



Realizing the Democratic Ideal

The 2010 NNER Conference



Panelists, top row, l. to r.: Nick Michelli, Phyllis Fernlund, NNER Executive director Ann Foster, Deb Shanlet. Second row: Jennie Rakestraw, Marijke Kehrhaan, Greg Bernhardt, Deborah Curtis. Missing: Jean Eagle.

NNNER conference attendees found a welcoming atmosphere in Normal, Illinois, site of the 2010 conference. Addressing the theme *Realizing the Democratic Ideal*, which resonates from many perspectives in this challenging era for advancing public education, conference planners **Molly Munson-Dryer, Deborah Curtis, Stefanie Lee-Berardi, and JoNancy Warren** sought presentations from the

various voices that compose the NNER work—teachers, students, school and university administrators, and faculty from arts and sciences and education.

Conference breakout sessions addressed democratic principles ranging from classroom practice to national policy.



Keynote Speakers

Keynote speaker **Greg Michie**, author of *Holler if you Hear Me*, provided examples from his work in Chicago schools in bringing university and school support personnel first to understand and then to meet the needs of students served by schools. In the closing session, **Bill Ayers** noted our shared responsibility to social justice, which begins with how we treat students and one another in schools. Both speakers reminded the audience that in an endeavor measured by actions, democratic practices in schools and universities—though sometimes challenging—are the core of our values and the key to the advancement of our mission.

2010 MICHELLI AWARD FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice was presented to **Ken Jones** of the University of Southern Maine for his years of work with teachers that led to the creation of the NNER web page section, *Teacher Stories*. Ken's vision was that classroom stories are the most powerful way to teach future teachers and also provide opportunities for reflection to current public school and university faculty. To that end he developed a process for allowing teachers to write candidly and reflectively about the real issues, dilemmas, successes, and challenges of providing quality education to all—advancing democracy and social justice in real-life teaching situations.

(see *Jones*, p. 3)

Connecticut's Bulkeley High School Receives 2010 Clark Award

Rene Roselle, clinical professor working at Bulkeley High School, in the school's application for this award wrote, "In preparing a nomination for the Richard W. Clark Award for Exemplary Partner School Work, I thought 'I wish the committee could spend some time with me at Bulkeley High School and then they could *see*'. The magic of a partnership is hard to put into words.

Through it all, the University of Connecticut Neag School of Education and Hartford have remained strongly committed to each other. The Neag School has placed 157 students at Bulkeley High School in 4 years and 400 students across our 3-year program in the same amount of time. That is what we call a critical mass!"

A Teacher Preparatory Academy serves as an



Representing Bulkeley High School, l. to r.: Gayle Allen-Greene, Marijke Kehrhaan, Willie Nunez, Shantel Honeyghan, Kerry Swistro, Kevin Clemens, René Roselle, Lisa Camargo

"Bulkeley has approximately 1,500 students in grades 9-12. Students represent 42 different countries; 18 different languages can be heard in the halls. The school is approximately 69% Latino, 23% Black and 8% White. The city struggles to meet the needs of children living in poverty and learning English while trying to test well on standardized tests. Administrative turnover, restructuring, and resource allocation pressure us. Hartford has had 7 superintendents in 10 years, three acting and four appointed. The city has endured state takeovers and failed

example of long term and in depth partner work.

In addition to coursework on education and teaching, seniors in the program are required to complete a Capstone project. This year-long project entails proposing a research topic, completing a research paper, taking action in the community as part of a 5-week internship, and creating a culminating presentation summarizing the student's experience. The program aims to provide students with transferable skill sets while encouraging them towards careers in education.

Established at the high school in collaboration with the Neag School, the academy provides support for current students and hope for the future. Its primary purpose is to recruit, support, and prepare students interested in education.

See *Clark Award*, p. 8

CONNECTIONS



Southern Valley Jr./Sr. High School, a partner school with the University of Nebraska Kearney, continues its community engagement work which has resulted in a \$10,000 continuation grant from the Cameron Foundation. The school works

with arts and science faculty to teach students how to study and solve local problems. For updates and ongoing information, visit them on the [web](#), or contact James Reed, jareed@esul1.org.

The NCATE Blue Ribbon Report on Teacher Education

The NNER endorsement may be accessed [here](#). To access the NNER response, please visit the NNER [web page](#).

Blogs, blogs, blogs

Ken Jones, recipient of the 2010 **Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice** continues to write insightful [reflections](#) on democracy and education in other cultures while working in India and surrounding countries.

Dick Clark welcomes your views and contributions on his blog, [Education and the Community](#).

UPDATES

David Keiser's mapping of nurturing pedagogy across the NNER settings information will be on the web page soon. Thanks to all of you for the positive response and detailed examples from throughout the NNER.

The NNER Executive Board has endorsed the School Climate standards as aligning with the NNER's work to provide safe and nurturing educational environments for all. See the .pdf file of the standards [here](#).

Take Note



Ann Foster
Executive Director

Dates to remember

Feb. 1-4. Setting visits. Ann Foster and Deb Shanley will be part of the MPER board meeting **Feb. 1**, and Ann Foster and Greg Bernhardt will meet with groups from the University of Texas Arlington partnership **Feb. 3-4**.

Thursday, February 24, 9:00a.m. NNER Governing Council meeting, at AACTE, San Diego.

July 18-21. The NNER 2011 Summer Symposium, Seattle.

October 20-22. 2010 Annual conference.

Education for Everyone: Many Voices One Purpose. Hartford, CT.

--**Ken Jones**, from p. 1

In his model, an editorial board reads and selects stories, which are posted on the web page and used throughout the NNER in courses and in-service work. Although Ken was in India continuing this work at the time of the award presentation, he was able to converse with the conference audience via skype. Cathie Fallona, Director of the School of Education at the University of Southern Maine, on hand to receive the award on Ken's behalf, noted that the work has influenced both teachers' work and that of the university.

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

Addressing Barriers To Student Learning & Faculty Health

By Dr. Dan Lowry

The University of Missouri Partnership for Educational Renewal (MPER) is one of the nation's largest educational partnerships, comprising 22 school districts (from Kansas City to St. Louis), which represent over 182,000 K-12 urban, suburban and rural students. In addition to MU's Colleges of Education and Arts and Science, the MPER also includes two community colleges, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Heart of Missouri Regional Professional Development Center.

To accomplish our overarching mission of "educational renewal," MPER has several programs tapping into the research expertise of the University of Missouri to enhance student learning in K-12 classrooms.

One MPER program receiving national and international attention is the "School Mental Health Leadership Academy." This program grew out of a two-year study conducted by the MPER Governing Board on the negative impact of mental health issues on children and faculty. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 5% of children between the ages of 4 and 17 demonstrate mental health issues. Fifty

percent of these children's parents report the children upset or distressed by their emotional and behavioral difficulties. Eighty percent report that the difficulties have affected family life, friendships, learning or leisure. The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) reported that mental health services for children in the United States are not responsive to children and their families, or are not available, or tend to be disconnected from other types of learning supports.

Now in its fourth year, the MPER School Mental Health Leadership Academy has developed a design of two annual one-day sessions, with topics focusing on both student and faculty mental health issues. One of the academy's overall goals is to provide tools that school leaders will find effective in addressing mental health issues. MPER Partner Districts choose session attendees based on issue(s) studied. Nationally recognized leaders facilitate the first meeting, introducing and summarizing the designated mental health issue. A subsequent meeting provides practical examples of schools addressing the topic. Previous years have focused on varied topics:

- *Mental Health Issues Related to Early Childhood Education* (2007-08)

- *Building District Capacity for School Mental Health* (2008-09)

- *Suicide Prevention* (2009-10) This study received state, national and international attention. MPER Partner Districts piloted "Trainer of Trainer" sessions for youth suicide prevention, instead of being merely reactive to this rising epidemic.

This year the academy is focused on student resiliency, an inherent characteristic existing in all of us and in every school and community. Every person, school, and community has unique strengths and weaknesses, assets and deficits, and individual and community risk factors. A growing body of research identifies individual traits as well as family, social, and environmental circumstances that buffer individuals' susceptibility to risk. Educators equipped to understand the inherent characteristics that can buffer students can better help students overcome obstacles and achieve to their full potential. (Morrison, et. al., 2006)

--Dan Lowry is co-director of MU's Partnership for Educational Renewal

<http://innerpartnerships.org>

During the 1990s in Australia, critical literacy theory began to have a profound effect on teacher education, state curriculum policies, professional development, and classroom practice. Critical literacy, which is concerned with relationships between language and social power, encourages readers to become actively involved in reading, to develop awareness that no text is neutral and to learn to uncover author bias. Helping students understand the relationship between language, power, and social groups and practices gives students an advantage in life.

In the United States, teachers are pressured to teach to the test, ensuring that their students meet state level requirements and pass standardized tests. Since assessing critical literacy is not part of standardized testing, the task of helping students think critically is often left out of the curriculum.

But how can teachers teach critical literacy? One way teachers can support critical literacy at early reading levels is using familiar folktales to prompt students to think

about the “good” characters and “bad” characters to examine how the author uses language to create a point of view about them. Students can explore alternative versions of familiar stories and compare author treatment of the characters. Students begin to learn that the way an author or illustrator portrays a character affects how a reader might respond. They learn that all texts have some sort of agenda. Students can also discover through reading and discussion that people have different points of view. As students become more proficient readers, issues become more intertwined and the thinking more complex.



See *Critical Readers*, next page



A project of the **Montclair State University** and **Newark Public Schools** partnership, the Art Backpacks program (ABP) at Franklin Elementary School in Newark, New Jersey is now in its seventh year. ABP grew out of the NNER 2000-2003

ART IN BACKPACKS

Arts in Teaching and Teacher Education Initiative led by Mary Ellen Finch and Wilma Smith.

Two primary goals of ABP are to enhance young students' positive regard for learning and school, and to provide some of MSU's future teachers with intensive clinical experience in teaching alongside experienced teachers, university faculty, parents, community volunteers and local artists. An example of nurturing pedagogy, ABP encourages students and future teachers to consider and develop an understanding of multiple

perspectives and multiple contexts for living. When a classroom consists of students, teachers, community volunteers, parents, university faculty, and local artists, future teachers naturally begin to consider the *value* of concurrent interrelationships for student learning and achievement and the *fluidity* of learning contexts. In ABP, future teachers work with small groups of fourth grade students. For most of these future teachers, it is their first teaching experience.

See *Backpacks*, p. 7

<http://nnerpartnerships.org>

2010 Annual Conference stirs conversations



Keynote speaker Greg Michie speaks with Jo Nancy Warren and Gloria Jameson at the 2010 Conference in Normal, Illinois.

CRITICAL READERS, *from p. 5*

Throughout, collaborative learning situations are important in teaching students to think critically. Engaging in one-on-one, small group, and teacher-led discussions helps students discover other points of view and models for how to question and support their thinking.

An additional difficulty is finding materials that foster critical thinking. With these obstacles in mind, materials like *Perspectives* were developed, to provide teachers with materials and opportunities for engaging students in critical literacy practices from kindergarten through grade 5.

Alternatively, teachers can use noncommercial materials to teach critical literacy. Communities present a wealth of topics students can explore in a critical way—issues such as school lunch programs; current

events; political and consumer ads; local issues such as homeless camps, raising taxes, humane treatment of animals; and so on. To engage in critical discussion, readers must explore different points of view and learn to ask critical questions: *What does this writer/speaker want me to believe? What information has been left out? Who has power/lacks power in this issue? Whose voice is not heard?*

Whether teachers choose to explore critical literacy through community issues or to use materials designed to teach critical thinking such as *Perspectives*, teaching students to be critical readers is a must in giving students chances to become productive members of our society.

For more information about *Perspectives*, see www.glaciercreekpublishing.com or call (866) 517-2001.

TriPartite and Governing Council Updates

At the 2010 conference the tripartite council deliberated the NNER's stance on charter schools. Led by Arts and Science chair Leslie Wilson, the group forwarded a position that the NNER should support schools promoting our mission of quality education for all students in the skills and knowledge of being critical and productive participants in our democracy.

The tripartite council helped the 2011 program planning group to form the program, which will feature an interactive session for NNER members and advocates about various charter school positions.

The group also received a presentation by Cori Mantle-Bromley on the work of UNESCO to promote global sustainability through teacher education. NNER's Brandon, Manitoba setting is engaged in this effort, and with strong interest from other settings, the NNER will work with Dr. Mantle-Bromley and colleague Victor Nolet to engage settings in this effort.

The Governing Council adopted a new option for new members, to provide for two-year affiliate memberships, in which institutions interested in membership but still developing a critical mass of support can participate in NNER functions and receive support from NNER colleagues.

Backpacks, *cont. from p. 5*

Their goals are facilitating students' visual arts and language literacy learning and practicing and reflecting on their own emerging skills, knowledge and abilities. Art Backpacks asks future teachers to actively integrate theory and practice in every aspect of their classroom work. It asks them to challenge the notion that an effective teacher is a one who gives a good performance—from which students may or may not benefit.

Before and after each class session, future teachers discuss goals for student learning and for their own development. Immediately after, future teachers reflect on and discuss teaching and learning challenges, successes, evolving insights into their development as teachers, and effects of their teaching on student learning.

One future teacher, reflecting on her efforts to teach students to see, recognize, identify and physically position frames around abstract shapes and forms within representational images, and on her own developing awareness of her self-as-teacher, recently commented, "When I saw some students choosing to place their viewfinders (frames) around a recognizable object right in the center of the composition, I tried to explain the nature of abstract shapes and show them that the images within their viewfinders should no longer be about what those objects are in real life; instead, we are focusing on the shapes within the recognizable images and forgetting that this is a person, this is a leaf, etc. I also helped students grasp this concept by referring back to the examples and the demonstration they'd seen at the beginning of the class. In the future, I want to make sure I'm dividing my attention equally among all of my students, and I also want to get better at finding new ways of getting students to understand things when they don't understand me the first time."

Acknowledging the limits of understanding creates a space to grow. It also assures greater learning among students. Nurturing pedagogy reminds us that knowledge about acting wisely

in the face of uncertainty is a work in continual progress.

Working with future teachers constantly reminds us that we wish them to develop complex habits and abilities so as to act wisely to assure student learning. Acting wisely in the interest of and in the presence of students requires active assessment of students' learning needs, and hearing, seeing and understanding students' needs at a specific moment. Future teachers are asked to assess themselves, adjust, determine what they must do, and gauge how to act to bring about student success in context.

Knowing pedagogical theory and content as things separate and removed from the classroom is not enough. ABP asks future teachers to cultivate and develop *pedagogical abilities*, to consider the innumerable ways of thoughtfully and educatively integrating life problems into content in ways that acknowledge and honor students' experiences.

Through clinical experiences like Art Backpacks, future teachers learn to function intellectually, practically and sensibly in the ongoing live, real-time act of classroom student learning. It asks them to begin a journey toward functional expertise extending beyond typical teacher development, and it serves as a platform for them to become exceptional in calibrating their knowing and doing to student learning needs, contexts, and circumstances. It can become a means of recognizing and accepting the challenges, contradictions, truths, and dilemmas implicit in the complexity of teaching and learning.

In ABP, nurturing pedagogy is unfolding as a process of developing teachers who bring sensibility, subject matter content, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, theories and practice into a kind of balanced presence resulting in wise actions that will enable and enhance student learning.

CONSORTIUM AWARDS 2011 MINI GRANTS

In its first year, a new mini-grant program for schools, teachers, and/or principals, the Metro St. Louis Consortium awarded three grants to partnership members for projects to further the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy*. A \$1500 grant was awarded to **Money Guiden & LaTisha Smith** of HSSU, **Nancy Williams** of Maryville, **Sylvai Shead** of Clyde C. Miller Academy, and **Patricia Johnson** of the William Clay Early Childhood Center, for *Developing Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills*.

A thousand dollars went to **Julie Wuch** of the Wilkinson ECC for *The Right Books at the Right Time*.



A thousand dollar grant was also awarded to **Kimberly Curtis** (HSSU), **Linda Pitelka** (Maryville), **Julie McMullen** (Parkway South HS), and **Stephen Hoffmeyer** (Roosevelt HS) for a project titled *Rediscovering our Past: Using Cultural Artifacts and the Arts to Develop Non-Traditional Methods of Teaching U.S. History*.

Sam Hausfather, Dean of Education at Maryville, said he expects grants to be available again this coming fall.



Clark Award, from p.2

The goal of this pathway is to provide a rigorous curriculum and field experiences through meaningful, creative and engaging learning opportunities. The Academy emphasizes the importance of collaboration between a student and their teacher in the learning process, demonstrating best practices, and ensuring all students are ready for postsecondary opportunities.

This new and exciting option for students launched on 8/31/09 to students who are entering grades 11 and 12, enrolled at Bulkeley High School, and completed the application process. This option is part of Hartford's All Choice initiative. As the first program in Connecticut that pointedly focuses on preparing students to become teachers, implications may be far reaching for Hartford and the State. In a time of teacher shortages, the program hopes to increase the pool of highly qualified candidates who will be able to fill the critical content area vacancies, increase the diversity of applicants, and encourage students to return for careers in the City of Hartford as educators or other professions that will benefit the community.

National Network for Educational Renewal

SETTING	STATE/PROVINCE
California State University, Chico	California
Colorado State University and the Poudre School District Partnership	Colorado
University of Connecticut	Connecticut
Georgia Center for Educational Renewal at Georgia Southern University	Georgia
Illinois State University	Illinois
University of Southern Maine and Southern Maine Partnership	Maine
The Brandon School-University Partnership (The Brandon School Division and Brandon University)	Manitoba
St. Cloud University and the St. Cloud School District	Minnesota
Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational Renewal*	Missouri
MU Partnership for Educational Renewal	Missouri
Nebraska Network for Educational Renewal*	Nebraska
Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal	New Jersey
University of New Mexico—Albuquerque Partnership	New Mexico
CUNY and the New York City Department of Education	New York
Miami University Partnership	Ohio
Wright State University	Ohio
South Carolina Network for Educational Renewal* Arlington University-School	South Carolina
Winthrop University-School Partnership	South Carolina
Network for Educational Renewal (AUSNER)	Texas
University of Texas at El Paso	Texas
University of Washington	Washington
University of Wyoming and Wyoming School-University Partnership	Wyoming

*denotes multiple IHE site settings

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