

2007-2008

Models of Management in Academia ~ **Facilitators:** Donna Fry, Associate Professor and Director; and Laura LoVasco, Associate Director for Clinical Education, Physical Therapy Department ~ Number of Participants: 9

The purpose of the teaching circle was to facilitate department meetings where faculty and staff could discuss and clearly define the collegial model of management and how the model could be adapted to address the needs of the department. Many of the teaching circle meetings focused on the use of effective communication within the collegial model. The teaching circle helped members of the department begin serious discussions about their relationships, communication and decision making within the department. Two books were purchased to help facilitate discussions: “Our Iceberg is Melting” by John Kottor and “Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Field Guide” by Patrick Lencioni.

It is hoped that the teaching circle will continue its work next year; members identified the following as potential areas to address:

- *Role delineations*
- *Decision making model*
- *Being a team member*
- *How to keep department work flowing smoothly*

Reggio, UM-Flint Style: Balancing Philosophy and Best Practice ~ **Facilitator:** Beverly Schumer, Associate Professor, Education ~ Number of Participants: 11

This teaching circle was a continuation of a circle formed last year entitled, “Early Childhood Leadership: Mentoring and Facilitating Professional Development.” However, the purpose of this year’s teaching circle was to build a collective understanding about the Reggio Emilia philosophy and curriculum among the Early Childhood Education faculty and staff, and explore how the UM-Flint program was demonstrating best practice within the Reggio framework. The DVDs listed below were purchased and used to support the understanding of the Reggio practices and philosophy throughout the teaching circle meeting discussions.

Beverly Schumer, Associate Professor and Aviva Dorfman, Assistant Professor, presented a scholarly paper, “Building Departmental Community Through Teaching Circles: Year Two,” at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters at Western Michigan University this past March.

DVDs purchased:

- *An Amusement Park for Birds*
- *The Hubley Collection: Everybody Rides the Carousel*
- *Focused Observations*
- *Supporting Children in Resolving Conflict*

TCP Capstone Development Project ~ **Facilitator:** Kirk Weller, Assistant Professor, Mathematics ~ Number of Participants: 6

The Mathematics Department is in the process of revising its Teaching Certificate Program and developing a capstone course is vital to the program's revision and success. The teaching circle provided a forum where faculty could identify, read, and discuss various position papers, research articles and recommendations that deal with the capstone course development and implementation. The teaching circle facilitator, Dr. Kirk Weller, team-taught a capstone course at MSU during the winter 2008 semester as part of a grant from the National Science Foundation. Due to the demands of teaching the course however, the teaching circle did not meet during the winter semester. Dr. Weller plans to share his experience with UM-Flint faculty and guide them as they work towards developing the course.

The teaching circle featured Dr. Richard Hill, Professor of Mathematics from Michigan State University, who presented his work, research and experience with capstone courses to teaching circle members.

Children's Mathematical Thinking ~ **Facilitator:** Matt Wyneken, Associate Professor, Education ~ Number of Participants: 10

Members of the teaching circle studied the book, "Young Mathematicians at Work: Constructing Number Sense, Addition and Subtraction" by Catherine Twomey Fosnot and Maarten Dolk. By studying this text, faculty developed a better understanding of children's mathematical thinking (CMT) which will help them develop learning experiences aimed at assisting children to construct their own knowledge and make sense of foundational mathematics.

Higher Education Across Disciplines, Country and Culture ~ **Facilitators:** Jie Song, Assistant Professor, Chemistry and Jacob Peng, Assistant Professor, School of Management ~ Number of Participants: 9

A group of Chinese-speaking faculty formed this teaching circle in order to better understand the challenges caused by conflicts between cultures and disciplines and how to address these differences in order to be more effective in educating UM-Flint students. Members discussed the differences between the culture and education at UM-Flint as it compares to the education they received in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. They used the ideas shared to develop teaching strategies that would be effective on our campus. The teaching circle also held a student forum with approximately 20 international students from various parts of Asia in which the students shared their learning experiences. Members felt that this session provided invaluable information and will help them better serve our students. Dr. Zongde Wang, Visiting Scholar in Chemistry and Biochemistry, also participated with the teaching circle and was able to provide insight to the current changes in higher education in mainland China.

Taking Learning to the Streets ~ **Facilitator:** Susan Gano-Phillips, Associate Professor, Psychology

The group is planning to print a resource guide for faculty regarding civic engagement projects.

2006-2007

Exploring Strategies for Teaching Diversity Courses

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Facilitator: Wei Cao, Education Department

This teaching circle is designed to form a supporting environment for faculties who are teaching or interested in teaching diversity courses. We will share, identify, and explore a variety of strategies to address the challenges many of us encounter in classrooms as well as ways to engage students in the learning process. We also hope this teaching circle will serve as a platform for building a community of scholars who are teaching diversity courses on campus.

Broadening our Visions: Examining the authorities of the global energies on the SEHS

Facilitator: Susanne Chandler, SEHS

We are a school of mostly junior and untenured faculty, with few long-term tenured/senior faculty to help mentor/model processes, vision, etc. In an effort to grow together toward the visioning and broad perspectives needed to lead our unit/s and university in healthy and productive considerations, we have agreed as an entirety to host at the minimum a year-long brown-bag lunch discussion series. Our focus will be on learning to understand the influences of the larger global events on our particularized areas so as to strengthen our directions. We have agreed to proceed with this through an agreed upon set of readings, and focused discussions.

Ethics in Public Life: Opportunities for Interdisciplinary Study

Facilitator: Susan Gano-Phillips, Psychology Department

This teaching circle will discuss how ethics is conceived of and taught within members' individual disciplines as well as how interdisciplinary studies of ethics focusing on "real world" challenges might be organized. The group will consider how classroom discussion might be combined with community engagement projects to highlight important ethical issues. Ethics will be used as an organizing theme as the teaching circle works to develop a model for an interdisciplinary course.

Early Childhood Leadership: Mentoring and Facilitating Professional Development

Facilitator: Beverly Schumer, Education Department

As educators in the field of Early Childhood, classroom teachers and director of the Early Childhood Developmental Center and the Early Childhood Department faculty, we share a common aspect of our work: assisting UM-Flint students and other adults in developing their abilities as early childhood educators. We plan to read together about mentoring student teachers and other professionals in the context of classroom practice and teacher preparation programs.

We intend to share a focus as colleagues and develop our relationships with one another through reading and discussing texts and their implications for our work.

Understanding Social Activism in Islamic Feminist Literature: A Focus on Nawal El Saadawi's Woman At Point Zero

Facilitator: Ernest Emenyonu, Africana Studies Department

Woman writers in predominantly Islamic countries are becoming increasingly irrepressible activists in their commitments to the feminist ideology of women's liberation. Nawal El Saadawi, a Physician-turned-versatile Egyptian writer (novelist, playwright etc) is currently described as the "spokesperson of women's struggles in the Arab world." Her novel, *Woman at Point Zero* says it all! She will be visiting UM-Flint for one week in March 2007. The Teaching Circle will study and discuss this novel and excerpts of her writings prior to her visit.

Exploring a Film & Video Studies Minor

Facilitator: Fred Svoboda, English Department

The nine of us listed above began emailing last spring, meeting once in June, to explore possible directions for a Film and Video Studies (or Media Studies) minor. UM-Flint already teaches very similar courses to those that make up such a program at Ann Arbor, Michigan State and Central Michigan, so this should not be an onerous task. We have been discussing what courses would be appropriate for such a minor, whether any new courses should be added, who else we should consult, what administrative structure would be needed, how we would coordinate course offerings/schedules, etc., what would be the strengths of such a minor and its appeal to students, and whether there are particular pitfalls we should avoid.

Tailoring Science Education for Education Students

Facilitators: Li-hsuan Yang, Education, and Marian Aanerud, CSESP Department

This is a teaching circle that includes faculty members who are teaching or are interested in teaching science courses to prospective K-12 teachers to discuss challenges and exchange ideas related to our teaching and the science learning experiences of our students.

Promoting Strong Teaching and Learning Experiences Through Online Courses

Facilitator: Sharman Siebenthal Adams, Education Department

Nationwide online University course offerings have increased. This trend has also been seen here at UMF. While the growing demand pushes faculty and administrators to meet students' increased needs related to online course offerings, many questions still abound with regard to the manner and mechanisms faculty should use in successfully meeting those needs. The purpose of this teaching circle is to collaborate with members across campus in order to further investigate not only what steps are being taken at UMF but also at other universities. Members of this teaching circle are interested in pursuing investigation of both the successes and challenges related to online teaching.

Scientific Writing: Grading and Teaching

Facilitator: Jessica Tischler, Chemistry and Biochemistry Department.

We would like to explore the differences in scientific writing vs. the standard curriculum. We hope to develop specific teaching points that can be used to help students write better research papers and literature reviews than what we currently see. We also hope to develop rubrics that we can use to emphasize these ideas and help grading be quicker and less subjective. We have several books that will form the basis of our discussions: *The Craft of Scientific Writing* by Michael Alley and *A Field Guide for Science Writers* by D. Blum, M. Knudson, and R. M. Henig (Eds).

2005-2006

Standardizing Laboratory Communication at UMF

Facilitator: Jessica Tischler

We wish to discuss the potential standardization of writing requirements in the laboratory sciences. There are many instances where courses have different requirements or even instructors within the same course may have different requirements for the same type of assignment (lab notebooks for example). We believe that integration of specific criteria for writing across the science curriculum will benefit both students and instructors; alleviating student confusion and anxiety and allowing for the development of a standard grading rubric as well.

Teaching & Learning Issues: The American Democracy Project

Facilitator: Heather Laube

The University is a member of the American Democracy Project (ADP) and is working to determine just what the project will look like on our campus. One important component of this process is a careful consideration of the meaning of civic engagement and citizenship and how these differ from community service. Additionally, teaching and learning for citizenship can take a variety of forms including classroom analytic work, engagement and reflection with the community, and non-classroom learning experiences on campus. This teaching circle is concerned with the accurate and appropriate use of the above mentioned analytic categories.

Considerations in Math Education

Facilitators: Mehrdad Simkani and Rose Casement

Teaching content and pedagogy to Elementary Education pre-service teachers will be studied in order that we may stay current with best practices in math education and demonstrate them with the pre-service teachers in our own classes.

Towards A New Purpose-driven, Student-centered and Intellectually Relevant Curricula

Facilitator: Ernest N. Emenyonu

The issue of reforming the UM-Flint General Education Program is topical at this time, but of greater significance is the need to design a curriculum that will achieve a triangular function: purpose-driven, student-centered and intellectually relevant. The members of this Teaching

Circle are coming together from various disciplines in an effort to come up with a curriculum model that focuses on purposeful relevance and a proper sense of direction for our students and the university.

Teaching Circle for 1st through 3rd year Faculty

Facilitator: Michael Farmer

Teaching full-time is probably the greatest challenge facing new faculty. The success of their teaching during the first 1-3 years can determine the long-term success of their entire career in academia. We will focus on the issues and concerns of new faculty during this critical first 1-3 years at U of M- Flint. All of the members are faculty within this time period, and all are tenure track assistant professors with the goal of being highly effective educators. We will address issues such as syllabus and course development, maximizing student engagement, balancing teaching and research, and involving students in new faculty research.

Information Literacy Across the Curriculum

Facilitator: Laura Friesen-Lynn

Information literacy should be an integral part of UM-Flint's newly designed core curriculum. Incorporating information literacy into this design will require the collaboration of librarians, faculty and administration. The skills and knowledge involved in true information literacy will not be gained in one class session, but rather must be built over the course of an academic career. This teaching circle will focus on what an information literacy program will look like, including, potentially, the design of online tutorials and for-credit courses on information literacy.

Promoting a Culture of Student Success

Facilitator: Jack Kay

Promoting a culture of student success is integral to the outcome of several key University initiatives including Enrollment Growth, General Education Reform, and Strategic Planning. For us to adequately address any one of these initiatives, student success must be at the core of all discussions, decisions, and actions. This Teaching Circle will focus on answering the following question: What strategies should the University of Michigan-Flint adopt to promote a culture of student success? The answers to this question will ultimately impact everything from recruitment and retention to graduation rates. In fact, identifying strategies to promote a culture of student success may partially define the very fabric and ethos of our university.

2004-2005

Flint Linguistics Group

Facilitator: Kazuko Hiramatsu, English Department

The purpose of this teaching circle is to continue to look at how we can teach students about different aspects of language. This group is hosting the Michigan Linguists Society Meeting on campus in October, where Dr. Lisa Green will be presenting her research on African American English. They will discuss the use of dialects in Flint at some of the teaching circle meetings, to prepare for her talk.

Common Challenges in Health Care and Social Work:

Facilitator: Dr. Suzanne Selig, Health Sciences and Administration

The goal of this teaching circle is to explore ways to advance collaboration among health care and social work professionals. At the meetings, members discuss the best practices within their respective fields and discuss ways to collaborate and/or strengthen the work that is done in the classroom and in the field.

Teaching and Learning with Technology

Facilitator: Sharman Siebenthal, Education Department

The purpose of this teaching circle is to explore issues related to teaching and learning with technology and expand upon the group's concerns over the balance between providing students with applicable skills and their sense of understanding related to technology. In sharing ideas over the use of technology, members have expressed interest in the growing demand and consequences of online coursework, ethics involved in teaching and using technology, the long-term development of hypermedia across subject matter, and the use of simulations within the classroom.