

Attending the New York State English Council Conference with five of my colleagues was an invaluable experience. Certainly, it is always beneficial to attend a conference pertaining to my discipline; however, attending this particular conference in the face of many national and state wide initiatives was simply crucial in order to propel Clarence toward our future goals in aligning our curriculum. While the focus of the conference was “Teaching Humanity: The Character Connection,” I believe the larger emphasis was placed on understanding and implementing the new Common Core Standards across all disciplines. As a department we have already “unpacked” the Common Core and are in the middle of identifying gaps and aligning our curriculum acutely to the new standards. It was extremely beneficial to see that we are right on track with what New York State is requiring of its English teachers. What was even more promising to see was that our department is at the forefront of current and future literacy instruction across all disciplines. In moving ahead, I believe that sending a small team of English teachers each year should be part of our ongoing professional development. Attending a conference individually is essential; however, attending a conference with a team allows crucial discourse and rollout when it comes to education initiatives.

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