



THE TWENTY

This Month: Curriculum and Technology Departments



Volume 5 Issue 4

Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

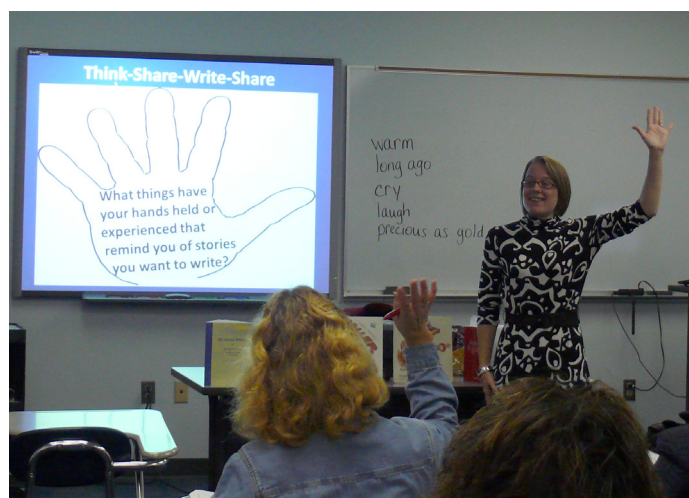
December 2009

Fourth Annual IU-Wide In-Service Sees Attendance Numbers Soar

BY LINDSEY SMITH, *Coordinator of Professional Development*

The IU Wide In-service, held annually on Columbus Day, features professional development opportunities for educators who work outside of the four content subject areas (Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts). This year's conference also reached out to paraprofessionals for the first time, offering topics geared to meet their needs.

On October 12, 2009, 214 professionals including guidance counselors; school psychologists; school nurses; librarians; art, music, theater, health, physical education, foreign language, English as a Second Language, business, technical education, technology education, gifted and family and consumer science teachers participated in content-specific sessions to meet their diverse needs. The professionals from school districts across the IU region, who participated in the day at Pleasant Valley High School, also used the opportunity to share effective practices with colleagues from outside of their district.



Davina Messics from the Lehigh Valley Writing Project discusses an activity called Think-Share-Write-Share with a group of paraprofessionals.

An additional 253 paraprofessionals joined the learning experience by attending sessions at Northampton Community College. Locally known presenters including Tom Baileys, CIU 20 Director of Technology; Chris Wolfel, CIU 20 Supervisor for the Partial Hospitalization Program; Deb DiMenichi, CIU 20 Training and Consulting Staff; and individuals from the Lehigh Valley Writing Project, The Center for Humanistic Change and KidsPeace presented information on technology tools, behavior and de-escalation techniques, conferring with student writers and coping with traumatic events.

By combining the smaller academic departments within school districts into larger peer groups, the in-service day offers cost-effective professional development to audiences who benefit from topic-specific information.

SEE ADDITIONAL PHOTO ON PAGE 3

Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

The Twenty for December

Happy Holidays! Soon you will be hearing about an exciting initiative in your local school districts that involves Race to the Top funds (RTTT) from the federal government. This is a \$4.5 BILLION pot of money that will be distributed on a competitive basis to states that commit, along with local stakeholders, to specific reform measures. Pennsylvania's Department of Education is applying for up to \$400 million.

Fifty percent of the RTTT funds, if Pennsylvania receives an award, must be directly sent to school districts to fund reforms they commit to as local stakeholders. In our IU 20 region that encompasses Pike, Monroe, and Northampton Counties and based on approximately 150 districts agreeing to participate statewide, awards could range from \$100,000 to \$2 million or more depending on the actual amount of money Pennsylvania receives, the number of districts agreeing to participate, and your Title I population.

One of the most controversial requirements is that a participating district must agree develop and use a multi-measure evaluation system for teachers and principals that takes into account student achievement gains as a "significant" factor. Yet to be defined is what "significant" means or looks like. At this time, districts would just need to "agree to agree" to develop and use such an evaluation system, with details to be worked out and finalized if and when Pennsylvania is awarded RTTT funds.

To participate, a district will need to send to the Department of Education an official memorandum of understanding agreeing to all the commitments required and signed by the superintendent, board president, and teacher union president.

At IU 20 we will be working with your superintendents to explore this program and the commitments required. We will also be assisting in providing as much information as we can to you and your local stakeholders as districts determine if they will or will not participate.

As always, please contact me at the intermediate unit if I can be of any assistance, and please have a safe and happy holiday.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . that the Curriculum Department offers FREE staff development, at the intermediate unit and on-site to meet school district needs, on an array of topics including:

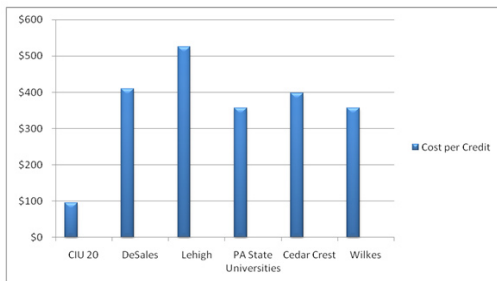
- Autism
- behavior
- data analysis
- inclusive practices
- literacy
- science
- educational technology tools
- assessment
- assistive technology
- early childhood
- instructional coaching
- mathematics
- RtII

Course for Credit Program Offers Cost-Savings and Rigorous Content to District Professionals

BY LINDSEY SMITH, *Coordinator of Professional Development*

The CIU 20 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) course for credit program provides member districts with cost savings and rigorous course content while serving the local needs of educators. By utilizing local resources and area educators, CPE courses greatly reduce the cost paid for similar studies at colleges/universities.

The cost per credit of a CIU 20 CPE course for credit is \$95 (not including applicable materials/texts), which can provide hundreds of dollars in cost savings per student per credit in comparison to higher tuition rates and fees charged at the university level (for a price comparison, please see the accompanying chart). These graduate-level courses, taught throughout the CIU 20 coverage area and online, are offered on a variety of topics based on local need in order to provide educators with an alternative to often pricy or geographically inconvenient graduate opportunities.



This graph represents the costs per credit charged by some Pennsylvania universities. This information was obtained from university websites. Tuition rates at the graduate level are subject to change.

In order to maintain high quality and graduate level rigor in graduate level courses, all instructors must successfully complete an interview and reference check in order to be considered for graduate level course instruction. CIU 20 requires references from current supervisors who are often superintendents and other central office/building administrators. After completing this process, selected course instructors then develop a course proposal using guidelines set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Upon completion, the proposal is reviewed by a member of the CIU 20 Course Design Team (IU 20 and school district administrators) for changes or revisions. Once the Design Team has approved the proposal it is submitted to PDE for final approval before the course may be taught.

The CIU 20 CPE Course program also considers regional data analysis as well as school district input when selecting course topics. Currently, CIU 20 is working with some approved instructors to design individual courses and series of courses to provide support to local initiatives and select audiences (e.g. Guidance Counselor course series, Career Pathways courses). All CPE courses are related to achievement of the PA Academic Standards and each course is standards-based. The program aims to provide tailored instruction to enhance the skill set of educators throughout the region, making the program useful to the teaching process and the needs of school districts throughout Northampton, Monroe and Pike counties.

Intermediate Units are the only entities besides colleges/universities, as set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, able to award credits for graduate level courses. Colonial Intermediate Unit 20's program, in particular, has existed since the 70's; however, development of new process and procedure for course submission and instruction in recent years has improved course rigor and quality.

An informational brochure on the CPE course program is available on the CIU 20 website for additional information. Please visit <http://www.ciu20.org/curriculum-Services/continuing-professional-education-courses.aspx> to review the CPE Course Brochure.

Beginning the Journey of Differentiated Instruction

BY MISSY PETRILAK AND DONNA LLOYD, *TaC Staff*

One of the professional development opportunities that IU20 has provided since 2005-06 has been the training entitled, "Beginning the Journey of Differentiated Instruction." Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an effective, systematic approach of planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to address the needs of diverse learners in the classroom. A fuller definition of differentiated instruction is that a teacher proactively plans varied approaches to what students need to learn, how they will learn it, and/or how they can express what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible (Tomlinson, 2003). This three-day, interactive workshop provides participants with a fun-filled focus on the facts, principles, and skills necessary to effectively and successfully implement differentiated instructional strategies in their classrooms.

After attending this training, participants are able to identify and delineate the research that supports the use of differentiated instruction. Also, they are able to state practical rationale for utilizing differentiated instruction, as well as implement various differentiated instructional strategies. Some of the strategies presented throughout the course include, but are not limited to, cooperative learning, tiered activities, cubing, ThinkDOTs, compacting, use of essential questions to guide instruction, flexible grouping, and anchoring activities.

Day 1 of this school year's training was completed on November 11, 2009. Approximately 42 participants had the opportunity to see various differentiated strategies modeled throughout the day by the presenters, Melissa Petrilak and Donna Lloyd, CIU 20 Training and Consulting staff, with discussions by "clock partners," table partners, or by the whole group on how these strategies could be implemented in classrooms. The differences between a traditional classroom versus a differentiated classroom were noted by viewing video clips from Ferris Beuler's Day Off (traditional) and School of Rock (differentiated). Participants used process sheets to capture the various instructional strategies being utilized by the teacher in the video clips to solidify the differences between a traditional and differentiated classroom.

Throughout the day, participants were given time to process new information in the form of "Brain Dumps." This DI strategy is a great one and should be used with all learners to allow them time to process what is learned up to that point. In order for the brain to retain information, it must connect new information with prior knowledge. In the classroom, information is chunked into ten minute intervals, and then learners are

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For more information concerning CIU-20 Programs and Services, visit our website at www.ciu20.org or contact:

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Technology Department Working on Wide Area Network Re-Bid Project

BY THOMAS BAILEYS, *Director of Technology*

A major undertaking in the technology department has been the re-bidding of the technology contract for the Wide Area Network (WAN). The WAN was first put into place more than four years ago to provide high speed network connectivity between the CIU 20 member districts and the IU. The original contract that resulted from the WAN project is set to expire in June 2010 and a new five year contract is being sought. This project also includes the necessary steps to ensure that the WAN and internet services continue to qualify for federal eRate eligibility and reimbursement for funding via the state eFund (Act 183).

The IU has used this advanced network to provide many services for districts including United Streaming videos, offsite storage and backup, CPETracker, Internet2 and most recently connection to the statewide education network, upon which CIU 20 is a node. In fact, all network traffic between WAN member districts and between the districts and the IU utilize the WAN rather than their commodity internet route. In late 2008, CIU 20 connected to the statewide educational network and expanded the list of services and locations (all but a handful of school districts in the state are connected via their local WANs) for which network traffic utilizes the private network instead of the commodity internet.

Delivery of services over the private networks reduces the ever expanding need for internet bandwidth and provides a more secure and private path for those services. In addition, by acting as a consortium for the purchase of the high-speed circuits, internet and other educational technology services, members can benefit from the combined purchasing power and bidding procedures. Statewide bidding for commonly used technology products and services is now becoming the norm, resulting in drastic price reductions from vendors.

A request for proposal was prepared and issued, seeking an increase in circuit bandwidth for consortium members from 50 Mbps (megabits per second) to 100 Mbps (megabits per second), essentially doubling the capability of the network. Additionally, the proposal requested pricing for a bulk purchase of commodity internet based on the expected combined usage in the member districts. The resulting bids will provide the higher bandwidth circuits for about \$150 per month less than members are currently paying and a reduction in the cost per megabit of commodity internet from \$225 per megabit per month to

\$45 per megabit per month. Thus, each member of the consortium will see their level of service increase dramatically while their monthly recurring costs drop significantly. The analysis also shows the potential for districts who are not currently members of the WAN consortium to save money over what they currently pay for internet only.

One of the CIU 20 districts, for example, by becoming a WAN member can connect to the WAN and gain access to the WAN services including the statewide educational network and Internet2, maintain their current commodity internet bandwidth of 50MB (megabites) and still receive a net savings (district dollars) of \$184 per month or more than \$11,000 over the five year contract. In addition, by adding an additional member to the consortium some fixed monthly costs are now divided among another entity thus reducing costs for all of the other members without changing the monthly savings for the new member described above.

In concert with the WAN re-bid, CIU 20 has applied for an Act 183 eFund grant to further offset the cost of providing the WAN and for funding the development of additional content for delivery via the WAN. Included in this application is transition funding for new districts to join the consortium (to offset their cost of joining the WAN), funding for the procurement of "edge" equipment for each member district that will allow them to optimize the use of bandwidth thus leveraging their purchases even further, funding for the startup of a cyber services program and funding for the purchase of additional digital content that would utilize the WAN for delivery. Grant awards are expected around the middle of December 2009. All of the current WAN member school districts plus the Easton Area School District opted to participate in the Act 183 grant consortium application.

The construction and broadening of advanced networks is part of a national effort to expand access to information resources that can be shared, leading to academic achievement gains. As their part in this process, the PA Department of Education has connected to the statewide educational network and is preparing extensive content in the form of the Standards Aligned Systems, for delivery via the advanced networks to connected schools. In addition, the Department is preparing to move many of its existing data and service applications onto the state education network to increase efficiency and security, improve quality and reduce costs.

Fourth Annual IU-Wide In-Service Sees Attendance Numbers Soar

ADDITIONAL PHOTO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Presenter Janice Pigga works with a group of Physical Education teachers as they discuss adaptations to gym equipment.

Beginning the Journey of Differentiated Instruction

Continued from Page 2

provided two minutes or so to process the new information. An engaging way to differentiate this activity was to roll a die. Whatever number came up determined which statement, out of six on the Brain Dump reflection sheet, would be responded to by the participants. Additional brain-friendly strategies such as movement, novelty, and humor were also employed throughout the day culminating with the participants selecting several of the day's strategies to implement in their classrooms before the next training date. There will be an opportunity to share their experiences with implementing their chosen strategies with their fellow participants during the Day 2 training session.

The second session will be held on January 12, 2010 and will be followed by the third and final day of the workshop on February 23, 2010.

Keystone Commons Creates Social Networking among Local Educators and Students

BY THOMAS BAILEYS, *Director of Technology*

The Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units is pleased to announce the development of a Social Learning Community that will be made available to members of the statewide K-12 educational network, PAIUNet. This new service, dubbed Keystone Commons, was developed to have the look and feel of popular social networking websites such as Facebook or MySpace but with a slightly more useful twist, learning.

Staff and students from school districts who are members of the PAIUNet network can create an account on the website which can be found at www.keystonecommons.paiunet.org. Having an account will allow them the opportunity to participate in this social learning network from behind the protective wall of the private PAIUNet network. People outside of the network (non-members) will not be allowed to create accounts and access the network. Students will only be able to create accounts through their classroom teacher.

The Intermediate Units will be offering training to district personnel on using Keystone Commons effectively in their classrooms and to administration for the establishment of professional learning communities. The training, which will be delivered via webinars using Elluminate, is currently in development and will be rolled out to school districts early in the new year. This is one of many services being offered by the intermediate units for PAIUNet member districts.

Curriculum Department Holds Joint Meeting – Response to Instruction and Intervention

BY KATHY EMEIGH, *Assistant Director of Curriculum*

On November 11, 2009 a group of approximately 90 educators from across CIU 20's entire region, met for a time of growth and learning in order to discuss and collaborate about the topic of "Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)." The educators included principals, curriculum directors, reading specialists, math coaches, general education and special education teachers and IST coordinators. This full-day, joint event was held at Northampton Area Community College's Fowler Center. CIU 20 is intent upon bringing all stakeholders together to collaborate, discuss and ultimately improve student success.

The purpose of this joint meeting was to build a common language-base around RtII across all stakeholders and to create a collaborative environment where educators across districts could share their journeys as they implement RtII. Additional activities, videos, stories, and times to share and plan promoted conversation around the experiences of RtII in buildings.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) "Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) is a multi-step approach to provide early academic and behavioral supports to struggling students rather than waiting for a child to fail before offering help."

CIU 20 will continue to be intentional in holding these joint meetings in order to increase communication and collaboration in support of this valuable initiative.

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