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Report Submitted to TRC for TSSA Award in Summer 2008

By
Amy S. C. Leh

I received a TSSA award to attend the International Conference of the World Association of Case Research and Application (WACRA) held June 29 – July 2, 2008 at Edinburgh, Scotland. The presentation on “Creative teaching: Using the case study method to teach future teachers how to survive and thrive in today’s classrooms” was very informative. Teacher candidates at the presenter’s institution experienced teaching different levels (elementary level as well secondary level) at all types of schools, e.g. at urban as well as at rural schools, before they left the university. As all teacher candidates in the USA, the candidates learned diversity and practiced how to teach pupils with diverse backgrounds. In one of the courses, the candidates studied 25 cases: first lady in the USA. In the case of Barbara Bush, the candidates learned that Barbara was a good athletic. They also read a story describing Barbara bullying one of her classmates when she was a child. This case as well as the other 24 cases taught the teacher candidates that every student had his/her characteristics that could be turned to be positive or to be negative depending on how a teacher guided students.

Presentations on “The art of discussions management,” “Writing field based cases,” and “Evaluating student contributions” were also informative. The presenter distinguished “cases for research” from “cases for teaching.” His presentations focused on cases for teaching. He explained why instructors should use cases in instruction and how to use the strategy effectively. He later described process of writing cases, referring to how an instructor writes cases for his/her classes. Afterwards, he illustrated how to evaluate student contributions to case class discussions. Writing a good case is time consuming. I hope that I would be able to apply the strategy to my classes in the near future. Some of the evaluation strategies I have used in my instruction. It was great to see that the presenter used similar strategies and to compare the way he used them to the way I used them.