.
- How do we as faculty integrate community service or civic engagement with our students to enhance learning?
- Peer reviewed assessment: tell me what I am saying and how effective am I?
- How can we develop the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to enhance our educating skills?

Using Technology in Early Childhood Education ~ Facilitator: Della Becker-Cornell, Early Childhood Development Center, dellac@umflint.edu

Even though the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) is an accredited program, we have a long way to go when it comes to adapting to a paperless department and becoming a technology based program. One of our goals is to problem solve ways to implement a new green outlook in our center. The construction of classroom websites for the distribution of family, staff and classroom news is underway but still needs discussion, collaboration, and feedback from fellow staff members and families. In addition to allowing families to view information online and fill out paperwork/forms online will allow us to move towards a technology based center. Documentation of our children's learning is very important and can easily be managed through the use of technology. Collaboration is necessary to distinguish other technology needs of the staff and families as we move our program forward. This Teaching Circle will allow each classroom to stay connected with the other's vision, thus keeping ECDC ahead of all its competitors.

Project Based International Teaching and Learning Opportunities ~ Facilitator: Sharman Siebenthal Adams, Education, sharamans@umflint.edu

Helping students expand their understanding about topics related to International Education is a complex process. In forming this teaching circle, members plan to focus on finite areas of teaching and learning related to International Project Based learning opportunities. Within our discussions and analysis we examine past and current experiences with multimedia, project based learning, and international travel with students.

Film Studies – Past, Present, and Future ~ Facilitator: Darryl Baird, Communication & Visual Arts, dbaird@umflint.edu

A discussion and potential planning phase to bring together faculty and coursework based on cinema, film history, philosophy, production, and criticism into a minor or major at UM-Flint.

Inquiry Based Learning ~ Facilitator: Kristina Hansen & Matt Wyneken, Mathematics & Education, khansen@umflint.edu & mwyneken@umflint.edu

The co-facilitators, Krista Hansen (mathematics) and Matt Wyneken (elementary education mathematics), had the opportunity to attend the “12th Annual Legacy of R.L. Moore Conference” this past summer. Moore was a University of Texas mathematician renowned for both his research and the many and high caliber PhD students he produced. Over these many years “modified Moore methods” of teaching, otherwise known as inquiry based learning (IBL) have been developed by many of Moore’s academic descendants and others. The purpose of this teaching circle is to investigate these methods of teaching. While the book we will be reading has collegiate mathematics as its intent, the book is mostly about teaching and the method applies to all disciplines. For example, the final session of the conference we attended was a panel of Berry College faculty including representatives of the departments of physics, chemistry, and philosophy, as well as mathematics. The title of their session was “IBL Across the Curriculum.”

“The Moore Method: A Pathway to Learner-Centered Instruction,” by Charles A. Coppin, W. Ted Mahavier, E. Lee May, G. Edgar Parker. The Mathematical Association of America, MAA Notes # 75, 2009.

Link to The Legacy of R.L. Moore Project: <http://www.discovery.utexas.edu/rlm/>

Link to “The Moore Method” book:

<https://www.maa.org/EbusPPRO/DynamicSearch/ProductDetailsAdvancedSearch/tabid/176/ProductId/2230/Default.aspx>