

Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program Chronicle

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Northeastern Nevada Science Project

The NNRPDP received word that they have received funding for the Northeastern Nevada Science Project. This is a three year project where teachers will receive content training as well as field experiences in each of the three content strands of the Nevada Science Standards. Participants will receive 6 free graduate credits from UNR for each year's work.

The first year of the project will be devoted to the study of Life Science under the direction of Dr. Richard Vineyard from the Nevada Department of Education. The content instruction, along with a field camp at Lamoille, will be held the week of August 4-8, 2008. The work at this camp will incorporate content, technology, and an exciting field experience. There will be 6 additional day long sessions which will be held during the 2008-2009 school year. Those days will be devoted to the application of the content in the classroom with separate sessions for elementary and secondary teachers.

Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and White Pine County teachers in K-12 are eligible to apply to participate in the project. Enrollment will be limited to 30 participants. Application forms will soon be available and sent to all teachers in our region. If you have any questions concerning the project, please feel free to contact Teresa Noland at tnoland@elko.k12.nv.us or Sharon McLean at smclean@elko.k12.nv.us. You may also call either of them at 775-753-3879.

Resources

Awesome Library—This website was developed to provide information resources for K-12 teachers, students, parents, and librarians. Visit www.awesomelibrary.org/.

Tools for Teachers—Sue LeBeau has gathered some terrific websites for tools that teachers can use in their classroom. From puzzles, certificates, and awards, to quiz generators and flashcards, this site provides links to all. Go to www.suelebeau.com/freetools.htm.

Library of Congress—The Library's mission is to make its resources available and useful. You will find millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts. Check it out at www.loc.gov.

TeacherTube—The goal of TeacherTube is to provide an online community for sharing instructional videos. Teachers can also post videos designed for students. Look at www.teachertube.com.

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Special points of interest:

- ☉ Check out our website at www.elko.k12.nv.us/pdp.
- ☉ Visit our calendar of events at www.localendar.com/public/slneal.
- ☉ NELIP Site Facilitator meeting will be held April 28.
- ☉ Site Facilitator's annual written evaluation is due May 2.
- ☉ NNRPDP Governance Board meeting will be held on May 8 from 3:30 to 5:30.

Literacy and Learning Conference

Teachers and administrators from five northeastern Nevada counties participated in the 2008 Literacy and Learning Conference held January 25-26 at the UNR Fire Academy in Carlin, Nevada. Guests were honored to hear keynote speaker, Gina Guess, a teacher and education consultant from Attala County School District in Mississippi. Gina's presentations focused on reading as a process and the connection between reading and writing. "We're all teachers of reading," stated Gina.

Round Table Sessions on Friday evening gave participants the opportunity to engage in short discussions about clustering, teacher inquiry, Bloom's Taxonomy, "safety net structures" for high school students, literature trips and using pictures to tell stories.

A wide variety of one hour sessions were held on Saturday afternoon. These sessions provided opportunities for participants to learn about assessment, integrating technology into the curriculum, inquiry learning,

and various tools used to develop literacy and writing skills. Teachers walked away with engaging activities and teaching strategies to use in their classrooms on Monday morning.

Robbie Nickel, from Elko County, and Rick Dahl, from Lander County, were the lucky winners of the all expenses paid trip to an educational conference of their choice, sponsored by the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program.

Northeastern Nevada Math Project

The Northeastern Nevada Math Project (NNMP) is nearing the end of a three-year professional development effort. The NNMP is a joint effort of the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program, the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Nevada Department of Education. Working together, these three entities have made every effort to bring the best professional development strategies together for the benefit of teachers and students in our northeastern region. All five school districts have contributed to the project by providing substitutes for teachers involved, meeting rooms and constant cheerleading.

Meeting in Ely, Elko, and Winnemucca as collaborative groups, teachers have refined their math knowledge and teaching skills.

For the past three years teachers involved in this project have met for one week during the summer and six follow up days during the school year in each location. Their commitment of time and effort is to be ap-

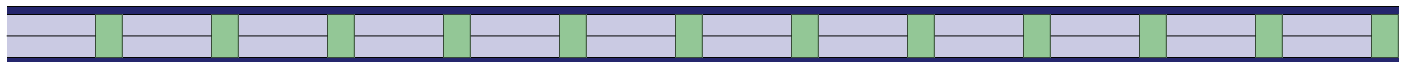
plauded. The project offered teachers six graduate credits for each year and some teachers chose to include these credits as part of a masters degree offered by UNR.

Drawing on information from Nevada CRT testing and teacher surveys, each year of the project has focused on a specific content area. The first year of the project concentrated on numbers and number sense, the second on fractions, and the third focused on geometry skills. The final year has also centered on application of concepts acquired over the three years in action research projects and Lesson Study.

The goals of the NNMP have been to provide opportunity for teachers to work with each other in improving math teaching skills, provide content area information to improve teacher knowledge, to provide an ongoing collaborative support group, and to give teachers an opportunity to focus on a specific content area over time.

The NNMP is being recognized as an outstanding model for teacher professional development. Ripples from the project have been widespread. Participants in the project have taken leadership and coaching roles in their own districts and schools. They are also taking leadership roles as presenters at local conferences. Three participants have been nominated for the Presidential teacher of the year awards. Other districts and professional development organizations are inquiring about the project as a model for professional development in their own areas.

The NNMP will be meeting for the final time to celebrate the completion of a job well done. Participants will be sharing their action research projects with administrators, fellow teachers, and guests at a celebration and graduation luncheon on May 19th at the Stockmen's Hotel in Elko, Nevada.



Science High School Proficiency Exam

The Science Proficiency Exam will be administered to this year's 10th grade class. These students will be the first group who must pass the exam before their graduation. This test will be composed of questions from previous field tests.

The science portion of the HSPE is composed of 60 multiple-choice questions that demonstrate the student's depth of knowledge (cognitive domains). Students demonstrate science proficiency by responding to questions based on skills pertaining to:

- ▶ Physical science
- ▶ Life science
- ▶ Earth/space science
- ▶ Nature of science

The Southern Nevada RPDP has developed a site, TIPS: Targeted Interventions for Proficiency in Science, which focuses on helping teachers fully prepare their students for this exam. The TIPS site has a wealth of information to provide content background to teachers, particularly Nevada science teachers who are preparing their students to take the High School Science Proficiency Exam (HSPE). The site is broken down into Nevada's 63 high school benchmarks covering Life, Earth, and Physical science content, as well as Nature of Science.

[\(http://rpd.net/sciencetips_v2/\)](http://rpd.net/sciencetips_v2/)



“Learn the art of patience. Apply discipline to your thoughts when they become anxious over the outcome of a goal. Impatience breeds anxiety, fear, discouragement and failure. Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success.”

—Brian Adams



“An education isn't how much you have committed to memory or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't.”

—Anatole France

Teaching Tips

Help Students Set Achievable Goals For Themselves

Failure to attain unrealistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students. Encourage students to focus on their continued improvement, not just on their grade on any one test or assignment. Help students evaluate their progress by encouraging them to critique their own work, analyze their strengths, and work on their weaknesses. For example, consider asking students to submit self-evaluation forms with one or two assignments (Cashin, 1979; Forsyth and McMillan, 1991).

Tell Your Students How They Are Progressing

Learning is made easier when the students are aware of their progress. Positive feedback can motivate them to greater effort because it makes their goal seem attainable. Also, ask your students how they feel they are doing. They probably want to take part in assessing their own progress toward learning goals, and their input can guide your feedback. You will find their reactions are usually based on what “feels right.”

Reward Success

Both positive and negative comments influence motivation, but research consistently indicates that students are more affected by positive feedback and success. Praise builds students’ self-confidence, competence, and self-esteem. Recognize sincere efforts even if the product is less than stellar. If a student’s performance is weak, let the student know that you believe he or she can improve and succeed over time (Cashin, 1979; Lucas, 1990).

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Who are we?

The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP), established and funded by the Nevada State Legislature, is committed to providing quality professional development to teachers in the school districts of Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and White Pine counties.

Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to enhance student learning within the context of Nevada State Professional Development Standards by recognizing and supporting research-based instruction and by maintaining a collaborative learning culture and facilitating instructional leadership.

2007-2008 NNRPDP Staff

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