MATH + SCIENCE = SUCCESS Learning Communities

2008-09 Final Report Template

Title of Learning Community: Physics Learning Community

Contact Name(s) and Email Address(es):
Chad Fertig cfertig@uga.edu

Membership: (Add rows as necessary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Institution/School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craig Wiegert</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>UGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dava Coleman</td>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>UGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Vandergrift</td>
<td>STEM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dale Autrey</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin McReynolds</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Barrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ji Shen</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>UGA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Description of Learning Community Progress

1. Describe the process by which the members of your learning community work together (i.e., how do members interact with each other in meetings or in other learning community work?).

   Approximately once per month, during the academic year, we gather in the reading room of the physics department building for approximately 2.5 hours starting at about 5:15 PM. The meeting agenda is prepared by Nancy Vandergrift and usually contains both old and new business.

   Also, the learning community has a google group, administrated by Nancy Vandergrift, through which the group members engage in discussions, and view and edit documents pertaining to current projects.

2. Briefly describe the learning community’s work, including the topics(s) addressed and/or activities implemented. Include products produced, if applicable.

   The primary project undertook in 2008-09 was titled “Un-popular science: incorporating popular science writing into the classroom.” We worked to identify stimulating passages and quotations from the best popular science literature, and then began preparing an electronic compendium of these excerpts and original “front-matter” (brief introduction, discussion questions, etc.), to assist 6-12 science teachers in integrating these readings into lesson plans. We presented some preliminary work at the
GSTA meeting in 2008, and received positive feedback. We plan to continue this work next year.

3. Explain how your work is impacting STEM teaching and learning.

Members of the community have already used excerpts from our “Un-popular science” project in their own classrooms. We have also collected a list of email addresses of teachers from across the state interested in joining in the production of the reader. This product will allow our community to affect STEM teaching outside of its own membership.

4. What do you think is the most valuable aspect of participating in a STEM learning community?

A regular forum for interactions among science educators is a great place to test new ideas about science teaching, outside of the classroom. It also fosters additional contact between K-12 and UGA faculty, including visits by high school students to laboratories at UGA, and visits by UGA faculty to high school physics classrooms.

5. Does your learning community plan to continue to work together?

Yes.

Submit by June 15, 2009 to Nancy Vandergrift at vandergr@uga.edu