

APA meeting in Dallas

April, 2006

Keynote: Professional Development: Key to Ignatian Teaching and Learning

Part 1: Kate Kodros and Paul Molinelli: Where did we come from? Professional Development at St. Ignatius, San Francisco.

Thank you for allowing us to share our story with you today. Last summer Paul Hogan asked if Steve and I would give this keynote, and, after getting over my shock, I gave it some thought. You know how it is at work, it's so chaotic, with no end of problems, crisis, and unsolicited "suggestions" from people. Despite all this, we have made progress, though we still have a long way to go, and that journey is what we want to share with you today.

I am Kate Kodros and I have been at St. Ignatius for 18 years, ten as Assistant Principal. Steve Phelps had been at SI for over 30 years, the last 10 as Director of Professional Development. Steve is now the President of Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, CA. Paul Molinelli is our new Director of Professional Development.

So, where have we come from, and where are we going in terms of professional development? Paul and I will set the context by giving a brief overview on programs we have put into place at St. Ignatius. This will be in the format of a talk, but don't hesitate to ask questions. Steve Phelps will take us forward from there: where do we need to go. Finally, after the break, we will have time to talk in small groups about the process of implementing and promoting some new professional development ideas into our schools.

The overarching understanding for this conference is that professional development results in better student achievement of school outcomes. Our outcome for this morning's session is to give you some concrete ideas about professional development in action as it exists at St. Ignatius.

So let's begin.

"Ok, here's the thing. When I was hired in the spring of 1995 I thought that my job, was to keep things EXACTLY the way they were.

SLIDE 2:

After all, we were SI! Recently coed, new Student Activities Center, gym and swimming pool recently completed, the only coed school in the California province with the only female assistant principal in the province. Booming admissions, long wait list, why would you want anything to change?

SLIDE 3

But change was happening all around us. In one year, 1996-1997, The California Province went from having all Jesuit principals in the 5 high schools to having one Jesuit principal. Numbers of Jesuits teaching in the schools plummeted. Demographics changed, the tech industry was booming, new educational research was coming out, and all of a sudden the school cheer “We are SI” sounded a bit hollow. What does that mean? What does it mean to be a Jesuit high school in the 21st century?

SLIDE 4

Over the years we had misinterpreted the Jesuit ideal of the “Magis”. We took it to mean more, do more! The changes that took place at SI over the past ten years, the tasks that we were able to accomplish, can be summarized in the new way, the more accurate way we looked at the definition of Magis: deeper, better. More reflective, more spiritual, more Ignatian.

SLIDE 5

We wanted to be excellent at educating students in the Jesuit tradition. We needed to be excellent. How could we help our students achieve our graduation outcomes, how could they begin to approach the portrait of the Graduate at Graduation if we, as an institution, were not striving for excellence?

SLIDE 6

The first step toward excellence is to articulate the vision of excellence. What does excellence look like? This is important for us in our role as administrators because, “Leadership is vision clearly articulated.”

Charlie Dullea, the first lay principal, lay out this vision in the Excellence in Teaching program. This program identifies the characteristics of excellent teaching, and challenges each teacher to focus on one characteristic each year. Teachers put together a portfolio annually showing evidence of their work. (The whole program is on the website.)

SLIDE 7: The EIT WEBSITE (Paul give overview) (Include graphic)

SLIDE 8

Where did the characteristics of excellent teaching come from? A huge paradigm shift for us was the realization that we had to look outside our walls to see what was going on in education. Reaching out, exploring what others are doing, and incorporating what best helps us do what God is calling us to do is a true Ignatian characteristic. Matteo Ricci, the great Jesuit scientist and educator, and Pedro Arrupe, the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus certainly did not hesitate to explore the new and exciting ideas of their times.

We had become insulated at SI, and we needed to change that pattern. The position of Professional Development Director was created. Steve Phelps, the

first Professional Development Director, has a lot of energy, and all of a sudden our universe expanded exponentially!

SLIDE 9

Bringing teachers up to speed on the latest research on teaching and learning became a priority. Steve brought in speakers, workshops, experts, books, and videos. The conversation in the Faculty Lounge changed from the Giants and 49ers to brain research, alternate assessments, and backward design. We had achieved a change in the culture. (You can check out the different workshops on the website)

SLIDE 10: WORKSHOP WEBPAGE (Paul give overview)

SLIDE 11

It is expensive to fly experts across the country and put them up in hotels for week-long workshops. We realized we could achieve our goals more efficiently and more effectively by joining with the other Catholic high schools in the Bay Area. This was an equally huge paradigm shift. Imagine, joining with other non-Jesuit schools! Up to this point there was a love-hate relationship among the other Catholic high schools and St. Ignatius. Within two years we were all working together, sharing ideas, and resources. The level of student learning in Catholic schools in the Bay Area has been raised a great deal due to this collaboration.

SLIDE 12

How do you encourage teachers to grow in their craft? First, you have to give them time and resources. Thanks to the generosity of our Board of Regents, we were able to phase in a reduction of teaching load. Four sections became full time, with the clear expectation that faculty be involved significantly in the extra-curricular and spiritual life of the school. There is also an expectation of teachers working in collaboration on curriculum revision (using the backward design model) and on technology integration.

SLIDE 13

How do you hold teachers accountable? At St. Ignatius we have a five year renewable tenure program. Every five years all teachers write a reflection on what they have accomplished, and how they plan to grow in the next five years. The plan must cover all three areas of the school: academic, extra-curricular, and campus ministry. The teacher then presents a plan to a board of peers. A teacher who is not demonstrating growth in all three areas of the school cannot be granted the full five year tenure. (Again, The Faculty Development Board is outlined in detail on the website.)

SLIDE 14: FDB WEBSITE (Paul give overview)

SLIDE 15

One of the most important aspects of faculty life at St. Ignatius is the Adult Spirituality Office. This group of three part time teachers is responsible for ensuring that all faculty understand, and embrace the ideals of Ignatian spirituality, and of Jesuit education. They do a wonderful job of bringing Ignatian spirituality into our everyday lives, and helping us see God in all things, especially our students and our work.

Over the last ten years we have been able to build a culture of excellence at St. Ignatius. It looks like everything was carefully planned and coordinated, but of course you know that is not the case. There was lots of hard work and lots of prayer, but there was also sheer chance, lucky timing, and blind faith. Of course the hand of Ignatius was everywhere. Striving for excellence, looking outside the walls for the best practices, life-long learning, working collaboratively, reflection, experience, action...sounds like Ignatius, doesn't it?

SLIDE 16

We have done some good work, but we have a long way to go. We need to focus on building professional learning communities, continue integration of technology, create a comprehensive student wellness program, institute data-driven decision-making, the list goes on and on. Schools need to be places of learning for students AND educators (teachers are learners, too!) Knowledge is growing at an exponential rate, and this knowledge must always be "situated" within a particular "community of practice."

SLIDE 17

We need to keep up! We must strive for excellence so that our students may get out into the world and live out Ignatius' vision for them: to be persons for and with others.

SLIDE 18 (PAUL SUMMARIZE AND REVIEW OUTCOME – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO BETTER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES.)

Part Two: Steve Phelps: Where do we go from here?