A World of Teachers at UND
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Twenty-seven secondary teachers from twelve different countries recently were granted what many described as a dream: to further develop their teaching expertise and English language skills through studying at UND for six weeks of intensive training and internship. Funded through an International Research and Educational Exchanges (IREX) grant, the 25 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and two social studies teachers were hosted by the Department of Teaching and Learning from September 25th through November 5th.

The selected teachers were educational experts and leaders in their home countries, many having won awards such as National Teacher of the Year and several working as teacher trainers with development agencies abroad. Their goals for studying in the U.S. varied by country and personal interest; those from more developed countries were particularly interested in learning more about instructional technology, while those in less developed countries were particularly interested in learning more about educational reform and U.S. educational methods to help their own educational systems compete on a global basis. All were excited to experience teaching in middle and high school classrooms in the Grand Forks School District, and to participate in a small slice of American life.

As co-director and the instructor for the 25 EFL teachers, this program presented a challenge. My experience in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) includes two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Marshall Islands and three years teaching ELLs on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico.

Despite the fact that my experience training international English teachers is extensive, I had never before faced the challenge of training a large group of teachers from so many different developing nations, with vastly differing educational systems, resources, cultures and religions.

To meet this challenge, we carefully structured the format of each training session. Each session began with teachers sharing what they already knew about the topic to be presented, and concluded with small and large group discussions of how the new information could be adapted and implemented back in their home countries. What could have been a we do it best in the U.S. professional development project quickly became six weeks of comparative education, with teachers learning from each other as well as learning about multiple educational systems and teaching methods around the world.

The challenges I felt quickly diminished as the teachers began sharing their stories and educational systems with each other. Education is not always mandated or free; a high school class can easily consist of over 60 students and many children cannot afford the cost of their books. Teachers can earn as little as $15 a day, and many need to work more than one job. Classrooms in Senegal, Cambodia and Bangladesh lack computers and Internet access. Teachers in these countries have limited resources beyond government-produced textbooks printed in black and white on cheap parchment paper; teachers in Argentina and Columbia have state of the art textbooks and

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technological resources but face violence, political turmoil and student apathy in the schools. India faces a critical divide between globally competitive schools in the modern cities and poverty-stricken schools in the rural villages. Teachers in former Soviet countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are challenged by sweeping reforms to compete with Russian and European schools, but without the teacher training and resources required.

The sacrifices these teachers made to study in the U.S. are equally astounding. It cost hundreds of dollars and weeks of preparation for each teacher to complete the application and interview process. Most of the 27 teachers were not granted paid leave from their schools, but rather had to sacrifice six weeks worth of salary or make up the teaching time when they returned home. Several of the female teachers were conflicted with breaking cultural and religious practices such as not traveling alone as a single woman and leaving fathers to care for the children.

The 27 teachers left UND on November 5th with a new dream: to return to their home countries and use their new knowledge to improve the lives of the students they teach. There was little talk of technology and methods in the last week of the program, in contrast to the beginning, but, rather, passionate discussions about making a difference, implementing student-centered teaching approaches, and advocating for change and educational reform. Teachers shared their plans to become teacher trainers, to pursue leadership opportunities, and, most of all, to network with each other and UND for ideas and support.

I sat back and listened to these final discussions and preparations, exhausted from facilitating and instructing these teachers; I was continually awed at their dedication, commitment and sacrifice.

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**Call for 2010 Models of Innovative and Best Practices in Teaching and Learning at UND**

Do you have a classroom strategy that really engages students and gets them excited about learning? Is there a teaching method or approach that you developed as a result of inquiry into learning in your class that has been particularly successful? Have you developed online assignments in creating a class for the ES program that accomplish significant learning around broader goals? Or an approach that works well to teach key concepts or ways of thinking to your majors or graduate students?

For the last few years we have been gathering models of good practices to feature some of the many great things happening in UND classrooms. And we are asking you to add your insights into the mix by letting us know about the effective and/or innovative teaching and learning strategies that you have developed for our students. Our intent is to both acknowledge this good work and compile inspiring models for others. We are sharing them on campus (you’ll find fifteen models posted under the “Programs” link at oid.und.edu) to ground ongoing conversations on best teaching practices, and we also hope that over time this collection might grow into something larger for an audience external to UND.

If you have an idea and would like to discuss its potential, call Anne Kelsch at 777-4233. The proposal deadline is noon February 1, and the guidelines are available online.

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**Progress Report on the Teaching Thursday Blog**

Last Spring OID announced the creation of a teaching blog developed in collaboration with Bill Caraher (History). Today we are pleased to report that Teaching Thursday (http://teachingthursday.org) has had over 4,000 views, averaging around 30 a day. The blog has also been linked to by The New York Times. Teaching Thursday features discussion ranging from “The Cost of a Cheap Education” to “Cheating Online” and “Critiquing the Three Year Solution.” To date many UND faculty and colleagues from other institutions have contributed their reflections and thoughts via entries in the main blog or comments. We invite you to join us. For the last few weeks of the semester we’ll feature a series of teaching-related posts on “what I’ve learned this semester.” We hope you’ll contribute to this open forum for teachers who want to share and reflect on their classroom experiences this fall.

See you in the new year!
Online education is undeniably changing how we teach at UND. This fall 365 sections of 279 different courses are being offered online through Distance Education. Student enrollment in those courses totals 4,299. This number represents a 24% increase over last fall’s internet course enrollments, with 45 more courses in 64 additional sections listed in the fall 2009 online catalog. And if you look back just a few years to 2002-3, the annual online enrollments for 2008-9 represent an 811% increase.

As many faculty know from direct experience, online teaching demands a steep learning curve, requiring the acquisition of new skills and approaches to ensure that student learning outcomes meet those of on-campus courses. There is an obvious and rapidly growing need to support faculty in creating high quality online classes that are grounded in solid pedagogy. With the support of the Provost’s Office, the Office of Instructional Development (OID) and the Faculty Instructional Development Committee (FIDC) are very pleased to announce a new program designed to help meet that need.

The Online Summer Instructional Development Professorship (Online SIDP) program will grant ten $4,000 summer stipends to UND faculty working for four weeks on innovative instructional projects dealing with online courses offered through Distance Education in the following academic year. This competitive grant program parallels the structure of the existing Summer Instructional Development Professorships. As with traditional SIDPs, eligible faculty will need to demonstrate that their project goes beyond normal course development and has the potential to increase student learning.

Proposals are due March 1 by noon and OID will offer an On Teaching Seminar in the spring (February 16 from 12-1) for faculty interested in submitting a proposal. Grant guidelines are available online at oid.und.edu under the “Funding for Faculty” tab.

Traditional Support for Summer Course Development Continues

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

You will be teaching a new course next year, and would really like to develop some innovative ways of helping your students gain necessary knowledge while actively building their thinking and information literacy skills.

You’ve struggled with a course you’ve taught a number of times that needs reworking, and there are some strong approaches to student engagement that would really suit the subject matter, but to date you haven’t had time to do the redesign.

You want to move components of your traditional campus course online to make more time in class for active learning. But you don’t want to sacrifice any of your higher learning goals in the hybridization process and need to develop exercises and assessments that ensure nothing gets lost.

The feasibility of these scenarios confirms that many of us are looking ahead to summer months in which course development will occupy a significant portion of our time.

Summer Instructional Development Professorships (SIDPs) are intended to fund course development grounded in sound teaching practices. The four week ($4000) stipends support work that goes beyond normal course development (for example, the program does not fund updating of course content) and focuses on enhancing student learning. The deadline for summer 2010 SIDPs is noon, March 1. So go online to oid.und.edu, choose the “Funding for Faculty” link, and look into the SIDP guidelines. And if you have any questions, please email or call Anne Kelsch (anne.kelsch@und.edu or 7-4233).

Please note the following addition to our New Faculty Biographies featured in the last issue of On Teaching.

Richard Aregood (Communication Disorders and Sciences). Richard Aregood is the Charles R. Johnson Professor of Communications, teaching writing skills from a professional journalistic perspective. After graduation from Rutgers University in English and Political Science, he began his career as a reporter for the Burlington County Herald, a rural county seat weekly. At the Philadelphia Daily News, he worked as a reporter, rewriteman, city editor, assistant managing editor, deputy sports editor and rock critic before becoming editorial page editor. His editorial writing has been honored with the Pulitzer Prize, three American Society of Newspaper Editors Distinguished Writing Awards, the Scripps Howard Walker Stone Award and a National Headliner Award. He has also been editorial page editor of the Star-Ledger of Newark, N.J., and senior vice president of the Marcus Group, a public relations and crisis management firm, where he won a PR News Platinum PR Award for a viciously pointed op-ed on behalf of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. He has previously taught at Rutgers and the University of South Florida. He and his wife Kathleen live in Grand Forks with two cats. Their son, J.T., is a student at Beloit College.
### UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

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On Teaching is published six times a year as a service to UND faculty.
Director: Anne Kelsch. Editor: Scott J. Baxter. Staff: Jeanne Boppre, Jana Hollands