

Thank you from the TOSAs

As our year being Teachers on Special Assignment draws to a close, we would like to thank all the Teacher Leaders who shared their insights, classrooms, and furthered our learning. Each of us would like to share our appreciation with you.

Caroline Baldie

Being a TOSA has changed me in so many ways. I have learned so much from this experience. Of course the thing that is of the most importance is it has made me a better teacher. I know that when I re-enter the classroom I have the understanding and tools to help students learn and achieve at higher levels. Part of this understanding came from you, my Teacher Leaders. I am in awe of what you do for kids every time I visit your classrooms. You are all so dedicated and you care so much for your students.

Planning, presenting, and facilitating at the Learning Community Forums has helped with my personal growth as well as getting to know all of you (Teacher Leaders and participants) in the project. I have a whole bunch of great friends and colleagues to call on when I need to. (I will keep in touch because the support of having this "Learning Community" is very powerful.)

I have also changed by gaining better science content knowledge. Each Summer Academy opens my eyes to my misconceptions as well as allows me to explore specific ideas about Science. Working collaboratively with you in small groups has been very powerful. Bouncing ideas back and forth; the patience needed for all of us to gain the knowledge has been so easily forthcoming from all of you. Just putting ourselves in the shoes of our students is very enlightening!

I wish I could go down my list of Teacher Leaders and tell you how each one of you has touched me but because of space this isn't practical. So, thank you, thank you for what you have given me and taught me this year and the year before. I look forward to Summer Academy to see you again (as a participant this time). I look forward to keeping in touch and continuing our Professional Learning Community. You are the best of the best!

Lois Sherwood

Beyond the Cedar Curtain

The far reaches of the NCOSP grant reach beyond what many consider the end of the road. Forks is a scenic 1 hour and 10 minute drive from Port Angeles. The road wanders between small settlements, the edges of Lake Sutherland and Lake Crescent and the trees. Stretches of old forest are interspersed with areas of young trees, sprouting in areas of intense logging. Finally the State Highway gravel yard signals that Forks is not far away. Forks is a logging town. No question about it. The schools are clearly the center of the town. Every sign in Forks proudly declares support for logging and the school mascot. Turn left at the light in the center of town, and you will find the Middle School, the High School and just a bit further down the road, the Elementary School. The school buildings may seem dated, but the science instruction is clearly state of the art. If you have time, stop at the logging museum at the West end of town. At least stop to consider the age of the log monument that marks the outer limits of Forks.

Continue West on 101. Miles pass with no evidence of development. Tall cedars and hemlocks dominate the road side vegetation. The road shows evidence of frequent washouts. On any given trip one section of the road or another will narrow to one lane, with an alternating two minute stop light on either end to signal safe passage. Miles slip away with only an occasional whirl of a passing logging truck. Cell phones indicate 'no service' out here. Fortunately most loggers have upgraded to satellite phones, so a logger can call for help if help is needed. And then it happens. Few experiences can match the thrill of the panorama of the Pacific Ocean opening beyond the cedar curtain. Scenic pullouts, Ruby Beach, Beach 1,2,3,4 and 5 all beckon. Save time for a picnic and a stroll. Stop at a gas station, and someone will have a message to be transferred to the school.

The Queets/Clearwater School lies to the left of the highway amidst this grandeur. The isolation of the school intensifies the dedication to students and quality instruction. A TOSA brings resources and outside information, and leaves with reverence and appreciation for the power of place. The experiences of the visits provide much to ponder. Fortunately the long drive home provides plenty of time to do so.

Mary of Marblemount

Parting Thoughts But Not Goodbye!

As I look over the schools and Teacher Leaders of Skagit County that I have visited, I realize that each name has become more than a list of visits, e-mails, and phone numbers. I look at my well-worn spreadsheet with marks, cross-outs, and color coding and realize you are part of my year as your TOSA and part of my life. I will miss being able to visit you and share your stories but I know you well enough now to feel free to call or e-mail you and visit if the time works out. I look forward to our last Summer Academy and spending time with my "Summer Friends" that are becoming part of my life. Thank you so much for welcoming me into your classrooms and your lives. I am a better person for getting to know you all because you were gracious and shared your work with me. There is always an open invitation waiting for you in Marblemount!

Western Kids Camp

Are you planning to attend Summer Academy but not sure what your children will be doing during that time? One option is Western Kids Camp. This theme-based camp combines academics and recreational activities for children in grades K-6. This year's theme is First Peoples. Participants will use university classrooms, labs, playing fields, and the Wade King Recreation Center for a fun-filled week packed with activities. The weekly sessions run Monday -Friday 7:45 am - 5:15 pm.

For more information and to register, contact Jen Gudaz at (360) 650-4049.

Thank you Continued

Fred Akins

The following is an attempt to capture something of what I have learned as a TOSA. The TOSA position with NCOSP has been very meaningful to me. Only a titch of its significance has been captured by my pithy and sometimes glib statements.

What I learned as a TOSA:

- Couldn't find the perfect teacher that everybody should observe, but working together we can help each other improve
- Teachers are incredibly busy
- Listening well is work
- When asked to do a job, ask for what you need in order to do the job well
- Everyone likes a little attention; some are better at getting it
- Bullets can be overused
- Collaboration works
- Be strategic
- Keep working to be a more effective teacher

Thanks to all Teacher Leaders in the classroom. The view from TOSAhood has made me appreciate how much you do to 'advance science learning and teaching for all'. May we all work to teach with integrity, fidelity and efficacy.

Adrienne Somera

I would like to thank everyone in the project for the wonderful experience that I had this year as a TOSA. You have been a great support to me as I jumped into this new role and I have learned so much from everyone I worked with. Visiting your rooms to observe or participate in lesson study with you, helping you to plan workshops for your staff, talking with you at LCFs about teaching and learning; these things have all been amazing experiences for me. I think I did much more learning from you than helping you this year and I look forward to getting back into my room and seeing if I can put all of my new learning into practice.

Susan Kagel

As I look back on this year, I want to thank all the Teacher Leaders who have helped me grow as a learner and as a teacher. You opened your classrooms and your thinking to me and from it I have become a richer person. In the frenetically paced world of teaching each of you have been so gracious with your time whenever I came calling or sent out another e-mail. Your positive outlook and desire to help students with their learning has been such a wonderful experience to share. Through lesson study, the Learning Community Forums and e-mail conversations, I feel that I have benefited so greatly from this community of learners. I will take what I have learned and hope to continue our conversations as I make the transition back into the classroom. Thank you for all you have taught me!

Summer Academy Update

Summer Academy dates are July 31st-August 11th. To register, log-on to the North Cascades and Olympic Science Partnership, www.ncosp.wvu.edu. There you will also find a list of items that need be collected and/or submitted before Summer Academy. These items include:

- If possible, one lesson or unit from your current teaching assignment that is designed to help students develop their understanding of density (this may include lessons on sinking and floating, exploring mass and volume, measuring and weighing.) If you are able to bring samples of student work from that lesson, please do.
- A digital photo of yourself (+/-others) in a natural setting where a geologic (non-biologic) energy transfer is taking place.
- Science Education Program Rubric (adapted from LASER): Please complete a rubric that assesses your district science education in five key areas.
- K-12 Science Curriculum Sequence: Please submit the district prescribed K-12 Science Curriculum Sequence. **Note: This only needs to be submitted in its entirety by one participant.**
- LASER Strategic Plan: Please confer with your District Administrator or other Teacher Leaders to identify someone who can bring a copy of the current version of the district Science Strategic Plan generated at the LASER Strategic Planning Institute.
- Science Survey: Please ask at least 3 other teachers (or as many as you would like) in your building and your principal to complete a brief, three-question "Science Survey." This may be submitted on-line or brought to Summer Academy in hard copy.
- Consider bringing other existing district and/or building data that could help inform your thinking about science education reform. Possible data could include:
 1. Science course outlines
 2. Information about how your adopted curriculum is being implemented in classrooms.
 3. Student data from building or district assessments (**WASL data will be provided**).

See you at Summer Academy!