

# The Educator

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY  
AND EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION

\* THE STUDENT TEACHING EDITION \*

LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING '09

SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION  
CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORKS

\* Subject matter expertise \*

Excellence in  
\* planning and practice \*

Commitment  
\* to all learners \*

Positive effect  
\* on student growth \*

Professionalism,  
\* advocacy, and leadership \*

For many students, senior student teaching is the final semester of their college career. Teaching is an intense activity. The most common complaint of new student teachers is how tired they are (sleeping-in during the week is no longer an option!). Teachers must juggle subject matter, time management, and resource management while also attending to instructional goals. They must be alert to how students are working and learning as well as any misunderstandings or confusion that may arise while attending to those teachable moments in the classroom. All this must be accomplished while keeping in mind students' health and safety and providing an atmosphere in the classroom that is trusting, nurturing and encourages learning. These talents and strategies take time and practice! Student teaching is just the beginning of this wonderful apprenticeship. **We wish all of our student teachers good luck next semester and special good wishes to our global student teachers who will be leaving for their international sites prior to our next semester.**

## A PEEK AT THE LAST STEP - THE SENIOR STUDENT TEACHING SEMESTER: CAPSTONE

One night each week during the semester, all student teachers participate in ECE/ELE 498: "Inquiry into Learning: Senior Capstone Experience". This course's goal is to support them both in developing an open-minded, inquiring approach to their own practice and in increasing their awareness of the many issues that affect this prac-

tice. One of the five major assignments student teachers complete in reaching this goal is a Family Engagement Project (FEP). Truly amazing are the stimulating, novel, and parent-friendly projects that our seniors create! The following description is representative of a multitude of outstanding FEPs.

During the break student teachers in Spring 09 will be reading [The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down](#). It is a remarkable prize winning true story:

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for General Nonfiction  
Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Current Interest  
A Salon Book Award Winner  
Boston Book Review 1997 Ann Rea Jewell Non-Fiction Prize  
A New York Times Notable Book  
A Best Book of the Year (People, Newsday, Glamour, and the Detroit Free Press)

A prominent theme of the book is how cultural factors such as religiosity, family and kin support, child rearing practices, racial identity contribute to the lack of understanding and communication between American institutions and new immigrants to the country. We hope as you are reading this book, you will find a deeper appreciation of the socio-cultural resources that are so vital to families for their survival.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

As second-grade student teachers at Orchard Hill Elementary School in Skillman, New Jersey, we implemented a Family Math Night for the parents of our students. There were two nights offered for parents between the three classes on either November 11 or November 12, 2008. During these nights, the three of us discussed the important concepts that second graders should know in the Everyday Mathematics curriculum. We made a booklet for the parents to take home that included different strategies they can use at home with their children, additional games to play, helpful websites, and additional resources for both parents and students. They also were able to bring home a small bag with playing cards and the directions to the games that were played. This was a



**Ashley Davey, Rachel Holzapfel, and Mary Mamrak**

convenient way for parents to practice these games and strategies with their children in any setting. During our Family Engagement Project, we were able to meet our most important goals. First, we wanted parents to be able to recognize what effective and developmentally appropriate addition and subtraction strategies are for second-grade students. To achieve this goal, we chose to demonstrate games that enforced some of the

most important strategies that second-graders learn including Doubles Facts, Making Ten, Understanding Place Value, and Counting Back. Additionally, after attending parents should have been able to comprehend the strategies and games thoroughly enough to reinforce them with their children at home and rely less on only flashcards and drill. We attempted to reach this objective by creating an interactive environment where parents could move from one center to another. Each center was lead by one of the student teachers or cooperating teachers. There, the parents were taught how to play each game and which strategy each game reinforces. This was in an attempt to make the games more parent-friendly and fun for everyone involved.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

