

Notes from First Meeting---Eastern Initiative
Department of English and Theatre PLC Discussions
January 6, 2011

Members present: Rob Milde, Sally Martin, Gill Hunter, Gaby Bedetti, Jane Clouse, Tom Butler, Kim Creech, Lisa Bosley, Kevin Rahimzadeh, Paula Kristofik, Chris Neumann

Focus of the PLC: Scholarly and research-based learning community. Collective inquiry and action research.

- What scholarship/ research/data do we need to bring to the table?
- What might be the scholarly outcomes? (joint conference presentations or papers)
- We need to be familiar with the PLC models of DuFour and Cox

We understand our charge to be:

- Become familiar with KY Core Content Standards

Task: Review and discuss KY Core Content Standards

- Help to reduce the number of entering freshman with remedial needs by preparing English Education majors to teach to the new standards.

Task: Align English education course syllabi with KY Core Content Standards

- Help to increase the retention and graduation rates of students entering ECU with remediation needs.

Task: Align General Education course syllabi with KY Core Content Standards and consider pedagogical implications

Task: Familiarize English and Theater Gen Ed faculty members with KY Core Content Standards and pedagogical implications

Discussions centered on revising course syllabi in ENG 101, ENG 301 and 303, ENG 405 and 440. We will consider adding ENG/ENR 090 and 095. Paula proposed re-visioning an ENG 101 syllabus around the standards with a cadre of adjunct/graduate student instructors. We wondered about additional funding from the Eastern Initiative grant or other grants to provide incentives for adjuncts/graduate students. Working together would provide cross-fertilization of teaching ideas, creating shared assignments etc...

Ideas discussed:

- Does incorporating the standards mean changing the paradigm of how we teach our courses?

- Student disposition is so important---how do we affect that?
- How can we affect the re-visioning and alignment of standards in Gen Ed courses like ENG 101 when it is so structurally difficult? The majority of these courses are taught by adjuncts who are overworked and underpaid---we do not have any control of this situation.
- We might create a teaching handbook based on the pedagogical implications of the revised syllabi, with, for example, assignment ideas for ENG 101 or other courses). This could have an impact on the quality of instruction provided by adjunct, graduate and new instructors.

Assessment ideas:

- Praxis
- Senior Capstone
- We need benchmark assessments
- Diagnostic pre/post tests
- Qualitative assessment such as teacher reflection notes, student reflection notes
- Use the current ENG 102 assessment tool as a guide to develop a 101 assessment--could compare assessment in revised and unrevised ENG 101 courses.
- Use control group and experimental group (look at retention rates) – even though lots of variables. Did we retain more in one group than another?

Questions:

- What about Career Readiness? What does that mean for us?
- Should we also be looking at developmental course syllabi? Dorie Combs said that this is a departmental/PLC decision.

Clarifications:

- Standards do not mean standardized
- Members of PLC can play different roles. Some might work to revise courses/align syllabi; others plan assessments and evaluations; others be our liaisons with secondary education; others might bring us research/data and lead discussions of that; others might lead efforts to create presentations or articles.
- Dorie said that there is funding to revise 5 syllabi in our dept (possibly one or two more). The faculty members who work “re-align” a syllabus will receive \$1000 to share among those involved. We will consider how this would work?