

Summer Curriculum Work and Learning

Faculty displays the meaning of effective professional development

By Dr. Regina McDuffie, Academic Dean



Researchers have studied the effects of professional development on student learning and they have found that effective professional development results in increased student learning. But what is *effective professional development*? From research we have learned that teachers need differentiated or varied approaches to growing and learning

just as our students do. With that in mind, our summer professional development was structured to offer teachers the opportunity to be actively involved in professional study directly related to their classroom.

This summer, every faculty member at St. Margaret's participated in a differentiated professional development experience that focused on increasing student learning and achievement. In the spring of last school year, faculty members worked collaboratively to submit proposals for a project that would support the curriculum and instruction goals articulated in St. Margaret's strategic plan. Some proposals included: adopting a bully-prevention program for the Lower School; establishing literacy centers and flexible rotations for early childhood classrooms; integrating history and literacy education in the Lower School; developing grading rubrics for performing arts classes; integrating the Character Counts program into physical education; exploring curriculum connections in grade 8 math and science; a review and assessment of writing in the history curriculum; the process of interpreting texts in English; and developing and implementing effective assessment strategies in math classrooms.

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In addition to these projects, more than 30 faculty members attended a two-day institute with Dr. Bena Kallick, titled “Curriculum for the 21st Century.” Dr. Kallick is an educational consultant and coauthor of numerous books, including *Using*

Curriculum Mapping and Assessment Data to Improve Learning, Learning and Leading With Habits of Mind and Assessment Strategies for Self-Directed Learning.



Dr. Kallick led the faculty through dialogue, presentations, and interactive hands-on activities that answered the following essential questions: How can the process of curriculum mapping be used to help us design a curriculum for the future? What are the characteristics of effective, creative, 21st-century problem-solvers? How might educators create schools and classroom conditions to learn, practice, assess and report students' growth toward internalizing these habits?

On September 1, the faculty gathered in Sillers Hall to participate in St. Margaret's first faculty professional development fair. Similar to a science fair, faculty groups set up tables with laptops and posters to display what they learned from their summer work. This event was a quintessential representation of effective professional development. The faculty, each proud of their own contributions, also espoused their enthusiasm about the wealth of knowledge, resources and professional growth opportunities that are available here at St. Margaret's. This event truly demonstrated the meaning of the term *effective professional development*.