**Writing PLC Minutes**

**January 17, 2014 (1:00-4:00 pm)**

**Division Library**

**Present**

Michelle Dullea, our moderator, Thomas Amans, Nancy Castañeda, Nancy Plummer, Ted Parsons, and Erica Dibello-Hitta

**Opening Remarks**

Michelle welcomed everyone back and informed us that state requirements have changed.  Full implementation of Common Core is scheduled for July 2014.  We have a revised Course Outline, with added technology components, that was approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Today‘s Writing PLC Goal**

* Review: What does Common Core (CC) look like in the ABE Writing classroom for the student and teacher? What is our role in facilitating CC
* Brainstorm CC Applications (site team meetings with Reading ABE, collaboration, creation of thematic lessons, adopt a common textbook, technology training, site meetings with early dismissal, extra-duty meetings.)

**Discussion**

Michelle welcomed everyone back and informed us that state requirements are different.  We will be in full implementation of Common Core is scheduled for July 2014.  We have a revised Course Outline and added technology components.  They were approved by the Board of Trustees. The new study guide has the Common Core Standards plus a technology component.

**Discussion**

Nancy Plumber - After reviewing the Beginning Writing Course Outline, Nancy stated that *(some beginning writers are unable to write a coherent simple sentence, let alone write an opinion piece which is listed in the course outline.)*\* The beginning course outline seems more difficult than the intermediate course outline. Michelle will investigate that.

Michelle – Now we need to focus on the practical application of the Course Outline to make sure we all cover what we need to cover for the Common Core.

We went over the Common Core Writing Anchor Standards.

Nancy Plumber - Writing incorporates reading which, at the moment, is taught in a separate class.  Nancy asked if we could have a joint Writing and Reading PLC.

Thomas - Suggested that Reading and Writing teachers collaborate among themselves at each site.

Nancy Castaneda - Suggested that there needs to be collaboration and communication among ABE and CTE teachers.   She informed us that GED online.org has a writing practice showing the format that will be on the GED.

Michelle - Filling in the gaps for our students will be our challenge.  We will start to incorporate “performance tasks” - which are somewhat similar to projects that are aligned to the CC. We will be doing a performance task once this semester with our students once we create one as a PLC.

We voted and decided to have Reading and Writing teachers meet at their own site to collaborate.  Each site will decide when to have the meeting. Later we can meet as a division to formalize the process.

Nancy Castaneda - Suggested we include GED, CTE and HS subject teachers in the initial site meetings.

Nancy Plumber - Stated that HS subjects students work on their packets independently.

Michelle - Stated that that will have to change somewhat in terms of completing a Performance Task.  Teachers will need to introduce the CC concepts.  CC themes are the same from K-12, however, the level of rigor increases at each grade level.

Nancy Castaneda - Mentioned that we need to find resources to create lessons.

Ted - Asked how he can address the new CC standards without materials.

Nancy - Mentioned that math has a lot of word problems.

Nancy Castaneda - Brought up Technimedia.

Michelle - Will offer a Technimedia workshop for writing at the GED Academy, Feb. 7 9:30-11 at SYA in the computer lab room 206 or 207. An email will go out soon.

Nancy Castaneda - Mentioned that Janet Scarpone has a writing series, as well as Math,  on CD Rom called “Learn Writing Quickly.”  GED 1120 Grammar is also very good.

Ted - Told us that when he was in the 6th grade a neighborhood child criticized him … Moral of the story: great expectations.  Ted is concerned …

Nancy Plumber - Sated that the response to literature was removed from the original CAHSEE because students couldn’t pass it.  She’s curious to see how our students will do with the new GED.

Ted - Mentioned that we need to prepare our students in the classroom to know what to expect in college.

Nancy Castaneda - Asked for a writing sample to know what students need to know to pass the English placement test at South Western College.

Michelle - The consortium gives us an opportunity to discuss what (programs) SWC provides, and what we provide and come to an agreement so that we don’t duplicate services.

Nancy - We need a core curriculum but not limit what each teacher may use.

Ted - We can’t keep buying a new book each year.  We need to have some consistency.

Thomas – Recounted an experience with a principal who expected teachers to follow syllabus that dictated what page they should be on. He also said that it would be nice to have a core text and a required reading list.

Ted - Pacing guides should not dictate what page a teacher should be on, on any given day.

Nancy Plumber - Each student should be working at their own pace.  Students need individualized instruction.

Erica - Mentioned that pacing guides are like a detailed syllabus which offers the teacher the flexibility to be creative and to add to the lesson.

Nancy Castaneda – I would like it if it’s a guideline, but we are not bound to it.

Michelle – I would like to take a look at Ted and Nancy Plumber’s syllabi.

Michelle – I would like to see a beginning, intermediate, and advanced pacing guide with a common textbook list and websites such as English Page.com.   --- Educreations.com is a website that students can use at home for all the GED subjects. You can save a presentation on it that a substitute can use.  Educreations shows numerous ways to solve a math problem.  Khan Academy is also good.

Ted - Suggested that all teachers provide Michelle a list of books and a set of websites that we use regularly and bring them to the next PLC so that we can vote on a set of core materials.

Michelle - The CA Dpt. of Ed. just came out with the first Official Framework for English Language Arts  (find the document online CDE.org)  How they envision CC being implemented in our state (see pages 6-8)  It touches upon the areas they want our students to function in from K-12.  On p. 9 is a list of 5 “key principles.” Let’s do a Jigsaw activity. Each person will take a key principle.

1st Key Principal

**Schooling must help all students achieve their highest potential. page 9**

Ted - Everyone (community members, teachers, parents) must help all students achieve their potential.  We’ll need tailored instruction. Everyone will need to have high expectations for the students.  Culturally responsive teaching is mentioned, also reaching advanced learners, as well as those struggling.

Ted’s opinion - This is an ideal.  It is too obvious. It has all been said before.  It does not address adult education specifically.

2nd Key Principal

**The responsibility for learners’ literacy and language development is shared.**

Nancy Plumber - Teachers and administrators need to collaborate not only in content area but also in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Teachers must be given time to collaborate - to view how things are working and to fix what’s not.  There needs to be a reciprocal relationship between Language Arts and the content areas.

Nancy’s opinion - This is not new.  Great communication and leadership will be needed at each site.  Administrators will need to inspire veteran teachers to work across the curriculum.

How will teacher training address these changes?  We may need to reinstate a department chair.  Who will be in charge of this collaboration?  How can we encourage talented young people into education because without them, it won’t work.

3rd Key Principle

**ELA/ELD curricula must be well designed, comprehensive, and integrated.**

Nancy Castaneda - Teachers need to have access to well-designed curricula, have clear sequential goals across every grade level. Practice and apply what they learn (project-based) be relevant, and address the purpose and connection (integrated=connected) between comprehension, listening and writing, foster critical thinking skills, (questioning is different, active engagement with peers= group work) must ignite their interest, touch their hearts, and illuminate the human experience.

Nancy’s opinion - We are on the ground floor.  We’re going to make mistakes that other students are going to benefit from.  With CC my grandson is engaged in school, in a way my son was not at the same age, because they are igniting their interest. In floral design I’ll have them debate and write about buying stock. We’ll have to rethink how we’re teaching.  Think about the relevance - write business letters, emails, etc.

Michelle - How do you see the ABE writing classroom looking different?

Nancy Castaneda – Yes, by making it relevant to the age group - we can have them rewrite a text message into English.

Michelle - How can we help teachers who don’t know how to use technology?

Ted - We can have a roving technician.

Michelle - How about if you make a list of tech needs and I find someone in the division who can help you with it?

Nancy Castaneda – Let’s make a list of the websites or programs that all teachers should have in their classroom.  Adultrock5 gets our students on their iPhones.

Erica - Michelle will need a list of tech savvy people, too.

4th Key Principle

**Effective teaching is essential to student success.**

Erica - Effective teaching has been called a civil right of students.  A great curriculum is essential but not sufficient. The decisions made by the teacher, either in their lesson planning or in the moment, determine the extent to which the students learn.  No single approach serves the range of learners.  (One size doesn’t fit all)

Erica’s opinion - My observation is that the success of CC will depend on how it is implemented.  And I wonder how much support we, teachers, will get to make sure that we provide meaningful instruction that goes beyond a check-list and a few buzzwords. (“Backwards mapping” is the new buzzword.)

5th Key Principle

**Motivation and engagement play a crucial role in learning.**

Thomas – The more motivated the student, the more they learn. It allows students to sustain effort and persist in light of difficult text. Building curiosity in the world and the world of words are essential for literacy that will lead to career and college success.

Thomas’s opinion - Commonality of our students: curiosity was not instilled in them. They’ve had negative past experiences with education.

Nancy Plumber – “Success breeds success” and they get excited about learning.

**Adjournment:** At 4:15 pm the meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting Date:** February 28, 2014 from 1-4 pm at the Division Library

Respectfully submitted by Erica Dibello-Hitta