BCS PLC

Friday, January 31, 2014

1:00 – 4:00 Division Library

**Present**: Mariano Rodriguez, Ely Freedman, Erica Dibello-Hitta, and Michelle Dullea.

**Agenda**:

1. General Overview
2. Reading Video (Erica)
3. Discussion
4. Common Core Alignment: Group Activity (5 sections/course outline) Jigsaw II
5. Anchor Standards Overview
6. Performance Tasks (1 per semester)

**General Overview:**

Michelle asked about the Pacing Guides. Everyone agrees that we are using them, although not slavishly.

Most of Mariano’s students tested out of his class at the semester break, based on TABE scores. Ely did not give the TABE because she feels that the students need more time to usethe grammar they’ve learned in class. The students that moved on in Erica’s class were those who were in a rush to pass the CAHSEE. Ely mentioned that the next level classes - ABE Reading & Writing - don’t offer them the opportunity to speak – which is what they need if they look for work.

Michelle asked if the TABE is a good testing instrument. Erica said no. It’s not a comprehensive test. Mariano gives his student a monthly assignment which he also uses as an assessment. Ely has her students write every day, and she has seen great improvement. Erica: she gives writing as homework as well as a class assignment.

We discussed movies we show in class like Double Jeopardy, My Cousin Vinny, and The Story of Rosa Parks. Mariano mentioned that the Cesar Chavez movie is coming out in March. Mariano mentioned that his students are renting movies of the Penguin books that Michelle gave us.

Mariano said that he has started to loan the Penguin books to his evening students (he keeps records of who borrowed books, phone numbers, etc.) His students are very excited; they come back with the book and their homework. He gives them a worksheet for them to fill out. (It will be available to add to the USB drive.) Erica mentioned that she has her students write reviews of the books.

Michelle will get back to us with a decision whether the rest of us can begin to loan them out as well. Michelle mentioned that we could order more books –it would be a good investment since it aligns with the Common Core.

Erica mentioned that some high schools are giving away class sets of novels. Could we get some of them? Michelle informed us about the Book Depository book give-away in March. (More information will be forthcoming.)

Ely discussed her students’ work that was published in the Writers’ Journal. The students provided all the pictures/illustrations as well as the text.

Michelle asked if we are using all the books. Mariano feels that Focus on Grammar is too complex. He mostly uses the other books. Michelle recognized that he teaches at night and doesn’t have as much time. Ely appreciates that Focus on Grammar uses all the verb tenses – which is like real life.

Ely talked about the tenant-landlord issues unit. As part of, she gave the class a PowerPoint presentation telling them what their rights are. (She’ll share it with us.) Michelle suggested that she could give her presentation at Montgomery as part of Viva Vida.

**Reading Video**

Erica introduced the You Tube video: Teaching Content is Teaching Reading. In 10 minutes it drives home the point that background knowledge is as important as the reading strategies were spend most of our time teaching.

Mariano would like us to get books, like the Penguin Readers, with general world knowledge (social studies, historical fiction, biographies, etc.)

Erica described how she’s having her students do short reports on various topics to present to the class to increase the students’ background knowledge. Michelle suggested using the lab to have groups of students present reports – (the History Channel has short videos they can use) Mariano started a list of possible topics: ancient civilizations, famous people around the world, great inventions, and Ely will have her groups research various countries.

Michelle reiterated that Common Core is the teaching of interdisciplinary subjects together; teaching the science or the math combined with the reading, writing, and grammar.

Ely shared her experience with college students and the gaps that they have. Michelle shared her dream of different levels of BCS.

Everyone discussed the Rosetta Stone program. We all like it. Ely talked about her pronunciation “bee” that she uses to practice pronunciation. (She made a PowerPoint with a list of words that flash on the screen – students who don’t pronounce their word correctly, must sit down until only one student is left standing.)

**Common Core Alignment**

Common Core says that this is a starting point – many gaps that we’ll have to fill – in BCS we think that there are things they should have learned in level 2 – well, they make not have gone to a level 2 class or they may never have gotten it, etc. You BCS teachers will take to CC because you’re doing that – filling gaps.

Ely has students who have never studied verbs, but they don’t want to go back to level 3 – which they need. We all agree. Erica opined that if BCS is a year-long class and level 4 is not, getting a new set of students at the semester break does a disservice to both groups.

Ely: The order in which things come up in Future 4 is strange. Mariano: I tell them if you don’t get it now, you’ll get it next year when we start again. Michelle: the second semester I reviewed the grammar and everyone like it – nobody was bored. It was like starting the new semester, but in the middle of the book.

**Common Core** BCS covers grades K – 6th of the CC Standards

Standards:

L - language standards

W - writing standards

RL - reading for literature

RI - reading for informational texts

RF - reading standard for foundational skills

SL - speaking and listening standards

We compared the Course Outline Objectives and started to match them to the Common Core Standards. At the next meeting we’ll continue. We may consider changing some of the wording of the Course Outline Objectives.

Michelle asked what we would like to do next time we meet. Mariano would like to follow up with what we’re doing; what works. Ely would like us to share more project ideas. Erica would like to have more intellectual discussions about CC while snacking on bonbons. ☺

Mariano would like Michelle to find (non-fiction) books to increase our students’ world knowledge. Michelle said that the ARC may have some. Ely wondered if Michelle could find something short and easy to read about different countries. The books Ely has are outdated.

Ely would also like more Penguin Readers (She has 42 students and 20-25 books.)

Michelle ended the meeting asking that if anyone comes up with more topics or materials that they would like to bring to the PLC, to let her know. Once we get the common core off our (agenda) list, we’ll be able to work on performance tasks. We’ll do one performance task per semester. The performance tasks will bring together everything we’re teaching in our classrooms.

While we all benefitted from sharing our classroom best practices, we recognized that at the next meeting we’ll need to start with Agenda items 4, 5, and 6 and leave the discussion portion of the PLC to the end.

**Next meeting**

April 11, 2014 in the Division Library