

ME-PD Learning Community Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

A leader in educational transformation.

SPRING 2009

FEBRUARY

ME-PD
PROGRAM

260 MORRIS HALL
1725 STATE ST
LA CROSSE, WI 54601

(608) 785-8142

WWW.UWLAX.EDU/MEPD

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

Director's Welcome	1
News from the Field	1
National Board Certification	1
Welcome New Hires	2
Enrollment and Grads	2
Research Items	2
LC Sites for Fall	2
Research Corner	3
Professional Opportunities	3
Graduate Student Survey	4
ME-PD Related News Items	4
UW-L in the News	5
Office Staff and Fall Schedules	5

Is it Spring Already?



Dr. Rhonda M. Rabbitt, EdD
Interim Director, ME-PD

"Be the change you wish to see in the world," Gandhi instructed.

Today Gandhi's words are even more powerful because we are amidst a time of political change, economic change, and university program change. During this change, we as individuals must strive to do our individual part so that collectively we move through the change into a

stronger, better place.

I believe that life is mirrored at various levels of experience, so that while I quote from the recent inauguration speech, you can apply the meaning to your professional life, your graduate study, and your personal life:

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends – hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism – these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. The world has changed and we must change with it.

~President Obama

Be the change you wish to see in the world!

Rhonda

National Board Certification

What opportunities are available to continue learning and growth after graduating from the Learning Community Program? National Board Certification provides an opportunity to continue to grow as a professional, creating the change in education that we seek. Board certification has a positive impact on student achievement, professional development, and teacher retention. Board certification ensures high-quality practice.

Becoming a board-certified teacher carries other benefits as

well. National Board Certification meets "highly-qualified status" under NCLB in most states, and can work towards CEUs and re-certification. Many school districts and states offer financial incentives, both during and upon completion of the certification process. To learn more about certification, speak with your graduate faculty facilitator or visit:

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:
www.nbpts.org

Some News

from the Field

Congratulations to **Beth Oswald**, 2003 graduate from Milton Learning Community, who was selected 2007-2008 Middle School Teacher of the Year for Wisconsin. Beth has been teaching history in Evansville at McKenna Middle School since 1996.

Congratulations to **Rebecca Poehls**, from the Oregon II Learning Community, who has had an article accepted for publication. "Self Advocacy: What is it and How is it Best Taught?" will be published in the upcoming volume of the *Health Education Monograph Series*, a publication from Eta Sigma Gamma, a national health education honorary organization.

Congratulations to **Beth Mohr**, a K-2 music and 6-12 band teacher in the Oakfield School District and learner in the Brown Deer Learning Community, who will present her research entitled "Evaluating the Effects of Standards-Based Assessment on Student Learning in Middle and High School Band", at the UW-La Crosse Graduate Research Fair in April

The ME-PD Learning Community program empowers educators to transform their professional and personal lives as they become agents of change and improve PK-16 student learning.

The Learning Community Program is committed to...

Excellence in Academics, therefore we will...

- Lead with passion and professionalism
- Cultivate Resourcefulness
- Model best practices
- Communicate effectively

Reflective Practice, there for we will...

- Engage in constant assessment and evaluation
- Seek to understand
- Strive for continuous improvement
- Listen, question, and provide feedback to self and others

Learning in community, therefore we will...

- Foster collaborative learning
- Embrace the art of facilitation
- Value human diversity and complexity
- Create and maintain a safe, respectful and ethical environment where all voices are honored

Empowerment, therefore we will...

- Focus on students
- Include and honor all stakeholders
- Inspire teacher leaders
- Challenge students to use their voice to advocate for others



Welcome Cindy George!

The ME-PD program welcomes Cindy George to the Learning Community Program. Cindy took over Susan Larkin's responsibilities last November. Cindy brings with her experience in finance, customer service, and marketing. Outside of work Cindy is involved with 4-H youth programs, curling, and camping with her husband and daughter. We are excited to have Cindy as part of our Learning Community Program!

Welcome Our LC Graduate Faculty Facilitators Beginning January 2009

- Sarah Dixen and Trish Harvey—Sun Prairie 5
- Deb Buswell and Tami Hillestad—West Allis 2
- Kim Harrington and Deb Uttech—Manitowoc 3



Spring Commencement Scheduled for Saturday May 16th

Research Items

- **Annual Celebration of Student Research at UW-L on Friday, April 3, 2009.** If you are interested in participating, please contact your graduate faculty facilitators.
- **RSEL Grant:** Are you interested in grant money for your research? Turn in applications to the Grad Studies Office by **Friday, February 20.** Contact your faculty for more information.

Enrollment & Grads

As we begin the Spring 2009 semester, we are happy to welcome 67 new students at three new ME-PD Learning Community Sites:

- Manitowoc 3
- Sun Prairie 5
- West Allis 2

Congrats to the students in the following communities who graduated December 2008:

- Kettle Moraine
- Milwaukee
- Onalaska 4
- Sun Prairie 3
- Sun Prairie 4

Every learning community graduate has achieved high standards in teacher leadership, learning in community, curriculum development and assessment, educational research, democracy, diversity, and social justice issues in education, and best practice pedagogy.

LC Sites Marketed for Fall 2009

Each semester, sites are identified to be marketed for in the following semester.

For Fall 2009, marketing sites pending approval include: West Salem, Burlington, Menomonee Falls, Brodhead, and Lancaster.

For more information please visit: www.uwlax.edu/mepd/lc/locations.html



A leader in Educational Transformation

Research Corner by Patricia A. Markos, Ph.D., CRC

Mixed Methods Research

According to Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), "mixed methods research is formally defined ... as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (p. 17). Mixed methods research uses induction (finding patterns), deduction (testing of hunches), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best set of explanations for understanding one's results). Many different strategies are used in mixed methods to answer a research question.

Researchers are interested in knowing that their results are valid, 'truth-worthy'. In quantitative analysis, quality is measured by the concept of validity (Cook & Campbell, 1972). This concept is a cumulative process with four steps including conclusion validity (to assess whether a relationship exists between two variables); internal validity (to determine if this relationship is causal); construct validity (the

degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the procedures used in your study to the theoretical constructs on which those procedures were based.); and external validity (examines if, and to what extent, findings can be generalized to other groups, places, and times). The language in qualitative methods, on the other hand, speaks to the truth worthiness criteria as a way to assess the quality of interpretative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). These criteria include the concepts of credibility and transferability that are parallels to the concepts of internal validity and external validity, respectively.

The fundamental principle of mixed methods research is to build on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the two usually competing methods, quantitative and qualitative research (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson & Turner, 2003).

In action research the goal is to "understand ... your ... practice and

to collect data that is appropriate and accessible" (Mills, 2007, p. 55). For students in the ME-PD program, the opportunity to truly understand their practice is the driving force for personal and educational transformation. Because the use of a mixed method can greatly enhance research results by providing a more comprehensive understanding of information its use in action research can help to achieve this goal.

Cook, T. D., & Campbell D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Johnson, R. B. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.

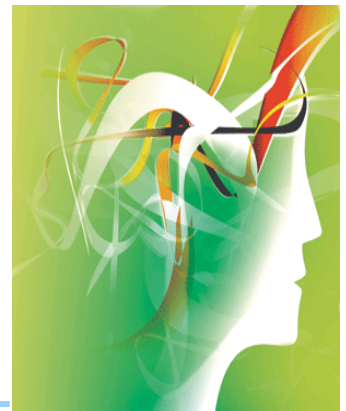
Johnson, R. B., & Turner, L. A. (2003). Data collection strategies in mixed methods research. *Handbooks of Mixed*

Methods in Social and Behavioral Research, Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985).

Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Mills, G. E.. (2007). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.



Professional Educational Opportunities

Western Wisconsin Education Conference February 20, La Crosse Center

"E=MC²: The Theory of Imagination"

Keynote Speakers:

- Katalina Groh "Leadership—An Art of Possibility Creating a Culture of Innovation and Creativity"
- Dr. Stuart Robertshaw "Dear Doctor Humor"

In addition, there will be three breakout periods covering a variety of topics in education, some of which will be led by faculty and students affiliated with the ME-PD program.

For more information visit the website at: www.wweconference.com

Widening the Circle: ACT 31

"Helping Teachers to Teach about Wisconsin Indians' and Hmong History and Culture, Authenticate Materials, and Infuse Curriculum"

April 3 & 4, UW-La Crosse

The La Crosse Native American Student Association (NASA) in conjunction with the WI Department of Public Instruction is holding a symposium Friday and Saturday at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. The symposium is open to PK-12 educators, post secondary educators, administrators, students in all areas of study, and other interested parties. Registration is free for UW-L students, but you must register. For information please visit: www.uwlax.edu/native

Wisconsin Research Seminar on Improving Educator Quality June 29-30 at Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

The Wisconsin Research Seminar on Improving Educator Quality will feature presentations of studies, evaluations, and ongoing projects aimed at improving the quality of teaching, student services, and leadership in Wisconsin schools. For more information on attending please contact your advisor or the ME-PD office.

For more information please visit: www.learningpt.org/greatlakeswest/witq/research2009.php

Graduate Studies Seeks Your Voice!

The Office of Graduate Studies would like to better know who you are, and would appreciate your feedback on your graduate program experience here at UW-L. Graduate Programs, whether on campus, on-line or through learning communities are very vital to the university and the community. Students' opinions are extremely important. With your help, we can improve our graduate studies programs for future generations.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact the GSO office.

To take the survey, please go to:

<https://secure.uwlax.edu/stusurveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=n402662>



Closure of the Professional Development Program

The College of Liberal Studies, with the support of the Provost and the School of Education, has decided to close the ME-PD Professional Development (Non-Certification) Program. Further admissions to the program have been frozen while the program is being officially closed. The intent of the closure is to strengthen the graduate programs in Special Education, ME-PD Initial Certification and Learning Community Programs. The program is being closed due to lack of defined areas of concentration, low enrollment, and lack of course options resulting in students unable to progress in a timely manner.

Is a Master's Degree Transformative?

Research conducted with our Learning Community Program participants has shown the transformative potential in obtaining a master's degree. Findings were shared on November 8th in Chicago and will be published in an upcoming issue of *Ubiquitous Learning: An International Journal* in an article by Rhonda Rabbitt, Hal Hiebert, and Pat Markos.

DPI Visit to School of Ed.

Last Fall the School of Education (SOE) had its accreditation visit from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI reviews each program in order to ensure standards are met for accreditation.

While DPI commended various programs, recommendations were given specific to DES to improve assessment of candidate proficiency. These include:

- Clearly delineated and defined measurement criteria.
- Align field experience assess-

ment forms with Wisconsin Teacher Standards.

- Follow-up evaluations with graduates of the program, assessing how well the program prepared them for work in the profession.
- Portfolio requirements and guidelines that measure proficiency in pedagogical knowledge and teaching practice over time.
- Guidelines that clearly identify when portfolios are to be submitted and assessed to demonstrate

multiple measures over time in candidate proficiency.

The School of Education anticipates continued work to ensure its programs conform to DPI requirements in the formation of professional, globally-responsive teachers.



UW-L listed among nation's 'Top Peace Corps' campuses

UW-L has earned a ranking in the top 25 medium colleges and universities on the annual list of 'Peace Corp Top Colleges and Universities.' UW-L ranks no. 24, with 19 undergraduate alumni and 2 graduate alumni working serving around the world as Peace Corp Volunteers.

The news was delivered in a letter from Ron Tschetter, director of the Peace Corps in Washington, noting that "With the knowledge and training acquired at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, these volunteers are making a positive contribution to the lives of people in 76 countries."

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has received volunteers from over 3,000 institutions across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. To learn more about the Peace Corps, visit www.peacecorps.gov.

New UW-L Sustainability and Environmental Literacy Website Online

UW-L's Joint Committee on Environmental Sustainability (JCES) has created a sustainability and environmental literacy Web site (www.uwlax.edu/sustainability) to provide information about the JCES, its membership, meetings and current activities. The Web site is a clearinghouse for news, events, campus projects, resources and information relating to sustainability and environmental literacy both on and off campus.

The JCES was created as a result of Chancellor Joe Gow's signing of the Talloires Declaration. The Talloires Declaration is a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy into teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities. The Joint Committee on Environmental Sustainability has faculty, staff and student members, as well as several, non-member community sustainability experts, regularly attend JCES meetings.

For more information about the JCES or its Web site, contact JCES Chair Rob Tyser at tyser.robi@uwlax.edu or 785.6992.

ME-PD Office Staff & Fall Schedules

Margie Hylkema

Assistant to the ME-PD Director

271 Morris Hall
(608) 785-5409
8:00-4:30 Mon-Fri

Margie works directly with ME-PD Learning Community director regarding any academic LC issues.

Dr. Patricia Markos

Research & Writing Specialist

268 Morris Hall
(608) 785-5087
8:00-4:30 Mon-Fri

Pat is currently conducting program evaluation, and research for the ME-PD Learning Community.

Janet Craig

ME-PD Program Associate
268 Morris Hall
(608) 785-8142
8:00-12:00 Mon-Fri

Janet is currently assisting in the ME-PD office primarily supporting the on-campus programs.

Scott Swdeen

ME-PD Graduate Assistant
270 Morris Hall
(608) 785-8673
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Scott is currently an ME-PD student, working towards licensure in middle-childhood to early adolescence. He assists the ME-PD staff.



Continuing Education & Extension (CEE) Staff related to ME-PD LCs

Cindy George

(608) 785-6507
8:00-4:30 Mon-Fri

Cindy works directly with prospective and current students on registration issues and other CEE related administrative details.

Karen Hansen

(608) 785-6513
7:45-4:30

Karen works to order and coordinate all books, videos, media, and office supplies that are needed and used by all of the graduate faculty facilitators for the Learning Communities.

• Don Campbell

CEE Director

• Lynn Weiland

Assistant Director Learning Communities & Teacher Education