

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Dean: Dr. Kenneth Witmer

Early & Middle Grades Education: Dr. Heather Leaman, Chair

Dr. Michael Bell, Department of Early & Middle Grades Education

- Dr. Bell is one of the greatest teachers I have encountered at West Chester University and furthermore in my life. A man of great courage and compassion Dr. Bell not only challenges his students, but cares about what he is teaching. His lessons are geared to make a lasting impact on the lives of his students whom he wishes become life-long and playful learners. Dr. Bell encourages students to look beyond “the bowling pins” and pursue happiness. For these reasons and more Dr. Bell is an outstanding part of WCU’s faculty.

- I have only known Dr. Bell since the beginning of this fall semester. Dr. Bell’s enthusiasm for his work and his passion for teaching really struck a note within me. Dr. Bell creates a learning environment that I have never experienced before. Dr. Bell’s sense of humor and general personality allows him to interact with and create distinct relationships with every student in the classroom. Dr. Bell will always be available if someone needs his help.

- Dr. Bell is great at encouraging his students. He makes sure that every student in his class does their best. Each class that he teaches is engaging and provides a fun learning experience in the day. He is very relatable and helps out each student personally.

- Dr. Bell inspired students in his Honors seminar through play. In today’s society, the educational paradigm at the collegiate level rarely promotes scholastic success Dr. Bell subscribed: a learning pedagogy developing excellence through leisure exploration and play. By including aspects of our childhood including expanding our imagination, sharing space and objectives with others, and accomplishing simple tasks with critical thinking, Dr. Bell enabled seasoned leaders and overstressed students the opportunity to unwind, but not at the expense of quality learning moments. Many times I would walk out of his seminar in awe, truly inspired by the extraordinary perspectives in this world that can be engaged so long as you remain open to possibility

Professor James Maxwell, Department of Early and Middle Grades Education

- Professor Maxwell has gone above and beyond this semester. He is not only an extremely smart man, but he is also amazingly patient, caring, and empathetic. His genuine personality makes his classroom environment so enjoyable. He teaches valuable information to future teachers and provides such great insight on what works and what does not in the teaching world. He is even taking a class period and paying for new teachers out in the work force to come in and have a “panel discussion” with our class. This will give us time to ask questions we may never get to ask and displays how much he really, truly cares. He also is taking a hike over one weekend to watch birds migrate and has invited the whole class. This just shows how much time he puts into his job. He also encourages us to go to his office hours and really makes the class a genuinely great learning experience.

- Professor Maxwell deserves recognition because he genuinely cares about each of us. He takes the time to get to know us, to make sure he can tailor activities to things we feel comfortable. He knows that not a lot of students have positive experiences with science, and works to change those views. Additionally, he goes above and beyond what is

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required such as putting together a panel of teachers for us to talk to in order to get perspectives from real teachers about job prospects.

Dr. Donna Sanderson, Department of Early and Middle Grades Education

- I believe Dr. Sanderson deserves this award because she always brings new ideas and energy to the classroom. She makes us excited to learn the material by showing that she's also interested in it. Additionally, she seems extremely credible because she often talks about her experiences in teaching, which makes me want to listen to her, because I know she actually knows what she is talking about. She also has really interesting ideas about education that I would want to incorporate into my own classroom.

Literacy: Dr. Sunita Mayor, Chair

Dr. Sarah Giunta, Department of Literacy

- From the moment I walked into the classroom, it was clear that Dr. Giunta is passionate about teaching children. I strongly feel that the lessons I learned from her will be of great use to me when I one day have my own classroom. Each time I walk out of her room, I find myself thinking about how I will teach my students and what I will do to make sure I am being the best teacher that I can be. Although I have enjoyed many of my education classes in the past, Dr. Giunta has sparked an excitement in me for teaching that I have not experienced at this level before.

She does not just simply regurgitate the information from the textbook. She lets us experience the authentic learning activities that we will one day use in our own classrooms. Through her class, I have learned what it means to create truly balanced instruction and cater to the different learning styles of children. She stresses that reading should not solely be about memorizing phonics rules or "spitting back" information about a book, but it should focus on making students *want* to read and foster a love for learning inside of them. By showing videos of her own children through various stages of their reading development, she allows us to see first-hand what a young reader looks like and how to best instruct them. Dr. Giunta has endless advice on ways to make learning authentic and meaningful and she always shares her own experiences as an elementary school teacher with the rest of the class.

I feel that Dr. Giunta deserves the recognition not only because she clearly loves what she does, but also because of the affect she has had on me as an education major. I always walk out of her classroom with a new passion for becoming a teacher, which to me is the sign of a truly gifted professor. In the short time I have been a part of her class, I can already tell that she is the type of elementary school teacher I would like to model myself after in the future.

Professor Lisa Gordon, Department of Literacy

- Professor Lisa Gordon deserves to be recognized because she genuinely cares about her students and wants to make sure they will succeed. I have her for a class where we are teaching and in the classroom twice a week, and she is just so interested in how we are doing. Before we were in the field, we had lectures and you could tell she is passionate about the course material. She always made sure to keep the lectures fun and interesting!

Dr. Steven Portman, Department of Literacy

- Dr. Portman often refers to himself as "the poster child" for teaching. He loves his profession and dedicates his work to inspiring others to achieve their full potential. He emphasizes the process of learning and reflects this ideal in his classroom practices. As a

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technology wiz, Dr. Portman opens our eyes to the various websites and resources there are for teachers to use. His realistic approach is refreshing and allows us to see the lessons at work in his own 5th grade classroom. His dedication to us, despite his many commitments and hobbies is impressive and greatly appreciated.

Dr. Tina Selvaggi, Department of Literacy

- Dr. Selvaggi has an honest dedication to her students and their success. She is always open to questions, criticism, and feedback and is very flexible with student concerns.

Professional and Secondary Education: Dr. John Elmore, Chair

Dr. Christian Penny, Department of Professional and Secondary Education

- Dr. Penny really knows how to combine fun, education, and – his favorite thing – technology. HON 451 is a very experimental seminar that grants the students a great deal of freedom in our projects. Dr. Penny has been a valuable resource throughout the video making process, as he is more than willing to stay after class and bounce off ideas with each group. He manages an atmosphere of support and constructive criticism that challenges us to grow as a group and make our video projects the best they can be. He really cares about the social justice element of the class and encourages us to try to enact real change and make a difference through our projects. Thanks to Dr. Penny, this class has been a wonderful opportunity for me to learn how to use video technology in a way that allows me to express my ideas to an audience that cares.