

# T N E

Fall  
2008  
Bulletin

## The Teachers for a New Era Project The University of Connecticut



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### *A message from the Director...*

Today I visited with first year teachers at the Beginning Teachers' Conference, sponsored every year by Teachers for a New Era @ UConn and the Neag School of Education. They shared their energy, their excitement, their doubts, and their commitment to providing the best education for their students – whether they teach in Bridgeport or Bloomfield, Fairfield or Franklin, Norwich or North Grovesordale. They are passionate, sincere, highly educated, and well prepared to take on the challenges in today's classrooms. They will make a difference in the lives of young people who are fortunate enough to be assigned to them.

As I drove away, I was reminded that the success of these new teachers who have taken on one of the country's most challenging – and most influential – careers is what we work for every day. More important than their success at UConn is their future success in teaching the hundreds of children who will call them "teacher".

Under my leadership, TNE@UConn will continue to focus on the responsibility of preparing new teachers, framed by the three principles of TNE:

- ◆ *Decisions Driven by Evidence:* How do we know for sure that our graduates are teaching their students well?
- ◆ *Engagement of Arts and Sciences:* How can we ensure that our graduates have the content area expertise needed to structure and deliver high quality instruction at all grade levels?
- ◆ *Teaching as an Academically Taught Clinical Practice Profession:* How can we help students learn as much as possible from pre-service experiences in the classroom so that they begin their teaching careers not only with a wealth of experiential knowledge but with tools to continue to learn systematically from their experiences in the classroom? How can we provide support to beginning teachers to sustain their growth during their first years in the profession? What are the most effective ways for educating new teachers who will remain in the profession?

I am grateful for the many partners who have joined our efforts over the last five years as we seek more effective ways to prepare teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. I look forward to our continued work together.



Marijke Kehrhn  
Director of Teacher Education/Teachers for New Era



### ***Introducing TNE's New Associate Director Charles Vinsonhaler***

Dr. Charles Vinsonhaler, who retired from the Mathematics Department in June of 2007 here at the University of Connecticut, has recently been appointed as Associate Director of TNE. Before his retirement, Dr. Vinsonhaler had served on the TNE Curriculum Design Committee. As a member of the UCONN faculty for almost forty years, he is continuing his dedication to education as our Associate Director. We are honored to have Dr. Vinsonhaler as a member of the TNE team.

“A great education begins with great teachers.”

# Worth a Listen: Children's Literature Podcasts

Susan Raab, a UCONN graduate, conducted a series of interviews focusing on children's literature that are now available at your fingertips. These podcasts can currently be found for your listening pleasure through UCONN's Teachers for a New Era website. Raab's eclectic group of interviewees include authors, illustrators, publishers, experts, and educators provide a variety of perspectives and resources in the field of children's literature.



Raab graduated from UCONN in 1980 with a degree in English. She has served on the Leadership Committee for UCONN's Northeast Children's Literature Collection and also serves on the Board for the Center for the Study of Children's Literature and Culture at the University of Florida at Gainesville. She is also the author of [An Author's Guide to Children's Book Promotion](#) and is President of Raab Associates Inc, [www.raabassociates.com](http://www.raabassociates.com). Each Year, The Raab Associates prize is presented in conjunction with the Connecticut Children's Book Fair. The prize is awarded to one or more students enrolled in an illustration course through UCONN's School of Fine Arts.

Raab's collection of interviews provides educators and administrators with insight to a variety of literature resources that

can be used in and out of the classroom. This wide range of passionate perspectives and ideas provides the listener with a personal connection to the interviewee, drawing them into the conversation. For example, Kimberly Pauley explains that when she is reviewing teenage literature she, "looks for books that speak to a teen reader directly, and do not condescend." There is also Kathleen Duey, a national award winning author, who describes her work as "devourable, clear, turn the page books." Duey has published over 70 books throughout the past fifteen years, most of which she has written as part of a series. Publisher Ann-Janine Murtagh outlines a book series on the brink of publication through HarperCollins in the U.K. entitled *The Magic Ballerina*. Murtagh explains how the series was written with the creative collaboration of Darcy Bussell, a well known prima ballerina in the U.K. These are just a few examples of what this collection of interviews has to offer in the field of children's literature.

The website provides photos of the interviewees, giving the listener the opportunity to connect a face to the voice. So if you are interested in leaning back and getting acquainted with experts in the field of children's literature, you can access these podcasts through our website at...

<http://www.tne.uconn.eduRECESSInterviews.htm#devard>

## A New Teacher Perspective: Aaron Clark

Even after the five years, two degrees and variety of experience in the field of education, I would be willing to bet that all of Neag's I/BM graduates head out to their first year of teaching sharing the same apprehension. This is when the training wheels come off and many first year teachers are wondering how they are going to manage the rigors of commanding a classroom on their own. I am sure Aaron Clark could tell you all about it.

Aaron Clark, a 2008 Neag graduate in special education, became interested in education when a close friend spoke with Aaron about how much he loved his job teaching students who have committed crimes. Knowing that he loved kids, Aaron decided to take the teaching route, spending his first two years at UCONN's West Hartford branch before transferring to the main campus in Storrs. Aaron is specifically interested in teaching students with behavioral issues. Aaron spoke about the lack of a positive adult presence in many of these students lives and hopes that he "might be the one figure in their life that pushes his student's in the right direction."

Mr. Clark has started his first year teaching at The Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science which is part of The Capitol Region Education Council district. The magnet school provides both a half and full day program designed to provide a solid educational background to students who are looking to continue on to study mathematics, science or technology in college. I asked Aaron a few questions about how his school year has started and what advice he has to offer to other first year teachers...

### What age and content are you currently teaching?

I am currently teaching eighth through tenth graders transitional math. I have a class of ninth and tenth graders that failed their math placement tests that they took upon entering this school and that display trouble with seemingly simple concepts like adding and subtracting negative numbers, exponents, and plotting on charts.

### How prepared do you feel to take on this first year of teaching?

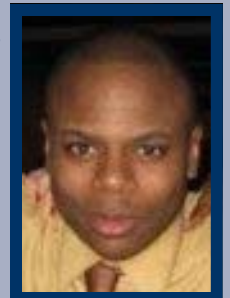
I feel prepared to teach this year but there is uneasiness as to what to expect/what I will run into. Classroom management has definitely presented itself as an early challenge, but it is getting better and better everyday, but there is still a long ways to go.

### What aspects of Neag's I/BM program have proved to be the most useful for you?

The drilling of concepts into our heads, when it seemed annoying and repetitive while going through it. The routine has now proven to be effective.

### Any advice to first year teachers for kicking off the school year?

Search out as much help as possible from veteran teachers, go into their classes to observe how they manage behavior and go with the flow (meaning it's easy to have expectations that you stand by, but trust me these can be crushed instantly; college and real world are much different)



# TNE at BC: Teaching for Social Justice

In March of 2008, The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association was held in New York City with a focus of "Research on Schools, Neighborhoods and Communities: Toward Civic Responsibility." The Boston College TNE Evidence Team presented a symposium entitled "Teacher Education for Social Justice: When Ideology meets Accountability," which was a collaborative research effort focused on learning to teach and teaching for social justice.

As their second year at The AERA Annual Meeting, The Evidence Team presented the symposium through a variety of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method studies. The team opened the presentation with an outlined theory of social justice, following with three empirical studies that focused on teaching for social justice. Kara Mitchell, a doctoral student and member of the TNE Evidence Team at Boston College, described how the team worked together to "ensure that our work 'speaks' to each other across papers," providing the symposium with an interwoven view of the individual research papers presented.

The preparation conducted for the symposium is part of a continuing research initiative on social justice at Boston College's TNE program. The paper "Learning to Teach for Social Justice: Measuring Changes in Beliefs," describes how a twelve item scale was used to evaluate teacher candidates as well as first, second and third year teachers beliefs and practices in relation to teaching for social justice. Another study entitled, "Observing Teaching for Social Justice for Teachers from Two Pathways," evaluates how educators from two different teacher preparation programs teach for social justice based upon their educational background.

The TNE Evidence Team has used the symposium as a stepping stone towards the publication of their work. They are continuing their research in the field of social justice and are hoping to present another symposium at the next AERA annual meeting in April of 2009.

To read the papers presented at the symposium, or for more information about this TNE research initiative or others at Boston College, feel free to visit their website at: <http://tne.bc.edu/>

# Welcome CLAS Dean Teitelbaum

UConn's new College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean, Jeremy Teitelbaum, became a part of the university community this past August. He came from The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he was a professor of mathematics as well as Senior Associate Dean. He has a long standing interest in mathematics education, and has been active in professional development of mathematics teachers and in outreach from the mathematical research community to mathematics educators. Dean Teitelbaum described how he is "very interested in the ways that the mathematics research community can engage with teachers and math educators."



Dean Teitelbaum's dedication to mathematics education is evident in the work he has contributed to the field. He co-authored Teaching Mathematics in Colleges and Universities: Case Studies for Today's Classroom, part of a series used in a teacher assistant training course that prepared math graduate students for college classrooms. He is currently working on a project supported by The Teacher Education Research Center of Boston entitled "Mathematicians writing for teachers." The purpose of the project is to create professional development materials on 'mathematical gems' through the collaborative effort of mathematicians and math educators.

We welcome Dean Teitelbaum's experience, research and passion to UCONN and look forward to his collaboration with TNE.

## You're Invited..

### To participate in Case Method Lunch Workshops!

#### Who?

All Faculty members who are interested in teaching with a case.

#### What?

The case method is a powerful teaching tool that requires students to derive solutions to problems based on real and fictional events in their field.

#### When?

Thursday, October 9, 2008  
Wednesday, November 5, 2008  
Thursday, December 4, 2008

#### RSVP?

For more information please contact Manuela Wagner at [Manuela.wagner@uconn.edu](mailto:Manuela.wagner@uconn.edu).

## Important Dates to Know

**Northeastern Educational Research Association  
Annual Conference  
October 22-24, 2008  
Rocky Hill, CT**

**M.T. Anderson, Author of several books for  
children and young adults  
October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
UConn Campus**

**17th Annual Connecticut Children's Book Fair  
November 8-9, 2008  
UConn Campus**

**American Educational Research Association  
Annual Conference  
April 13-17, 2009  
San Diego, CA**

**For more information visit [www.tne.uconn.edu](http://www.tne.uconn.edu)**

# 2008 Beginning Teacher Conference

Saturday, September 27 2008

For the third year in a row, the TNE Beginning Teacher Conference started early (but not so bright) on a rainy Saturday morning. Regardless, almost 70 first and second year teachers converged on UCONN's West Hartford Campus from all over the state to take part in the professional development activity. The conference is provided free of charge by TNE in an effort to provide support and advice to new teachers. The conference began with breakfast and opening remarks from TNE director, Marijke Kehrhahn and conference coordinator, Aja LaDuke.

Teachers were provided with a variety of session choices, intended to cover topics of great interest to new educators. One of the most popular topics was "Both Sides of BEST," which offered the perspective of a BEST portfolio completer as well as scorer. There was also a session entitled "Surviving the Early Years," which focused on managing time and stress during your first few years of teaching. Other topics included differentiated instruction, classroom management, language diversity as well as content oriented sessions for secondary teachers. The session presenters donated their time and expertise to these topics through hour long discussion or lecture based presentations.

Overall, the conference was a great success and TNE would like to thank all of those who made it possible. We hope to see you again next year!



*For up-to-date news and information about TNE, please visit: [www.tne.uconn.edu](http://www.tne.uconn.edu)*

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**The University of Connecticut**

**Teachers for a New Era Project**

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