Hello! This is the first edition of the TMU newsletter that will be printed every two months to update you on TMU happenings and events. The TMU crew has been very busy this summer planning unique professional development opportunities and is excited to see how the fruits of their labor will blossom this fall in the classrooms. Check out the articles in this edition to learn more about the TMU activities going on now!

First TMU Newsletter: Get It While It’s Hot!

Ongoing embedded professional development is a key component to the successful implementation of any reformed curriculum. Therefore, a new phase of the TMU project, called Planning Sessions, has begun. This phase, anchored by Graduate Assistant Tosha Burnie-Grimmer and Professor Vicky Kouba, is a communication component that focuses on the planning and delivery of a classroom lesson. Teachers from grades 6-8 in Albany and 5-8 in Schenectady, will have structured time to work cohesively with their colleagues on their curriculum. University at Albany Graduate Assistants will be in attendance to help facilitate meetings and serve as a mathematical resource. The Planning Sessions can also be used as an opportunity for teachers to work with others in different grade levels, or even schools, to broaden their content knowledge, become familiar with the new standards, share ideas and learn new approaches for implementing the material in their classroom. Planning Sessions will occur on a weekly or biweekly basis (according to teacher preference) throughout the year, for a total of fifteen hours in Albany and ten in Schenectady.

The City School District of Albany, will also be running parallel sessions for teachers in grades K-5 working on the Math Trailblazers curriculum. Elizabeth Nigro-Cushing and Kathleen Mineau of Albany, are the leads on the project and have arranged for speakers specializing in middle grade mathematics to address the group.

GA’s: Coming To A School Near You

The University at Albany TMU project has a new home. Professor Timothy Lance, Lead PI, secured Earth Science room 244 for use. The office is equipped with two sub-offices and a meeting room. Project Manager Jenna Storz is furnishing the room so that weekly meetings can soon take place there.

Editor: Philomena Brassard
Communications Specialist
On September 1, 2005, the New York State Education Department held a meeting for all the New York State Math Science Partnerships. Our partnership was represented by Donald Yackel, Lead PI of the City School District of Albany; Professor Timothy Lance, Lead PI of SUNY Albany and SUNY Albany evaluators Mary Pattison and Dianna Newman. Gary Clure, is also assisting our project with evaluation, but did not attend the meeting. The day’s events included presentations from every partnership to showcase a summary of their grant activities as well as a discussion of grant evaluation expectations. There was also enough time to meet with local outside evaluators and state evaluation consultants to gain valuable insight and clarification on what they will be looking for in the NYSED MSP Projects Annual Report due October 31.

TMU To Offer On-line PD Courses

Teachers can now earn professional development hours anywhere, even right from their own homes! TMU is offering online mini courses throughout the 2005-2006 school year that all focus on understanding mathematical content and pedagogy. The courses are designed to engage the participants in communication with each other and the instructor. Each four-week on-line course will earn teachers ten professional development hours. However, not all time will be spent online. Some time will be spent conducting research, reading, tackling projects and/or other activities. The course titled “Teaching for Understanding,” designed by Cristina Gomez, is the first of the series and a prerequisite for the other courses. When it was first offered during the second week of August, the completion rate was not as high as we had hoped. Yet, there was very positive feedback. The University Graduate Assistants interviewed every course participant by telephone to evaluate the course and found that the reason not all teachers were able to finish was because they encountered a lack of internet access and/or went on vacation. Additionally, the participants who did complete the course found it to be very enlightening and enjoyed it thoroughly. Every participant also expressed interest in taking another course in the future.

NYSED Meeting
Who Says Math Is All About Numbers?

One of the toughest challenges in math is understanding the language. It can make problem-solving very difficult. The NYS Standards support documents have a section with all the vocabulary a student in a given grade level is expected to know and understand. The terms will be used in the State Examinations. What is uncertain is how the terms mesh with the reformed curriculum.

Professor Vicky Kouba and Graduate Assistant Philomena Brassard are tackling this problem. They have begun to study how the state-identified vocabulary complements the curricula and identifies where the terms appear. This research will be very helpful for teachers so that they can adequately prepare their students for the state assessments with every tool necessary to succeed. If a term does not appear in the curricula, our work will help teachers know when they have to integrate it into a lesson. Hopefully, making teachers aware of their language and recommending appropriate use of the vocabulary daily, will make the students more familiar with the jargon and comfortable using it themselves.

Graduate Assistants Monica Zimmers and Philomena Brassard, have also worked on bridging the gap between the standards (specifically the new content strands) and the curricula.

Content and Pedagogy Training for 5th and 6th Grade Teachers

In September, the City School District of Albany has began a series of full-day released time training for about one third of its fifth and sixth grade teachers. At least one representative from every building will attend each session. A typical day is broken up into two parts. The first involves content training for the upcoming month with Siena College Professor/University at Albany Alumni Jim Matthews. Mr. Matthews specializes in Mathematical Instructional Theory and Practice. He was also past President of the Association of Mathematics Teachers of NYS. The second part of the day is led by Rita Floess, a mentor and teacher in the CSDA. She has a great wealth of knowledge for both Math Trailblazers and Connected Math, the fifth and sixth grade curriculum respectfully. This past August, she worked with Kathleen Mineau, to create an “Easing the Transition” document, designed for grade six Albany teachers and to use in this TMU professional development opportunity. The literature identifies areas where Math Trailblazer components are different than those of traditional programs, and also includes MTB terminology and non-traditional algorithms that children might use throughout their transition to CMP. Her workshop focuses on the pedagogy aspect of teaching and how to make the children’s transition from 5th to 6th grade as smooth as possible.

Schenectady Math Essentials Course

Schenectady City School District PI William Wales and Linda Burger, have begun to run a 30 hour course designed to help new and veteran middle school and high school teachers in a variety of areas. Topics that will be addressed include: classroom management, helpful ways to use technology for teaching, grades and participation, scope and sequence of courses and how to update work on midterms and finals. Advise will also be given to new teachers. This course will meet once a month for the duration of the school year.

National Consultant Visits Albany

Carol Inzerillo of Kendall Hunt Publishing visited the City School District of Albany for two days in October to work with a fifth grade group of elementary teachers and a group of Special Education teachers. As a Professional Development Associate and Senior Curriculum Developer of Math Trailblazers, she had a wealth of knowledge, especially for the Special Education teachers. She shared her expertise and assisted the teachers in understanding the mathematical material in the Math Trailblazer lessons and implementing the reformed curriculum. The teachers completed a self-evaluation on the events of the second day and described her visit as a rewarding experience.
CSDA Info

Embedded Summer Training
This past summer, lead teachers helped
develop materials to coincide with the sum-
mer school program, while remaining con-
sistent with the curriculum. They also as-
sisted the summer school teachers in imple-
menting the newly-designed resources in
the classroom.

“Teachers New To Grade Level”
Training
Approximately 20 teachers from grades
K-8 gathered at Sheridan Preparatory
Academy on August 30 to attend the
training. Instruction was led by CSDA’s
Kathy Mineau, Betsy Nigro-Cushing and
other MTB and CMP lead teachers.

New Core Curriculum
There have also been many activities
leading to the development of a new
CSDA core curriculum that took place
over at least 60 days during the summer.
It also involved completing pacing maps
for PK-8 grade. This project involved
over ten CSDA members.

SCSD Info

NYS Standards and Glencoe
The Schenectady Middle School staff and
TMU members will be working on supple-
menting the gaps between the NYS Stan-
dards and Glencoe Series for 6-8th grades.
The Schenectady Elementary staff will also
be working on realigning the standards and
filling in the gaps between Everyday Math
and Glencoe. The Math Curriculum Com-
mittee will then evaluate the realignment.

Evaluation Survey
SCSD’s Susan Malinowski, is the lead
elementary point person in Schenectady
for the TMU project. She is currently
working on coding evaluation surveys in
order for the SUNY Evaluation Team to
track the progress of students in conjunc-
tion with teachers involved in the TMU
project.

On-line Course Session I Schedule
Oct.5 - Nov.3 Teaching for Understanding
Oct.10 - Nov.7 Teaching for Understanding
Nov.9 - Dec.7 Teaching for Understanding
Nov.14 - Dec.12 Teaching for Understanding
Nov.14 - Dec.12 From Arithmetic to Algebra
Jan.5 - Feb.2 From Arithmetic to Algebra
Jan.5 - Feb.2 Multiple Representations

Next Year’s Summer Conference

• Planning for next year’s Summer Conference has begun. TMU Project Manager Jenna Storz, has secured the Desmond for June 27, 28
and 29 (TWTh). There will be a large room with round tables to fit 200 people and at least 6 breakout rooms. Each day teachers will listen to a
key-note speaker and have the option of choosing a workshop they would like to attend. It is very likely that the same workshops will be
offered everyday. Assistant Professor Abbe Herzig and Professor Vicky Koubab are investigating potential speakers. CSDA would also like
to bring in a consultant to work with their K-5 teachers, and perhaps SCSD will do the same.

• In August 2006, TMU would like to hold a Texas Instrument Training Conference. This conference would be part of the following budget
year. The conference would last five days during the summer and four days during the school year. If sponsored by TI, the conference
would cost $650.00 per teacher, or $13,000.00 otherwise. The conference could also be opened up to teachers of other districts to help off-
set costs. Donald Yackel has suggested holding the conference at one of the Albany schools and Jenna Storz suggested having it catered by
Price Chopper. Currently, Don is looking into the details of holding such a conference and investigating teacher interest.

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