TEACHER Education

West Chester University

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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## Contents

1 The College has a New Dean

2 Recitation Stone Project

3 COE Dean's Perspective

4 Establishing a Culture of Professional Inquiry

- Return on Your Investment

5 Continuous Learning through Teacher Research

6 Faculty News

7 *"I like it when I get to ask my own questions,"* – Exploring Student-Led Literature Discussions

- New Teacher Education Alumni Mentoring Program

8 "Carnival of Culture" Highlights Student Work Study Experience in Germany

9 iPad Devices May Motivate Students, but do they Mediate Reading Instruction?

10 3E Institute Hits the Road… to Honor New Educator 500 "Where It's Happening"

12 Scholarship Award Winners

- Our Mission

# The College has a New Dean

KENNETH D. Witmer, Jr. was selected to serve as the new Dean of the College of Education beginning July 2011. Dr. Witmer has served as Dean of the College of Education at Frostburg State University in Maryland and has extensive experience as a department chair and tenured professor. In addition to academic service, he brings experience in institutional advancement, serving as Director of Development for institutions in New Hampshire and Virginia.

Dr. Witmer currently sits on the Board of Governors of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Executive Committee of the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities. Since 2000, he has been involved with accreditation of teacher education programs through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, serving at the institutional level as the assessment director and at the national level as a member of the Board of Examiners.

Central to Dr. Witmer's interests and accomplishments is the transformation of educator preparation to a clinically-based model that is integrated with P-12 schools and focused on student learning outcomes. He also has research interest in urban education and intercultural teacher preparation.

Dr. Witmer received the Bachelor of Science in Geo-science/Physics and Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and the Master of Arts in Educational Sociology and Doctor of Philosophy in Education Policy, Planning and Administration, both from the University of Maryland, College Park.

At WCU, Dean Witmer serves as Head of the Professional Education Unit, the administrative body with primary responsibility for preparation of school personnel. The Unit incorporates faculty in teacher preparation programs throughout all five colleges and is governed by the WCU Council of Professional Education. For accreditation purposes, the Unit is accountable for program quality, including teacher candidate performance.

# RECITATION STONE PROJECT

*With the deadline quickly approaching and students returning to school, stonemasons labored long and hard to complete a yearlong effort of restoring the serpentine stone on the exterior of Recitation Hall.*

Recitation Hall, constructed in 1892, sits on WCU's academic quad, an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The exterior of the building is covered with serpentine stone, excavated from a nearby quarry that contains one of the largest serpentine stone deposits in the world. Rod Lukens, the project manager and '71 West Chester State College graduate recalled the quarry, "the quarry has been shut down since I went to school here." With a smile on his face, he added, "I remember students always sneaking off to what is now the Quarry Club for a late night swim." Heading south on New Street, past the excitement of Saturday afternoon games, one can take note of the Quarry Club, a swimming association, which now occupies the retired excavation site.

The green serpentine stone is beautiful, but unfortunately not as durable as other stones found in Chester County. With the building's historical significance the University wanted to preserve the building façade. While some of the stones were left untouched, others had to be replaced by using leftover stone from restoration of the Ruby Jones building, another stonemason project scheduled to run concurrently with the Recitation project. Some weather-beaten stones were patched and repaired with a material called Mimic. Mimic does exactly what its name suggests: mimics natural stone. The product was created to be compatible with natural stone. As they worked their way around the building, stonemasons artistically replicated the color and texture of the original stones.

Working through the sweltering summer heat and the blistering winter cold, the 14-member crew of stonemasons, half from Caretti Restoration & Preservation and half from the Masons Union Local 1 of Philadelphia, dedicated ten-hour days Monday through Thursday to the project. Several of the Philadelphia area masons had just completed restoration work on the Basilica of St. Peter and Paul.

Taking great pride in restoring the original stones, the workers found a few remarkable surprises. Located along the upper-most perimeter of the building, they discovered carvings in some stones. One carving on the south side of the building is a duck and on the side facing the quad, a clover is visible. Another carving on the same side as the clover is of an old boot. Lukens chuckled while explaining that the masons thought this was hilarious because a "boot refers to a mason who does a poor job."

Recitation Hall, now restored to its original beauty, is one of the architectural gems of the University.

Lauren Dazio, COE Graduate Assistant

# COE

## Dean's Perspective

*Dr. Kenneth D. Witmer*

Of the four seasons, fall is the one which seems to solicit the most feelings of nostalgia for me. Perhaps this occurs because I sense the vivid changes present in the chilling of the air, the shifting colors of the leaves, or the graying of the sky. Whatever the cause, I become very reflective and experience stretches of personal reckoning. I grapple with penetrating questions related to my relationships, beliefs, professional life, and many of the other human constructs that emerge from our being able to be the subject of our own thoughts. From a professional perspective, I find myself pausing from the busyness of the preceding seasons to honestly consider why I am doing what I do as a professional and what I must do to remain on the path that will allow me to continue to put my head, hands, and heart into my work. Having recently joined the West Chester University community, I find that the fall of 2011 has provided moments of intense self-reflection. Although strenuous at times, these fall episodes allow me to gain a renewed sense of purpose and a clearer vision needed to direct my steps forward.

This tendency for autumnal contemplation came to mind when I was asked why I left the pleasant hills of Western Maryland and a comfortable deanship at Frostburg State to come to West Chester University. In responding, I realized part of my interest in educator preparation at WCU stems from my belief that its programs are poised to enter a period of fall-type self-reflection. That is, the College of Education and the Professional Education Unit possess the fundamental strength and success necessary for someone in a leadership position to inspire others to consider the two essential questions I wrestle with each fall; why do we do what we do, and what must we do to remain on a path that allows us to put our heads, hands, and hearts into our work? The collective response to these questions is the foundation of a renewed sense of purpose and a clear vision for keeping the education programs at WCU moving forward.

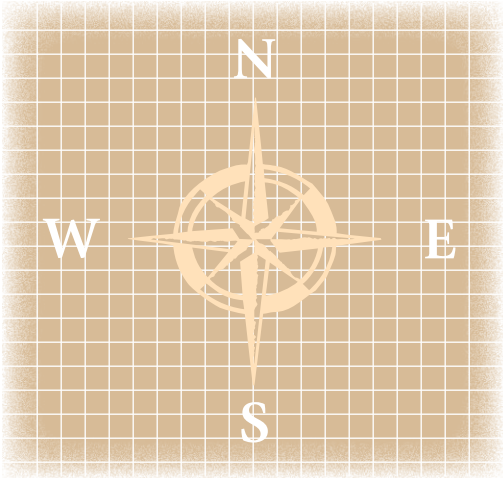
As we think about moving ahead, we must realize there are chilly winds blowing against educator preparation in higher education. American education, in general, is experiencing unprecedented scrutiny. Many would like to see education in this country completely privatized, while others would like to see it fully controlled by the federal government. The unfortunate impact on our profession is that those on all sides of the struggle are basing their cases on the faulty notion that current programs, including Pre K-12 teaching and higher education teacher preparation, are ineffective and need to be replaced; not refined, but replaced. In spite of these external critics, WCU has what it takes to move teacher education and other professional educator preparation to the next level of national prominence. I believe this university can be among the best in demonstrating how effective and dynamic 21st century educator preparation should be done. Clearly, the faculty members in the College of Education and the entire Education Unit have made great strides toward designing dynamic education programming that is responsive to the ever-changing preparation needs of our candidates as they are charged to meet the ever-changing needs of the students they will teach. I believe WCU is destined to be at the forefront of the transformation of teacher education in America!

In closing, I want to offer a special note of thanks to Dr. George Drake, Dr. Joyce Munro, and Dr. Michael Bell for the leadership they provided to the Dean's office this past year. To all the managers and staff, I extend my appreciation for the quality work that has been done over the years and for that which I witness now on a daily basis.

I am fortunate to be at West Chester University and am excited to join our faculty, staff, and friends to provide candidates the best educator preparation possible. And, one thing is for certain, as I work through my fall cogitations this year, I find comfort in feeling lucky to be in the right place at the right time. ❖

# *Establishing a* CULTURE *of* *Professional Inquiry*

Lisa Lucas, Ed.D.
*Assistant Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education*




A TRUE educator recognizes that the work of professional learning and improvement begins with a degree but does not end there. West Chester University and Sarah Starkweather Elementary School share the common goal of improving student achievement by supporting teachers to be their best, which includes supporting teacher candidates, classroom teachers, principals, and university supervisors.

Dr. Lisa J. Lucas (COE faculty & student teaching supervisor) and Dr. Karen J. Johnson (COE faculty, and Coordinator of Field Experiences) have collaborated with Mrs. Nancy Aronson (Principal of Starkweather Elementary School) to form the Enhancing Professional Practice Professional Learning Community. This Professional Learning Community or PLC provides a forum for West Chester University teacher candidates, student teaching supervisors, cooperating teachers, and administrators to bring to life the components of successful teaching practices and to foster professional discourse among practitioners as they seek to enhance their skill in the complex task of teaching.

### *Collaboration and Conversation*

Creating a culture of professional inquiry is one of the intended outcomes of this Professional Learning Community. The PLC provides an opportunity for educators at various career stages to participate in collaborative learning, with the goal of enhancing professional practice. Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2011) is the guide for shaping the conversation.

Danielson's framework is an instrument used by administrators and supervisors to evaluate pre-service and tenured teachers. Although the framework is used to evaluate performance, its principal contribution to the teaching profession is its use to promote professional learning.

Analyzing how the four components of Danielson's framework are put into practice is a goal of the PLC. The participants will view video clips that illustrate what successful master teachers do, making explicit that which is often difficult to describe orally. The framework will enable the PLC to clarify and reach consensus as to what constitutes good teaching.

The pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers, West Chester University supervisors and principals will focus on Domain 1 of Danielson's framework: Planning and Preparation. Together the group will plan a lesson that will be implemented by one of the student teachers. The group will approach this task from different vantage points. As educators focus on separate aspects of the same situation, their multiple perspectives can only enrich the quality of the plan that emerges. The lesson will then be taught by one of Dr. Lucas' student teachers. Dr. Lucas will videotape the lesson and will conference with the student teacher with a focus on self-assessment.

Teachers' awareness of their own areas of strength and need for growth is the first step toward professional improvement. Self-assessment allows teachers to learn by reflecting on and analyzing

*continued on page 8*

# Return on Your Investment

JANET Heinis joined the staff of the West Chester University Foundation on August 22, 2011 as the Major Gift Officer for the College of Education.

Janet comes to the Foundation with over 30 years' experience in Higher Education Administration. She served as the Director of Cornell University's Middle Atlantic Regional Office for Alumni Affairs and Development for over 22 years. Her professional background also includes work in undergraduate admissions at Cornell and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Janet is a graduate of East Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Social Work degree and a Master of Arts in Sociology. She also did post graduate studies at Rutgers University.

Janet makes her home in Honey Brook, PA where she is a fledgling golfer and a more accomplished community volunteer leader. Janet is looking forward to meeting the College of Education alumni as she travels representing the Foundation. Janet's office is located at 202 Carter drive just off campus on Matlack Street and she can be reached via telephone at 610.430.4153 or email at jheinis@wcufoundation.org.

# 2nd Conference on Teacher Research and Classroom Teaching

THE 2nd Conference on Teacher Research and Classroom Teaching, Continuous Learning through Teacher Research, was held in April at the Days Hotel in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Dr. Elizabeth Tisdell, Professor of Education at Penn State University, delivered the keynote address, "The Teacher and the Taught: Action Research as Passionate Practice and Unfolding Wisdom." Dr. Tisdell is coordinator of the doctoral program in Adult Education at Penn State Harrisburg.

The conference was supported by a WCU Pedagogy for Engagement Grant and was an opportunity for graduates and current students in the M.Ed. in Applied Studies in Teaching and Learning to share and discuss their work as teacher researchers. Eight M.Ed. graduates who are current teachers in PK-12 classrooms, shared their research projects, developed on the MERLOT website. Presenters described their experiences as teacher researchers, explained their research methodology, reported findings and implications for their teaching, and described the ongoing implications and ways in which their research has continued to inform their practice.

Grant monies supported seventy attendees including current students and graduates of the M.Ed. in Applied Studies in Teaching and Learning, graduate students in other WCU programs, university faculty members, and other educators. Following the keynote presentation, participants attended two breakout session presentations that included practitioner inquiry into teaching mathematics at the elementary and middle school levels, differentiated instruction in specific

content areas, teaching specific literacy skills in elementary school classrooms, implementation of school-wide or classroom based initiatives in the elementary classroom, connections between play and literacy development, inquiry based science instruction, and literacy instruction. Session titles and presenters included:

**What happens when the Simple Solutions: Basic Math Skills Maintenance Program is introduced as a supplement in a middle school math classroom?** Laura Anderson, Grades Six - Eight Mathematics Teacher, Saint Patrick School

**Teaching the literacy skills of alliteration, personification, and onomatopoeia in third grade.** Abby Lynn Burke, Third Grade Teacher, Rose Tree Media School District

**Writing Workshop: A second grade journey.** Bridget Diveley, Second Grade Teacher, Avon Grove School District

**What happens to student motivation, engagement, and achievement when Academic Choice is utilized in fifth grade language arts instruction?** Kathleen Elicker, Fifth Grade Teacher, Coatesville Area School District

**How does a classroom culture of environmental awareness and action shape fourth grade children's attitudes and behaviors about recycling?** Danielle Ferreri, Fourth Grade Teacher, Methacton School District

**How do I successfully differentiate my math instruction to meet the needs of my second grade students using a balanced math approach?** Amanda Galajda , Second Grade Teacher, West Chester Area School District

**How does play support early literacy in kindergarten classes?** Kathryn L. Klingensmith, Kindergarten Teacher, Unionville-Chadds Ford School District

**What happens when writing skills are integrated into inquiry-based science instruction?** Alicia Schmitt, Second Grade Teacher, West Chester Area School District

**How can I move basic performing students to proficiency in 6th grade reading using a Literature Circle Model?** Jenn Hydeck Smolenski, Sixth Grade Teacher, School District of Philadelphia

The 3rd Teacher Research Conference will be scheduled for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Connie DiLucchio, *Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator, Early and Middle Grades Education*
Heather Leaman, *Associate Professor and Chair, Early and Middle Grades Education*

# Faculty News

**Kathryn Alessandria**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counselor Education, was co-presenter of "Higher Education Mental Health Alliance: An Introduction and Discussion" at the ACPA College Student Educators International Conference in Baltimore, MD, in March 2011.

**Michael Bell**, Ph.D., Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented "Connecting Curriculum with Writing" to 130 teachers and literacy coaches at the Rutgers University State Literacy Consortium in Somerset, NJ, April 2011.

**David Brown**, Ed.D., Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, chaired a session on "Current Research Interests" and another session on "Legislative Outreach" for the first annual conference of Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education on May 9, 2011 at Langhorne, PA. Dr. Brown is a member of the PA Middle School Association Executive Board.

**Connie DiLucchio**, Ed.D., and **Fran Slostad**, Ed.D., Associate Professors of Early and Middle Grades Education, co-presented "Perceptions of Self-Efficacy: Teacher Candidates' Narratives and the Descriptive Review of a Child" at the Association of Teacher Educators in Orlando, FL in spring 2011.

**Linda Hanna**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented at The True Colors National Seminar in Newark, NJ on May 13, 2011. Her session was titled, "Awaken Student Potential within the Higher Education Environment with True Colors."

**Karen Johnson**, Assistant Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, is author of "Social Studies Scavenger Hunts", published in *Academic Exchange Quarterly* in summer 2011.

**Sara Lamb Kistler**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and **Laura Fiorenza**, M. Ed., Instructor, both of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented "Developing empathy and social competence in early childhood to improve peer relations in school en vironments," at the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children Conference in Philadelphia, PA on May 7, 2011.

**Heather Leaman**, Associate Professor and Chair of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented "Using Dual Language Children's Books to Encourage Social Studies Learning" at the PA Council for the Social Studies conference in Pittsburgh, PA, October 14, 2011. Student presenters were Lacey Christman and Alicia Penny in Elementary Education and Seiko Yamazaki, a graduate student in Applied Statistics. In May, Dr. Leaman presented "Welcome to the Multicultural Classroom" at the New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages / New Jersey Bilingual Educators spring conference in New Brunswick, NJ. Student presenters were Lacey Christman and Alicia Penny.

**Lisa J. Lucas**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, is author of Coaching: Job -embedded professional development, published in *Ethics and Critical Thinking Journal* in August 2011.

**Lisa J. Lucas**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, and **Karen Johnson**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, both of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented at the national Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching in Bethesda, MD in June 2011. Their presentation was titled, "Preparing Future Faculty by Creating a Culture of Mentoring." Drs. Lucas and Johnson also presented "Cultivating a Culture of Reflective Practitioners" at the Association of Teacher Educators summer meeting in Philadelphia, PA, August 2011.

**Vickie Ann McCoy**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, presented "Person-first language training needed in higher education" at the 2011 Annual Conference of the American Counseling Association held in New Orleans, Louisiana in March.

**Larysa Nadolny**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Professional and Secondary Education, was co-presenter of "Game Design and Virtual Worlds for STEM+ Learning Online" at the Emerging Technology for Online Learning International Symposium. This SLOAN Consortium event was held in San Jose, CA, in July, 2011.

**Katherine Norris**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Early and Middle Grades Education, presented at the Association of Teacher Educators summer conference in Philadelphia, PA, August 2011. Her presentation was an examination of pre-service teacher's use of critical literacy in the early childhood classroom. Dr. Norris is also author of "Getting to know you and you and you," published in *Teaching Young Children*, Spring 2011.

**Christian Penny**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Professional and Secondary Education, was co-presenter of "Building Learning Communities with Google Apps," a panel presentation at The International Society for Technology in Education International Conference in Philadelphia, PA in June. Dr. Penny also made a panel presentation titled "Curated Learning: Empowering Students to Navigate Their Learning Path."

**Heather Schugar**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Literacy, is author of four cases published in *Learning from cases of real teaching: Fourth and fifth grade reading lessons (Facilitator's Guide)*. Her cases are titled, Word study that supports reading and writing: A reading method instructor's perspective, Developing word knowledge through explanation of words in context: A reading method instructor's perspective, Modeling reading comprehension strategies across three genres: A reading method instructor's perspective, and Preparing students to comprehend and learn from expository text: A reading method instructor's perspective.

**Carol A. Smith**, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Literacy, presented "Literacy Coaching in the Digital Age: How can we support teachers on the new literacies journey?" at the 3rd Annual Literacy Coaching Summit in Philadelphia, PA on April 16, 2011. Dr. Smith also presented a review of her research as part of the WCU Research Day in April. Dr. Smith's presentation was titled "Preparing 21st Century Literacy Teachers: What Teacher Action Research Reveals"

**Sally Winterton**, D.Ed., Associate Professor of Early and Middle Grades Education, and **George Drake**, Interim Dean, co-presented at the 71st National School Board Association conference in San Francisco on "Revolutionizing the Student Teaching Experience: The Kennett Experience."

**Lynn Zubernis**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, presented "Only Love Can Break Your Heart: Fandom Wank and Group Theory" at the 2011 Annual Conference of the Popular Culture Association held in San Antonio, Texas in April.

# EXPLORING STUDENT-LED LITERATURE DISCUSSIONS

WHAT comprehension strategies do third graders utilize in student-led, small group literature discussions when roles (i.e., discussion director, illustrator, literary luminary) are assigned as compared to open discussion where students determine the path of the discourse? Dr. Diane Santori, Literacy Department, and recent graduate of WCU's Masters in Elementary Education program, Lauren Watson, investigated this question along with several others. They examined the students' reactions and experiences in both structures and their levels of participation. Lauren is a third grade teacher in a local school, where the study was conducted. Students met in small groups for eight weeks to discuss various fictional texts, primarily fables and folktales. After four weeks, students switched groups thereby providing all ten students involved in the study an opportunity to participate in each structure.

Initial findings indicate that these third graders utilized numerous comprehension strategies in each structure. As they prepared for their small group discussions, students assigned to the roles group, completed their jobs (i.e., generate five questions to discuss, list three connections you made while reading, draw an event from the story). In the open group, some students wrote their questions and reactions on sticky notes; one student color-coded the text (pink for important; blue for things she didn't understand; yellow for surprising elements); another student seemed to talk back to the text as she wrote her responses in the margin (i.e., "I'm getting so angry!"). These markings/notes documented the students' thinking while reading and demonstrated their comprehension monitoring. In both groups, students referred to their notes or completed job sheets during the discussions.

While participating in the discussions, students made connections and predictions, they inferred, clarified the text, used context clues, discussed vocabulary, summarized, and identified the theme. However, in the open discussions, students appeared to have more control over which comprehension strategies they used and when. They also worked collaboratively to construct meaning and answer each other's questions about

***"I like when I get to ask my own questions"***

the text. As for students' reactions to each structure, they were excited about participating in student-led literature discussions. The smiles and laughs on students' faces indicated this as did their responses on student surveys and in the focus group interview. They realized the value of this opportunity. One student commented, "I could use this skill around the world." Another student said, "It's a special thing." Overall, students preferred the open discussion. According to the survey data, 70% of the students enjoyed open discussion whereas 40% enjoyed having roles.

Ms. Watson, the classroom teacher, stated that while she felt assured that several comprehension strategies (i.e., visualization – illustrator) would be utilized in the roles group, she also found that some students did not like the roles they were assigned. They felt unable to complete the task well and they felt "trapped" in the roles. At times, the conversation felt forced and artificial. In the open discussions, students had more choice regarding which strategies to use and they used a broad range of strategies. There was a natural flow to the discussion; it was conversation-like, and truly student-centered. One third grader shared, "I like when I get to ask my own questions cause like maybe I didn't understand something… I get to ask like everything I want."

However, some stronger students occasionally dominated the conversation so teachers need to be aware of this possibility and monitor student participation to prevent quieter students from being silenced.

Dr. Santori received a COE seed grant to complete this research project. She will present this research along with Lauren Watson at the Keystone State Reading Association Conference in October. Melissa DiProspero, a graduate assistant in the Literacy Department, also worked on this project and will attend the conference as well.

Diane Santori, Ed.D.
*Assistant Professor, Literacy Department*

## *New Teacher Education Alumni Mentoring Program*

Are you a new teacher or a recent teacher education graduate on the job market? The online WCU Alumni Mentoring program can help. The college of education is pleased to announce a new program aimed at providing professional support to recent teacher education graduates online. The mentoring program provides you with the opportunity to connect with other teacher ed. alumni and COE faculty members to discuss issues all new teachers face. The program is run completely online so you can join us from the comfort of your home. There will be three sessions offered each semester and the topics will vary. Suggestions for topics are always welcome.

Past topics include classroom management, differentiating/Individualizing Instruction, planning for substituting, and job Search.

**To register for future sessions, please complete the online registration form found here: http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/coed/AlumniMentoring/**

**Contact:** Dr. McGinley (vmcginley@wcupa.edu) and Dr. Winterton (swinterton@wcupa.edu) for additional information

# "Carnival of Culture" Highlights Students Work Study Experience in Germany

In June, Dr. David Bolton, Professional and Secondary Education, and Rick Voss, Department of Social Work, took a group of students to Germany on a study tour. The purpose of the trip was to help the social work students understand social work in international settings. The five social work students from West Chester University took a class at Friedensau University with students from countries in Africa, Asia and South America. During the class, the students received not only instruction from Dr. Voss and Dr. Horst Rolly, a professor from Friedensau, but also visited institutions in Germany where social work was being practiced, including a psychiatric prison, a community center and an afterschool program. The highlight of the trip was the visit to Berlin to experience the Carnival of Culture, a celebration of the diversity of the city of Berlin. In the picture, the students from the class were photographed visiting Wittenberg, where Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the cathedral door. Students learned about the significance of Martin Luther to social work in Germany. Dr. Bolton hopes to take a group of teachers to Germany on a similar trip to learn about the German educational system.

# Recitation Hallmarks

Ever wonder what students studied 100 years ago at West Chester State Normal School? Here's the answer…

*The New Four Years Normal School Course*

***FIRST YEAR:*** *algebra, Latin to Caesar, school management and school law, spelling, reading and public speaking, ancient and mediaeval history, physical geography, arithmetic, English grammar, vocal music, physical training, manual training or domestic science.*

***SECOND YEAR:*** *plane geometry, rhetoric, composition and English classics, botany, zoology, bookkeeping, modern and English history, Caesar, methods of teaching, drawing, physical training.*

***THIRD YEAR:*** *psychology, Cicero or German or French, English and American literature, United States history and civil government; geography, physiology and school sanitation, solid geometry and trigonometry, methods in history and geography, physics, physical training.*

***FOURTH YEAR:*** *practice teaching, history of education, agriculture and nature study, arithmetic and methods in arithmetic, grammar and methods in grammar, Virgil or German or French, public speaking, chemistry, drawing, manual training or domestic science, physical training.*

*This program of studies is in effect as of 1911.*

To learn more about West Chester University through catalogs and yearbooks, visit the WCU digital archives at www.wcupa.edu

**Professional Inquiry** *continued from page 4*

their own actions. Hence, to acquire the capacity to improve their teaching, teachers must be able to recognize their areas of relative strength and weakness.

In future forums, the PLC will discuss Domains Two and Three of Danielson's framework: Classroom Environment and Instruction. The student teacher's videotape will serve as a basis for discussion.

The Professional Learning Community will conclude with a celebration, focusing on Domain 4: Professional Responsibility. The group will share a bite to eat and discuss the dispositions and responsibilities required for growing and developing professionally.

# iPad Devices may Motivate Students, but do they Mediate Reading Instruction?

*By Heather Schugar*

THIS PAST SUMMER, Drs. Heather Schugar and Carol Smith (Literacy) joined forces with Jordan Schugar (English) and Chris Penny (Secondary Education) to explore how struggling fourth- through eighth-grade readers' decoding, fluency, and comprehension compared when reading from a traditional picture book versus reading from an interactive e-book on the iPad. Ten students participated in this mixed methods, quasi-experimental study, with each student participating in both the control and the treatment groups by reading four books over the course of the summer—two traditional picture books and two interactive e-books.

Books were selected for this study based on their availability in both book and interactive e-book format, their reading level according to Scholastic.com's *Book Wizard*, and the quality of the text. Four books were chosen for this study: *Sir Charlie Stinky Socks and the Really Big Adventure* (Kristina Stephenson), *Miss Spider's Tea Party* (Daniel Kirk), *Wild about Books* (Judy Sierra), and *How Rocket Learned to Read* (Tad Hills). Each of these books was in the instructional range for the struggling readers participating in the study and had similar levels of interactivity between the e-book versions.

An abundance of data was collected and participants' reading was analyzed using a battery of tools. The faculty members analyzed running records to determine students' decoding accuracy, words per minute (wpm) rate and Zutell and Rasinski's Multidimensional Fluency Scale (1991) to measure fluency, pre-reading questions, oral retellings, and comprehension questions to assess comprehension, and observations to determine motivation.

The faculty researchers gathered some important findings from the summer's research. It was immediately evident that middle grades participants were eager to read interactive e-books on the iPad. Videos of participants showed very different body language and interactions depending on the format of the book being read. Many students appeared disengaged, as they slumped over the traditional picture books, racing to finish reading so that they could go home. However, when the iPad devices were present, these same students appeared engaged as they interacted with the texts' features, made impromptu comments to their protocol administrator, and asked to reread the electronic versions of texts they had already read in both formats. The faculty members involved in this project were eager to see if the participants' enthusiasm towards reading the interactive e-books made a difference in their abilities to decode, fluently read, and comprehend instructional level texts.

Although participants had similar decoding abilities for both traditional and interactive electronic versions of the four picture books used in this study, their rate of reading was dramatically slower when reading from an interactive e-book than when they were reading a traditional picture book, with the exception of *Miss Spider's Tea Party* for which there were no discernable differences. For example, participants read an average of 95 words per minute when reading from a traditional version of *Sir Charlie Stinky Socks and the Really Big Adventure*, yet they read only 77 words per minute when reading from the e-version of the same book. However, no discernable differences were evident in participants' smoothness or phrasing when reading from the differently-formatted texts.

The most interesting differences occurred in students' comprehension of the texts. For three of the four texts, participants exhibited considerably better comprehension for the traditional picture books than for the interactive e-books. After reading *Sir Charlie Stinky Socks and the Really Big Adventure* in e-book format, two participants expressed to their administrators that they had no idea what they had just read. However, for the most difficult text in the study, *Wild about Books*, participants had slightly better comprehension with the e-book, likely because the e-version provided significant vocabulary and comprehension support in the interactive features. There also were noticeable differences in participants' ability to answer higher-level comprehension questions. In particular, on all texts except *Wild About Books*, participants had more difficulty answering questions that required them to refer back to their background knowledge (e.g., Author and Me and On My Own questions) when reading from the e-versions of the picture books.

A manuscript detailing the results from this study is in the final stages of preparation for journal submission. It was important to the faculty members involved in this study that interested graduate students would have the opportunity to participate in the data collection, analysis, and sharing process. Ultimately, eight graduate students from the Department of Literacy elected to participate in the study. Each graduate student was trained both in using iPad devices for educational purposes as well as learning how to administer the study protocol. Alongside the researchers, these students collected data and participated in initial analyses of students' reading and motivation. This fall, three of these students are preparing a manuscript for a practitioner journal as well as conference proposals for both state and national conferences in reading and technology.

Reference

* Zutell, J.B. 7 Rasinski, T.V. (1991). Training teachers to attend to their student's oral fluency. *Theory into Practice,* 30 (3), 211-217.

# 3E Institute Hits the Road...

*Patricia Beneš*
*Executive Director*

# ...To Honor New EDUCATOR 500

## *"Where It's Happening"*

### 2011 RECOGNITION FOR LEARNING PROJECTS

*Inspired by the Forbes 500 list of business entrepreneurs, the Educator 500 program seeks to recognize, support and mentor the "Educator 500," who are Entrepreneurial Educators – teachers, administrators, university faculty – who believe all children can succeed, who pursue educational solutions to challenges in our schools, and who have the vision and courage to be value-creating change agents of education. They work with business and community partners who seek educational change to prepare students for work, community service and leadership in the 21st century. To date, the 3E Institute has identified 420 Educator 500 who have implemented a total of 296 learning projects to help students succeed in learning.*

IN 2011 the Institute for Educational Excellence and Entrepreneurship (3E Institute) of the College of Education is focusing the spotlight on new Educator 500 where their innovative work really shines - at school. We ve traded the stately setting of the Union League of Philadelphia, where our annual Educator 500 Forums took place, for the schools of the 2011 Educator 500, where these inspiring teachers can be honored with all of their school colleagues participating. We aim for this new "in school" recognition to excite and inspire other educators to apply for Educator 500 and enter the 3E Institute community of innovative, future-oriented educators. Pat Beneš, Executive Director of 3E Institute, has presented the award in eight different schools of the Greater Philadelphia area during August and September with school principals and leaders taking part in the recognition. More presentations are scheduled.

The award presentations occur during a regular school faculty meeting. Each presentation has its own style. At Downingtown East High School the faculty burst into laughter and applause at a spontaneous quip, then into loud applause when

*left: Overbrook Elementary*
*right: Concord Elementary*

*Whitemarsh Elementary, 2011*

their colleague received her award. At Whitemarsh Elementary School (Colonial School District), teams of educators recognized for two different projects also received school mementos and the school principal had a special cake served. Avon Grove Charter School was bubbling with enthusiasm: teachers filled every seat and stood around the perimeter of the school auditorium to cheer for their three new Educator 500. Overbrook High School teachers listened carefully to learn how a teacher created learning project is prepared for Educator 500 recognition. Then the walls of the school's big auditorium resounded with celebration as Overbrook's Educator 500 came forward to be honored for leading a student robotics project. At the Chester County Technical College High School two new Educator 500 stepped up for their technology project and it was discovered that now over 15% of this school's teachers have earned the Educator 500 status. Garnet Valley Middle school's two new Educator 500 were honored for their creative program for special needs students to explore their community. The teachers of Concord Elementary School feted their Educator 500 team project, "Student Recycling Initiative," before moving into their regular meeting agenda. And the new Downingtown Area STEM Academy principal and faculty acknowledged an Educator 500 teacher who teamed with a colleague at a different school in the district on an innovative web technology project.

Each new Educator 500 project leader or team receives a certificate of achievement signed by the Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Kenneth Witmer, signifying the initiative has met the criteria for a meritorious learning project. Each and every new Educator 500 recognized in this way receives acknowledgement, applause and encouragement from their school principal and other school leaders, as well as from their fellow educators.

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The 3E Institute identifies, supports and mentors entrepreneurial educators who collaborate with colleagues, parents, business and community to meet the educational needs of all students.

In 2002 the 3E Institute began the Educator 500 program with the 10 first projects. In the past decade the numbers of Educator 500 have swelled to over 300. Some of the Educator 500 are from states beyond Pennsylvania – California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington, New Jersey and Delaware - although the great majority of these motivated and inspired educators are from the Greater Philadelphia area.

Educator 500 projects vary greatly in subject, size of teams, types of activities, settings and other dimensions, but they all have important features in common:

Student learning focus
Innovation and creativity
Element of collaboration
Relevance to school, district and state learning standards
Evidence of impact and/or student achievement

Induction into the Educator 500 can lead to other opportunities for inspired educators:

Innovative, exciting graduate courses of the College of Education graduate certificate in Entrepreneurial Education

Seminars, coursework and more programming in project and problem based learning

Speaking and presentation opportunities as a 3E Ambassador

Ongoing recognition, support and mentoring from the 3E Learning Community

***As The 3E Institute has always stressed and great teachers like the Educator 500 always show,***

***"We do it all for the students!"***

**The next round of new project reviews will take place in spring 2012. Online applications and nominations are being accepted now. For more information about the 3E Educator 500 program, contact the 3E Institute at 610-738-0582 or visit the 3E Institute website www.3einstitute.org.**

# Scholarship Award Winners Announced

The College of Education is fortunate to have many scholarship opportunities for students pursuing careers in education and counseling.
Scholarship award winners were announced on April 6, 2011 at the 29th annual Teacher Education Day.

## Congratulations to recipients of scholarships for 2011-2012!

*Michael F. Bannon Endowed Scholarship*
Melisa Wolfson

*Harold W. Benda Memorial Scholarship*
Amy Mills

*Elva Boyer Chamberlain Scholarship*
Emma Gardner

*Cherry Memorial Merit Scholarship*
Amanda Otto

*Community Service Experience Award*
Brooke Norris
Elena Viscomi

*John Gontar 1932 Scholarship*
Alexis Yett

*Margaret Gontar 1932 Scholarship*
Brandon Marabella

*Cheryl Hamel School Counselor Memorial Scholarship*
Tara Neiffer

*Mary L. Turner Hopkins '43 Award*
Kerry Hickey

*Marion Peters Irvin 1923 Scholarship Award*
Mary Anderson

*Charlotte E. King Scholarship*
Jessica O'Connor

*Samuel Martin Endowed Scholarship*
Chelsea Mikhail

*Farilla Elizabeth McKinnon Book Award*
Robin Washington

*Military Order of the Purple Heart Scholarship*
Timothy Tice

*Norine E. & John F. Murphy Scholarship*
Jamie Moskowitz

*National Board for Certified Counselors Military Scholarship*
Jonathan Harold

*Terrie Ozelis Early Childhood Education Scholarship*
Amanda Moffa

*Leah Gallagher Riddle '41 Scholarship*
Jessica Petrick

*Teacher with a Mission Scholarship*
Melisa Wolfson

*Class of 1927/Tigani Scholarship*
Rachel Clarke

*Janet L. Wallace Education Scholarship*
Sarah Witmer

*Carlos R. Ziegler Scholarship in Childhood Studies*
Krystie Kramer
Melissa Terwilliger

*3E Institute Student Teacher Educator 500 Award*
Monica Simpson
Melonie Kaczynski

NCATE

**The standard of Excellence in Teacher Preparation**

# Our Mission

West Chester University (WCU) is a public institution established to serve the common good in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. WCU's primary focus is teaching and learning. To that end, the mission of the Teacher Education Program is to support the integration of teaching, scholarship, and service in meaningful ways. In line with the University's focus on teaching, the Teacher Education Program facilitates the discernment process for prospective pre-professional candidates. The program provides for their education, preparation, and continuing development. Our specific mission is to prepare reflective educational professionals who facilitate the development and learning of all students. Accordingly, we are committed to diversity. Our mission includes a commitment to conduct research and scholarship. These activities are aimed at discovering, understanding, integrating, applying, and disseminating knowledge of a) the nature of learning, teaching, and human development; b) the academic disciplines; c) the factors that promote or inhibit the realization of individual potential. We are committed to building bridges between subjects and collaborating across departments and disciplines. The University and its Teacher Education Program are committed to providing service to the individuals, communities, and environments of our region, state, nation, and world. We engage our time, talents, knowledge, facilities, and resources in collaboration with, and for the direct benefit of, our students, our community/school partners, and other individuals, and environments. Approved by the Teacher Education Council, April 16, 2003.