



PROFESSIONALISM IN PRACTICE

Practice Made Public

2007 Professionalism in Practice Conference Report

August 17, 2007

Coffman Memorial Union
Minneapolis, MN



photo credit: Carlos Grados



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PROFESSIONALISM IN PRACTICE

Synopsis of the event

On August 17, over 100 educators from around the Metro area came together at Coffman Union on the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus for the first annual Professionalism in Practice conference: "Practice Made Public." The conference lived up to its name as 36 presenters, all current and former Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) teachers, took the lead by sharing their school-based research and practice with other educators. Leaders from each of the conference's sponsoring partners—MPS, the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, MPS ATPPS/Propay Office, and the Patrick Henry Professional Practice School—welcomed participants and recognized the power of teacher-driven professional dialogue as a tool to improve learning for all of our students.

Theme for 2007: Practice Made Public

Conference goals

- Increase professional dialogue about equitable practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
- Share promising practices, lessons learned, and action research evidence from classrooms and schools.
- Provide time and space for educators to reflect on their practice and apply the learning and ideas gained from colleagues.

Strands

- **Learning in Practice**—How professional learning, inquiry and reflection improves student learning
- **Collaboration in Practice**—Ways that teams, clusters, cohorts, committees impact student learning
- **Leadership in Practice**—How teacher leadership and support impact school culture and student learning

Format—2 types of sessions

- **Interactive Workshops:** Sharing promising practices with colleagues through modeling or engaging participants in a simulation.
- **Research Round Tables:** Sharing professional learning gleaned through related action research topics. After identified presenters briefly share their work, participants are invited to join them in a discussion of project implementation and impact on students.

Note: Both types of sessions included dedicated time for participant reflection on implications for classroom practice.



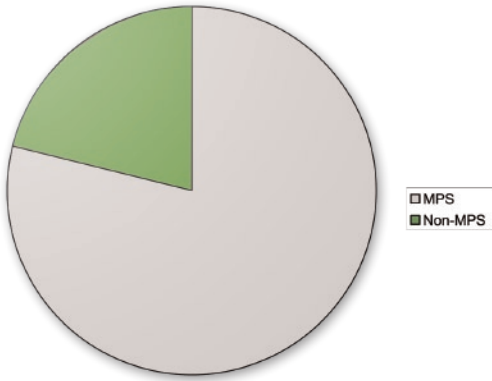
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Reasons for attending

When asked what drew them to attend the conference, participants noted the opportunity to learn from colleagues about practices that impact student learning as their primary reason for attendance. Many participants noted that they were drawn by the variety of sessions, while some cited individual presenters whose work they knew and respected. The uniqueness of a teacher-driven professional conference inspired many to attend. In addition, many cited the timing, location, and free registration as appealing factors.

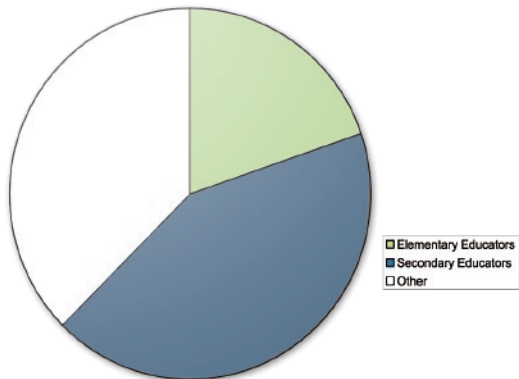
Minneapolis Public School Employees vs. Non MPS Employees



What drew you to attend this conference?

- Ability to talk about the evidence-based teaching that happens in the district.
- An opportunity to talk to others about their work.
- It was the first- it caught my eye and sounded interesting and appropriate for Minneapolis teachers. I thought it would really apply to me as an inner city North side teacher.
- Extended professional learning, new ideas to incorporate into my classroom, opportunity to grow and become more effective helping my students' achievement.
- Being able to present- also attending a session- always looking for new ideas, and to hear what other colleagues have to share.
- I had time. (Not like during the school year).
- Teachers teaching teachers.
- The variety of breakout sessions...also it was nice that it was free and food was included.
- Professional growth, to get fired up for the school year.
- Involvement in Propay.
- I wanted more strategies.
- Location and variety.

Work Context of Participants



Participant statistics

- 104 Total participants in the conference
- 145 People were pre-registered for this conference.
- 105 of the pre-registrations were MPS employees or 72.4%
- 99 of those pre-registered attended the conference or 68% of those who pre-registered.
- 5 on-site registrations





Sessions and strands

Put a Beat Behind It: Using Garage Band® for Construction of Performance Reading	Learning
The Role of Teachers in School Improvement	Leadership
Collins Writing in World Languages and ELL	Learning
Math Curriculum Wars: A Peace Treaty for Student Learning	Learning
The Effect of Classroom ENVoY Strategies on Homework Completion	Learning
The Kara Walker Experience: An Art and Social Studies Quest for Meaningful Learning	Learning, Collaboration
Teaching Mathematics is a Group-Worthy Task -- double session	Learning
Science Notebooks Inside & Out: Using Art as an Instructional Tool to Teach Science – double session	Learning
Assessments: Summative? Formative? What's BEST for kids?	Learning
Want to Teach Reading and Math? Try Singing!	Learning
Use The Go-Fish Strategy to Teach Academic Skills	Learning
Teamwork That Gets Results!	Collaboration, Leadership
An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication	Learning, Leadership
Storytelling: A Student-centered Approach to Language Learning	Learning
Designing Groupwork	Learning
Walking The Talk	Learning, Leadership
Teacher Mentorship Advances Professional Development and Student Learning	Collaboration, Leadership
Student Intrinsic Motivation: Perception vs. Reality	Learning





Sample session abstracts

Put a Beat Behind It:

Using Garage Band® for Construction of Performance Reading

Brock Dubbels

Interactive workshop, room 303

Audience: language arts, K-12

In this literacy activity, students rap literature and build a hot new single for their iPods while practicing their oral fluency and understanding of the elements of voice in literature and composition. Students reflect on their learning using a scale for fluency and performance.

Science Notebooks Inside & Out: Using Art as an Instructional Tool to Teach Science

Charlene Ellingson and Mary Jo Thompson

***Double Session* 10:30am-12:25pm**

Interactive workshop, room 324

Audience: science

In this interactive workshop, presenters will model and discuss how science notebooks and arts integration can be used as learning tools for students and instructional tools for teachers. Participants will understand and experience how scientists use notebooks in order to provide space for student thought, reflection, observation and questions. All participants will receive a CD and other resources.

Want to Teach Reading and Math? Try Singing!

Elizabeth Olson Ph.D. and Ann Kay

Interactive workshop, Mississippi Room

Audience: elementary

Participate in a fun-filled session that demonstrates how to use singing as a primary source for learning. Learn how Affirming Parallel Concepts among reading, math, and music has contributed to dramatic improvement in student achievement in Minneapolis Public schools. Experience how to create a classroom environment that engages and excites students, keeping them open to learning.

Storytelling: A Student-centered Approach to Language Learning

Gaelle Berg, Nancy Gustafson, Tina Maynor, Amanda Stuckey

Research roundtable, Mississippi room

Audience: K-12

How can language teachers engage students in language acquisition? TPRS is a storytelling method that results in language retention, more engagement, reinforced literacy skills, and reaches diverse students.

In this round table discussion, teachers will present evidence of the successful use of this method in their classes.

Teacher Mentorship Advances Professional Development and Student Learning

Bruce Black, Paul Klym, Matthew Boucher

Research roundtable

Audience: K-12

Come hear and discuss how teacher mentorship at Edison High School has positively influenced and supported teacher practices, staff development culture, and improved student learning. Learn about some of the essential elements of teacher leadership and assess teacher leadership opportunities at your own site.



Presenter comments



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I think that the pre-conference preparation forced me to take the reflective time I so often don't take. It makes you really sit and think about justifying what you do in terms of student achievement. It also has me thinking that I should do an action research project on the effects of arts integration on student achievement.

Char Ellingson

Presenting reinforced the importance of our (Edison TAP) ongoing data collection around the strategies we are asking teachers to implement to improve student achievement. Since our summative data is minimal (MCA-II), we have to have good formative data.

Bruce Black

Keynote Presentation

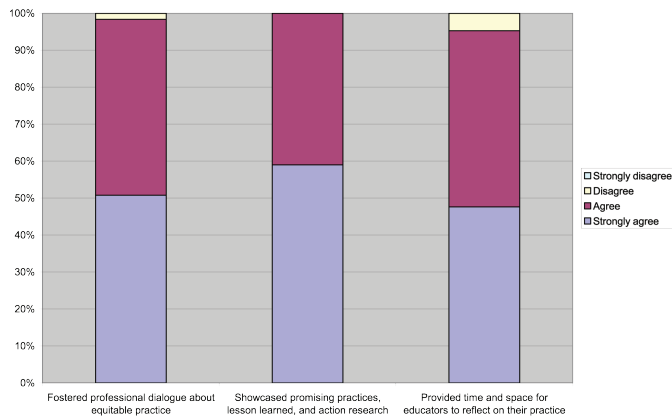


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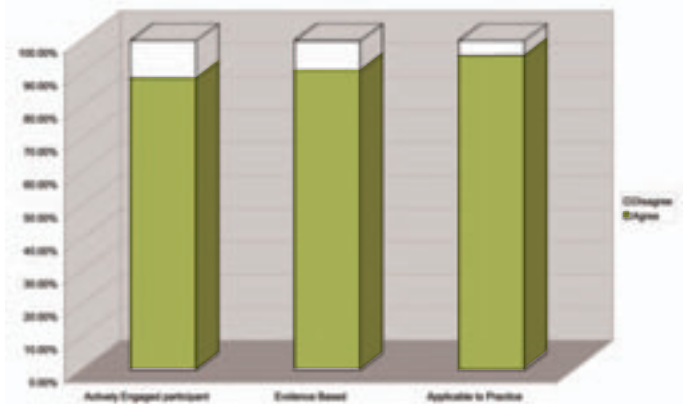
Many participants noted the interactive keynote presentation by Jan Mandell, along with her colleagues and students from St. Paul Central HS, as a conference highlight. Mandell, who is both an outstanding classroom teacher and a national voice on using arts integration as a tool for promoting student learning and equity, brought these together to help participants experience the power of arts in support of learning and student empowerment.

Ms. Mandell uses her passion for teaching and theater to create a more equitable society inside the walls of St. Paul Central High School and beyond. As founder of the school's Central Touring Theater (CTT), Mandell has led the way for nearly 30 years in a creating safe space which attracts a multi-racial, multi-economic and multi-intellectual group of students who come together to be themselves, tell stories, break down barriers and produce theater that is as powerful as it is entertaining.

The degree to which the conference as a whole achieved its goals



Aggregate of Participant Response to Individual Presentations



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Participant satisfaction

Overall, participants found the conference useful and energizing, and agreed that it had met its goals of fostering professional dialogue about equitable practices that have a positive impact on student learning; showcasing promising practices, lessons learned, and action research evidence from classrooms and schools; and providing time and space for educators to reflect on their practice and consider ways to apply the learning and ideas gained from colleagues.

- Great- Informative- Exciting- gets me excited to begin school again.
- Collaboration with others is inspiring and mutually beneficial. Time to reflect and give feedback was helpful.
- Great to share how “site” changes occur! Great idea to have this conference!
- Very informative, engaging and useful!
- Very well organized! Best organized conference that I have ever been to- very impressed with facilitators, food, keynote presentations, bag of books- presenters had excellent materials to hand out.



photo credit: Carlos Grados

When asked if participants would attend this conference again, 93.7% responded with an unqualified yes; 6.3% responded with a maybe. No one responded in the negative.

Why would you attend again?

- It is great to share and learn between professional teachers.
- ... fabulous ideas- practical- cutting edge.
- It is affirming to see quality work impacting student achievement.
- Excellent venue to interact with caring fellow professionals and create a professional community.
- It was quite refreshing, especially just prior to school re-opening.

Suggestions for improvement

Most of the participant suggestions for improving the conference focused on expansion: a longer conference day, longer sessions, and more options to address a wider variety of work contexts.

- Do it again! A great conference.
- Make the sessions a little longer- maybe 1.25 hours each instead of 55 minutes- more time for questions.
- It would be great if next year more opportunities were offered for [early childhood] population also since resource staff (SERTs, SLP's, specialists) interact with the younger students also.
- Continue to market toward U of M grads! Continue to bring in a variety of presenters. I love seeing students be part of the keynote.
- Make it all day.



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Minneapolis Public Schools
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