

Eastern Initiative

PLC Minutes

PLC Focus_Social Studies

Date : February 18, 2011

Members Present:

History: Jacqueline Jay, Caroline Dupont, Chris Taylor (group facilitator)

Political Science: Steve Barraca

Psychology : Myra Beth Bundy

Anthropology: Jennifer Wies

Sociology: Beth Underwood

Geography: Sonja Yow

Economics: Bob Houston (cannot attend Jan. 6)

Social Studies Methods: College of Education: Cynthia Resor

Absent: Joe Gershtenson (Political Science)

Issue / Problem / Question Discussed:

Cynthia Resor took group through Social Studies Content Requirements for Elementary, Middle School and Secondary School Praxis Exams. Resor also reviewed the 2008-9 Praxis Performance of ECU Teaching majors in regards to Social Studies. If Praxis performance used to assess ECU teaching majors' mastery in regards to Social Studies content, the weakest performance appears in the social studies interpretation of materials section for secondary education majors. This may be an area to highlight in regard to curricular improvements as the group moves forward with its work. (Given the sample size, however, this conclusion needs to be taken directionally and not as an absolute.)

Resor then led the group through the ECU curricular requirements particularly in regard to social studies for elementary, middle school and secondary level teachers. The group was struck with the fact that elementary teachers had more upper division course offerings in the social studies area than middle school teachers. This seems the reverse of what it should be. The group noted this was an area requiring further discussion and possible revision. As to the secondary curriculum, review of the requirements led to a discussion of entry requirements for admission to the teaching program. The group will consider recommending that entrance requirements be raised to 3.0. Chris Taylor will provide data of the grade-point distribution of current History Teaching majors to aid in this consideration.

Resor at the group's request reviewed the curriculum in ESE 549. It became apparent that little time is spent in this course or any other education course required of History Teaching majors as how to teach writing or reading (noted that a bit of literacy now included in ESE 490). The group noted that this is an area meriting further discussion and potential curricular enhancement.

Resources / Research :

Praxis exam content parameters, ECU performance 2008-9, ECU degree program requirements for teaching at elementary, middle school and secondary levels, particularly in regard to Social Studies attached hereto.

Chris Taylor to pull GPA information in regard to current History Teaching majors.

Ideas / suggestions / recommendations:

See issue/problem/question discussed area. Further areas of investigation, regarding possible curricular improvements: revisions necessary to improve Praxis scores in regard to interpretation of Social Studies material, revising course requirement options in the Social Studies area of elementary and middle school teachers, raising College of Education GPA requirement to 3.0 for History Teaching, and revising courses such as ESE 549 to better prepare History Teaching majors to teach writing and reading

Next Steps:	Person Responsible
PLC to meet March 18 at 4 p.m. in Java City to plan focus groups with teachers. Chris Taylor as facilitator to put together sheet outlining issues/details group must decide. This sheet to be circulated prior to meeting.	
Chris Taylor to compile GPA distribution of current History Teaching majors. To be distributed and posted on Blackboard site upon compilation	