Ring In the New Year With TMU

With a year of experience under our belt, we have witnessed this project’s growth. We have certainly gained momentum, which is a testament to the teachers in the Albany, Schenectady and non-public schools, as well as the dedicated staff on the project.

During the fall 2005 semester, four planning session groups began. Teachers participated to discuss math, become more comfortable with the standards and work together across grade levels and schools. The Schenectady Middle School planning group consists of three teachers. Since October, they have been discussing different strategies and working on some supplemental materials to support student understanding. Eleven teachers from the non-public schools have been meeting to gather activities and lesson plans that foster mathematical understanding. All three middle schools are represented in the Albany planning group, plus one teacher from North Albany Academy. These teachers have met for six sessions and are working on identifying topics that the Math Lab teachers should address in their work with students. Albany’s Elementary planning group consists of eighteen teachers (K-5) and have been meeting monthly since September with Lead Teachers Elizabeth Nigro-Cushing and Kathleen Mineau. This session addresses the correct implementation of the Math Trailblazers Curriculum.

As the second half of the year commences, we hope all the teachers will continue to participate in the planning sessions, and of course we look forward to meeting new faces, as well!

Logo Change!

If you did not happen to notice the change in our logo, it now reads “Teaching Mathematics for Understanding.” Because so many elementary school teachers have been interested in our project, we were thrilled to shift our focus from “Middle-Grade Mathematics” to “Elementary and Middle School Mathematics.” Now, we can accommodate a broader range of teachers and appeal directly to everyone’s different professional development needs. We are also in the process of publishing vocabulary resources to go along with all the curricula teachers use in their classrooms and our massive database is now equipped to handle on-line registration. As you can see, Team TMU is committed to making 2006 our best year yet!

Editor: Philomena Brassard
Communications Specialist
New and Improved On-line Courses

Another growing part of our project is the advancement of our three On-line Mini-Courses—Teaching for Understanding, Multiple Representations and From Arithmetic to Algebra. These new and improved courses give teachers more flexibility as to when they complete benchmarks. There is also more instructor feedback! Participation in discussions about three times a week is still a necessary part of all courses, since engaging in discussions helps everyone attain a better understanding for the material. Lastly, because we feel the discussion component is so important and understand from course feedback that composing responses takes more time than we had anticipated, we have increased the stipend and number of hours each course is worth from ten hours to fifteen hours. The expected amount of work for each course has NOT changed. Therefore, teachers who have previously completed a course will also be compensated!

Exploring Everyday Mathematics

This past December, twenty-five Schenectady teachers new to the Everyday Math program participated in a two-day workshop run by Everyday Math consultant Nelly Shephard. Teachers engaged in hands-on activities to explore and become more familiar with the curriculum. The workshop also provided effective strategies for planning and teaching lessons, as well as insight to the organizational structure of the units.

Content and Pedagogy Training

The full-day series of content and pedagogy training, run throughout the year by the City School District of Albany, has been a very helpful program for fifth and sixth grade teachers. The training directly coincides with the District’s Pacing Guide. At the December meeting, lessons from the upcoming January and February CMP unit, Covering and Surrounding, were discussed. Lessons 5, 6 and 7 will also be revisited during the January meeting to emphasize how closely the three are related. Teachers will also be exposed to some activities involving angle rulers and protractors, along with an investigation from Accentuate the Negative. Around ten to twelve teachers participate each month.

Grades two and three teachers in Arbor Hill Elementary School have also been meeting twice monthly to talk about pacing and testing. Kathleen Mineau and Elizabeth Nigro-Cushing have been running the meetings and will soon be visiting classrooms as a follow-up. During their visits, they plan to model lessons using student work to demonstrate to the children what quality work in mathematics looks like. They have also begun to work with groups of Special Education students to prepare them for the state test.

Spring Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23 - Feb. 20</td>
<td>Teaching for Understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 6 - Apr. 3</td>
<td>Teaching for Understanding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 9 - Feb. 6</td>
<td>Multiple Representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3 - Mar. 20*</td>
<td>Multiple Representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9 - Feb. 6</td>
<td>From Arithmetic to Algebra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 27 - May 1*</td>
<td>From Arithmetic to Algebra</td>
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*course is 5 weeks long due to vacation

New Lead Teacher in Sch’dy

The Schenectady City School District has recently hired a new Lead Teacher named Linda Gentiluomo. Linda has been teaching in Schenectady for eighteen years. During the past five years, Linda has also served as a science professional development specialist on the Capital Region Science Education Partnership.

Coming Soon: TMU Website

You will soon be able to find all information regarding TMU events and registration procedures in one convenient place—the TMU Website.

www.albany.edu/tmu
Evaluation Consortium Joins Partnership  By: Mary Jo Pattison, Evaluator

Early this fall, the Evaluation Consortium at the University at Albany joined the Mathematics and Science Partnership grant as the evaluators for the three-year project. Under the direction of Dr. Dianna Newman, a team of evaluators made up of Education Psychology students in the Masters, Certificate of Advanced Study, and Doctoral programs joined the partnership.

The Consortium employs a mixed methodology approach to evaluation using observations, surveys, interviews and archival data to accomplish four goals:

- To document and evaluate the professional development for teachers made possible by this grant
- To document and evaluate the implementation of the professional development in classrooms in participating districts
- To document academic outcomes in Mathematics due to the implementation of grant supported changes
- To document sustainable changes in the system that will support implementation and outcomes initiated by the grant

The Evaluation Consortium will be providing formative evaluation throughout the year to program staff, summative evaluation reports at the end of each calendar year and a final report at the conclusion of the three-year grant.

“Math Essentials For Teachers”

The Schenectady City School District’s course, “Math Essentials for Teachers,” has been helping seven Middle School teachers in a variety of areas. This thirty hour course is broken down into ten hours of class time and twenty hours outside of class working on a research project aimed to enhance the Mathematics Department at Schenectady. The ten classes explore several areas with a day or two dedicated to each of the following:

1. Technology
   a. Using the Equation Editor
   b. Using Math Software
   c. Gradebook or GradeKeeper
   d. Exploring websites for math resources
2. Discussing classroom management
3. Creating new course curriculums
4. Discussing positive teaching practices
5. Reviewing the scope and content of our Math Courses
6. How to get and stay organized

2006 TMU Summer Conference

On June 27-29, Schenectady and Albany Elementary/Middle School Mathematics and/or Special Education Teachers are invited to join us at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center for the Second Annual TMU Summer Conference. The conference will run from 8:00-3:00 and includes a Continental Breakfast and Courtyard Buffet Lunch. The conference will be structured around in-depth workshops that run across all three days of the conference. The workshops will address focused topics in mathematics content and pedagogy relevant to the curricula teachers use in their classrooms. Registration information will be available in March.

There will also be a Math Trailblazers Pre-Conference on June 26 and an Everyday Mathematics Post-Conference on June 30.