

# Teachers receive MEds from Plymouth State

By Hank Claassen, Middle School teacher, Puxi campus



During the staff orientation week, SAS celebrated the graduation of the class of 2011 from the master of education program at Plymouth State University (PSU). Nine teachers from various divisions of both the Puxi and Pudong campuses received their diplomas from Deputy Superintendent Alan Knobloch, who supervises the program with the assistance of student advisers Hank Claassen, Puxi, and Simon Power, Pudong.

Working collaboratively, SAS and PSU have developed degree programs that offer rigor, richness, and depth for those who seek an advanced degree that will be respected at schools around the world. The program typically takes between two and five years to complete, with coursework done at SAS on weekends as well as online. The programs encompass elective courses that have been tailor-made to align with specific SAS school improve-

ment initiatives, allowing our teachers to target their learning to their specific involvement in the adopted SAS school improvement programs.

The opportunities for continued professional growth through the SAS/PSU partnership are available to all SAS professional staff. For course details visit the PSU master's blog at <http://teachers.saschina.org/psumasters>.

PSU graduates 2011, from left to right: Matt Kuykendall, Leah Hefte, Bo Green, Karl Poulin, Ruya He, Cara Zang, Huiney Xu, Frances Zhang, Michele Wrzesinski (Missing: Todd Denton).

## A Plymouth State developmental journey

By Bo Green, Middle School teacher, Puxi campus

In the 1967 film *To Sir, with Love*, Sidney Poitier starred as Mr. Thackeray, a teacher who deals with complex inner-city educational issues but survives difficult circumstances and develops strong student relationships.

I feel the same affection toward my Plymouth State University (PSU) master's journey, although I did not have to suffer Poitier's classroom strife along the way. The parallel is that my SAS-supported PSU master of education (M.Ed.) program was the greatest professional development experience of my life and continues to reap benefits for me, and more importantly, for my students.

At SAS we are most fortunate to have this opportunity close at hand. The master's degree program is flexible in nature and offers terrific on-campus resources to help students get through the program, all the way from program of study design to graduate capstone project completion.

I found the five required core courses to be extremely beneficial and integrated well along the journey. And these core courses can all be completed right here in Shanghai! Perhaps even better, the elective courses can be earned across a variety of topics and engagement platforms, allowing for the pursuit of individual passions.

For example, I chose to take several online courses through the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development one summer while I took one core course on PSU's Plymouth, New Hampshire campus, and later took three courses based on key SAS initiatives: teacher leadership, classroom assessment, and reflective teaching. As for pacing, it's really up to the student. You can take three-plus years if you have the time, or you can earn an M.Ed. in a year and a half.

Our new SAS mission includes the following strategic objective: "All students will continually and confidently explore, discover, express, and pursue personal aspirations." This is exactly what I experienced during the program because along the way I became acutely interested in what effective education is, and specifically, the role student self-assessment (SSA) can play.

I found that the coursework allowed me to pursue and continually deepen this line of research and ultimately led to my first peer-reviewed publication. My graduate capstone project on SSA resulted in statistically significant student learning benefits. These are testaments to both the strength of PSU's program and the latitude for personal pursuit.

Thank you SAS and PSU!