Update of PDK Meetings #2 and #3 in 2004-2005

November 30, 2004

The second meeting of PDK was held on November 30, 2004. Our meeting involved a panel discussion on the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) law and its impact on the schools in our area. Participating in the panel discussion was Dr. Luke Cornelius (Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia Department of Educational Leadership and Professional Studies), Ms. Jackie Fillingim (Central Office Administrator from Carrollton City Schools), and Ms. Shelley Anderson (teacher at Central Elementary School – Carrollton, Georgia).

There were numerous questions from the audience. These questions tended to focus on the expectations for continued school improvement and the impact of students with special needs on school scores. Teachers, administrators, or parents with these concerns are encouraged to contact Ms. Fillingim for her insight. Ms. Fillingim can be reached through the Central Office of Carrollton City Schools.

February 15, 2005

Our third meeting of the year educated us about the Carroll Count Ferst Foundations for Childhood Literacy. The Ferst Foundation is a non-profit public foundation with a mission to “Provide books for local communities to prepare all Georgia preschool children for reading and learning success”. These books (see picture below) are provided at NO cost to the recipients. For more information about this program, please contact: Penny Ayers (left, above) at prapwal@aol.com or Martha Saunders at saunders730@msn.com.

Dr. Anne Halsall
President
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Phone: 678-839-6130
Phi Delta Kappa Meeting

Day:
Tuesday Evening, March 16, 2005

Time:
6:00 – 8:00 pm

Location:
Z-6 Building, Executive Dining Room

Planned program:
Panel Discussion: Evolution vs. Intelligent Design

Please RSVP to Dr. John Ponder (jponder@westga.edu) if you plan to attend.

Come to New Orleans!

Plan now to attend the Phi Delta Kappa International 2005 Conference from Nov. 10 to 13. The New Orleans Riverside Hilton is preparing to welcome educators from across the United States and the world to this cutting-edge conference, which is focused on the theme Doing What Matters: Education, Democracy, and the Future. Don't be left out!

Conference highlights include three keynote addresses by top-notch speakers who guarantee to inspire as they inform. For the first time, conference participants can earn graduate credit by participating in a one-day pre-conference workshop held Nov. 10. In addition, breakout and awareness sessions will expand the educational conversation about Doing What Matters by focusing on three themes: Practices That Improve Teaching and Learning, Classrooms of Tomorrow, and Keeping the Public in Public Education.

PDK Chapter Officers for 2004-2005

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ESOL Edge

Dr. Beth-Anne W. Miles

Bonjour encore une fois!

As you know, the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population is quickly growing and I am positive that your classrooms reflect this growth. If not, then it is only a matter of time before you are graced with an amazing opportunity to celebrate diversity. The following are a few hints that may help you welcome and more effectively assess our LEP and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners.

Please remember that the greater part of your LEP and ESOL learners hear proficient English strictly in your class. It can be said that the majority of LEP learners do not speak English at home. Remember to model correct spoken and written English. In addition, never discourage the use of the native language in the home environment. The belief that monolingualism is best disappeared in the 1970’s. Each culture and language should always be embraced.

Many educators are unsure about how to evaluate LEP learners. Below are some hints that may help you to better assess LEP students in the teaching and learning environment.

- Provide timelines, outlines, and charts. Many language learners become both auditory and visual learners (in addition to other learning styles) while acquiring a language. This may be as simple as writing a general daily schedule on the board. Such schedules may eliminate confusion, panic, and uncertainty during the school day for both ESOL and LEP learners. Charts, Venn Diagrams, graphs, and the like are visual organizers that may help put uncommon words, new terms, vocabulary words, story lines, and ideas into a format that is more easily grasped.
- Allow for open book testing and extra time to complete tests. ESOL and even LEP learners may need additional time to fully comprehend and to complete assessment activities. Note that when one learns a language, it is very tiring. It is not unusual for LEP children to come home and take naps to function the remainder of the day.

In lieu of open ended questions, employ “cloze” techniques. That is to say that you may leave a fact out in a sentence and have the LEP learner complete the sentence or fill in the missing part of the phrase. Create your assessment devices to cover primary objectives and not additional skills, like writing, which may not have been acquired. Remember that, typically, the final learned skill for language proficiency is the skill of writing. In addition to focusing on the primary objective, avoid excess verbage. Make your words precise and keep your meaning clear. You are attempting to gain insight into the learners’ knowledge—do not confuse them with idiomatic expression or unfamiliar vocabulary.

I have attempted to give insight to additional backgrounds and approaches that may serve you and your LEP learners in the classroom arena. Remember that the more English that is heard, the better. Your learners typically hear authentic English from you. Serve as a positive role model. In addition, I have endeavored to offer some alternative suggestions for assessment. I hope that this information will help you to better meet the needs of your learners.

À bientôt.
We’re on the Web!

http://coe.westga.edu/committees/pdk/

“Teaching is the greatest act of optimism.” - Colleen Wilcox

“Ours is a profession of hope.” - Carol O’Connell