

The Educator

Volume 1, Issue 5

January 2009

The Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education

Elementary Education Urban Center

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

ELEU FILM SERIES

OT: Our Town-February 4th in FH 132 @ 5:30p.m.

Against all odds, the students at Dominguez High School set out to put on the school's first theatrical production in more than 20 years: Thornton Wilder's "Our Town". But what does Wilder's famous play about life in rural Grover's Corners have to do with Compton CA? This heartwarming documentary follows the students on their discovery of the power of art and the human spirit. Nominated for an IFFP Independent Spirit Award.

Home-March 4th FH 132 @ 5:30PM

Single mother Sheree Farmer wants nothing more than to escape her gang infested neighborhood and find a decent home for her six kids. Her only support comes from an activist named Mary Abernathy. Though Sheree knows the odds are stacked against her, foolish as it may be, she dares to hope for a better life. Directed by Jeffrey M. Togman, this heartbreaking documentary examines the uphill battle many face in chasing the American Dream.

Promises-April 1st in FH 134 @5:30p.m. Documentarians Justine Shapiro and B.Z. Goldberg went to Israel to work on a project about children and conflict, interviewing Palestinian and Israeli kids ages 11-13 to get their views on living in a society afflicted with violence, separatism, and religious and

political extremism. The film culminates in an astonishing day when two Israeli children meet Palestinian youngsters at a refugee camp. A 2002 Oscar nominee for Best Feature Documentary.



Giving Parent Teacher Conferences a New Look

For years attendance at parent teacher conferences has been minimal at many elementary schools across the nation. This is especially true in areas of low income families or immigrant families who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the tradition of

parents listening intently as teachers deliver a talk on the children's performance of lack of performance in their classrooms. At Tefft Middle School this year, participation was up from 75 parents a few years ago to 525 parents at the last parent confer-

ence. The difference? Students are not only invited, but now lead the conferences which are called Celebration of Learning. Students are held accountable not only for their performance during the day, but for their academic futures. (continued page 3)

Dear President Obama:
..The nation still faces
one last great civil
rights battle: closing
the insidious
achievement gap
between minority and
white students....Joel
Klein, chancellor NYC
Dept of Education; Al
Sharpton, Education
Equality Project.

The Center for Excellence in STEM Education

What do you think STEM is? Science! Technology! Engineering! Mathematics!

The mission of the Center for Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education at The College of New Jersey, is to promote an understanding of academic STEM content at higher levels by integrating research-based best practice to ensure that all pre-kindergarten through grade 20, pre-service and practicing teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders have the tools to succeed in our diverse society. There are professional

workshops available to schools as well as in classroom coaching for teachers. Some of the more exciting workshops for teachers and pre-service teachers are as follows:

March 18, 2009 4-6:30 PM

All About Bones. Join Professor Burroughs to examine X-Rays, learn how muscles attach to the skeleton, and learn why bones work the way they do.

April 1, 2009 4-6:30

Digital Imaging

You can discover how to use the tool you already have. Bring in your digital cameras, the connecting cables and learn to manipulate pictures with tools that are part of Windows XP operating systems and free online resources at Picasso.

April 8, 2009 4-6:30

Designing Web Quests & Using Real Time Data.

Discover how to create online investigations that engage students.

More details in the STEM brochure.

Global Student Teachers

In the middle of the cold snap in the east, our brave global student teachers left Philadelphia, Newark, and New York for the next 8 weeks. We have elementary, secondary education, and special education students in South Africa, Spain, Italy, and Croatia, and Thailand. They teach at American Schools and the curriculum is taught in English. Every year our TCNJ students come back to campus with

stories and experiences that will last a life time. Look for their return and the annual roundtable in March.

Interested in the global program for 2010? Contact Dr. Robert Bartoletti in the STEP office ASAP!



TYC

The Teachers of Young Children Association is a student-run organization at TCNJ. Our mission is to provide meaningful involvement and valuable professional opportunities for all students at TCNJ who are interested in working with young children. As an organization, we seek opportunities to become more aware of and more involved in both national and state education

programs and associations, to volunteer time and ideas to local early childhood programs, and to network and collaborate with other early childhood professionals.

In the fall semester, TYC hosted a book drive to donate gently used and new children's books to Franklin Elementary School, which is located on William Street in Trenton, New Jersey. Our goal was to donate at least

500 books for Franklin's kindergarten through fifth grade student classroom libraries. To reach our goal, we opened this event to both the TCNJ community as well as the surrounding Ewing/Trenton area. We sought on-campus students, faculty, and organization contributions for this book drive, along with looking for the help of local organizations and citizens.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this book drive. We collected over 1300 books last December.

Submitted by: Scott Titmas

Welcome Transfers

On January 12, 2009, the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education welcomed 30 new transfer students. They spent an exciting day on campus meeting with the Dean, advisors, and faculty from other schools across campus. The final meetings for the day were in the computer labs registering for spring courses. The students, faculty, and staff welcome all our new transfer students and wish you good luck this semester. Please contact your advisor (you can find your advisor's name on TESS) and introduce yourself prior to

registration for Fall 2009.



P-T conferences from p.1

Changing the model of parent teacher conferences is essential in today's schools where a one-size-fits-all-model does not work anymore. There is an increasingly diverse population in our nation's schools. We must accommodate families with limited English proficiency and families where parents work shift in many factories or businesses. Mr. Mark Heller, an assistant principal at a middle school

outside of Chicago IL, is convinced that a true dialogue concerning a student's academic progress is impossible without both the child and the parent engaged and present and with the teacher on hand to share impressions and answer any questions parents have about homework, standardized test scores, student behavior and other issues. (NY Times Dec. 28, 2008)

Researchers have long supported the benefits of such conferences. Children are and should be the main stakeholders in their education. At student led conferences, children are learning to be organized, put together a portfolio of their work, and discuss their own progress. They can share with their parents a snapshot of their time in school, which for most children is the bulk of their day.

The human genome project is continuing to discover the route of development: "nature; nurture, augmented by a third shaper: brute luck."

Steven Pinker

Mark the Calendar April 23-24



The College of New Jersey is hosting a regional conference:

Academic Excellence in our Diverse World

Keynote speaker: Dr. Ronald Ferguson, author of *Toward Excellence with Equity, An Emerging Vision for Closing the Achievement Gap*.

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