

TNE

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

Fall 2007 Bulletin

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A Message From The Director...

Welcome to the Fall 2007 TNE at UConn Bulletin. Whether you are a student, educator, parent, researcher, policy maker or concerned citizen, we believe that you will find this Bulletin valuable and informative. As the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project at UConn enters our fifth year, we eagerly face the challenges that come with aspiring to great things: Preparing the best teachers possible as measured by the learning and achievement of pupils of our teachers.



During the summer we have been engaged in many exciting activities. We have added two new TNE Fellows, Dr. Robert Colbert of the Department of Educational Psychology and Dr. Juliet Lee, of the Molecular and Cell Biology Department. Dr. Colbert is a member of the School Counseling program and has an extensive background working with students in schools as well as with parent-professional alliances. Dr. Colbert is co-chairing the TNE Induction committee this year. Dr. Lee holds the Blue Skye Foundation TNE Fellowship, our first endowed TNE Fellow position. Her expertise is in the biomechanics of cell movement. Dr. Lee is a member of the TNE Curriculum committee and will be helping us enhance our recruitment of science teachers as well as preparing our students to teach biology in the middle schools. We are very pleased to have both Drs. Colbert and Lee join TNE.

In this issue of the Bulletin, you will meet three members of our TNE team, Dr. Tang, Dr. Yakimowski and Ms. Reese. Dr. Tang is a visiting Fulbright Scholar from Taiwan studying with us in TNE this year. Dr. Yakimowski is the TNE assessment Coordinator and the Director of Assessment for the Neag School of Education. She is directing our Teacher-Pupil study, known as Educational Expansions. Ms. Reese is one of our very talented TNE Graduate Research Assistants, working with the Schools as Clinics committee and preparing to graduate and become a teacher next year.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the Bulletin and we encourage suggestions and comments. Please visit us at our website, www.tne.uconn.edu for more information about the exciting people and projects at TNE.

"A great education begins with great teachers" - Vartan Gregorian

Who is TNE?

CORE STAFF:

Scott Brown, Ph.D.

Director

Donalyn Maneggia

Program Assistant

Mary Yakimowski, Ph.D.

Assessment Coordinator

Jeffrey Crouse

Budget Coordinator

Huiying (Cathy) Zhang

Database Coordinator

FELLOWS:

Fabiana Cardetti, Ph.D.

Mathematics

Robert Colbert, Ph.D.

Educational Psychology

Michael Dintenfass, Ph.D.

Department of History

Robin Grenier, Ph.D.

Educational Leadership

Jason Irizarry, Ed.D.

Curriculum & Instruction

Juliet Lee, Ph.D.

Molecular & Cell Biology

Katherine Capshaw Smith, Ph.D.

English

Shu-hua Tang, Ph.D.

Fulbright Scholar

Manuela Wagner, Ph.D.

Modern & Classical Language

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS:

Anthony Artino, Cognition &

Instruction

Sherryl Hauser, Teacher Education

Andri Ioannou, Learning Technology

Aja LaDuke, Curriculum & Instruction

Alison Laturnau, Teacher Education

Lwendo Moonzwe, Sociology

Greg Mullin, Cognition & Instruction

Katherine Picho, Cognition &

Instruction

Cheryl Qing Li, Measurement,

Evaluation, & Assessment

Rosalyn Reese, Teacher Education

Rohini Sen, Statistics

Anat Niv-Solomon, International

Relations & American Politics

Dong Yang, Mechanical Engineering

LET US INTRODUCE YOU TO...

Dr. Shu-hua (Sophie) Tang

2007-2008 TNE FELLOW

Tell about yourself, as a Fulbright scholar at UConn what are your goals and what do you hope to accomplish?

I am Professor of the Graduate Institute of Education at National Dong Hwa University in Hualien, Taiwan. I have a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Syracuse University. While here on my sabbatical leave, I plan to finish up a book on the topic of affective education of underachievers in Taiwan. In addition, my goal as a Fulbright Scholar is to take this valuable opportunity to learn more about the K-12 educational systems of the U.S. I hope this experience will enhance my education and provide practical suggestions for policy-makers in Taiwan.



How is the educational system in Taiwan structured? How does it differ from the United States?

In Taiwan, the compulsory schooling is only 9 years: 6 years of elementary and 3 years of junior high. Students who want to enter senior high and college have to pass rigorous exams. Since these entrance exams are nationwide and norm-referenced, you have to work very hard to compete with others. From the beginning of elementary school, parents are concerned about these exams. Taiwan has a longer daily schedule, roughly from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Some prestigious schools keep students longer or ask them to attend on weekends. The school calendar is also longer, we only have holidays off. In America, the school calendar is shorter and has days listed as "No School for Students" or "Early-Closing" because of professional development days, staff meetings, etc.

How are teachers perceived in Taiwan?

In Taiwan, teaching is not only considered a dignified occupation in the social hierarchy, it is also one of the best professions to have (teachers in elementary and junior high do not have to pay taxes!). They also have a high starting salary and the job is very competitive in terms of other professions. There are almost no staffing shortages and the retention rate of teachers is very high because it is so competitive.

What are some of the differences you've noticed as a parent in terms of your children's schooling experiences?

As I mentioned earlier, under the severe pressure caused by a long history of a high-stake examination system in Taiwan, the schooling experience is much more stressful for students and parents. Especially for underachievers, this pressure could put them in a very bad situation. Some underachievers' parents are even put down by their relatives or friends. In contrast, learning in the U.S. is much more relaxed and homework is also very light. The curriculum is less structured, and is focused more on extra curricular activities. Even though there is an increasing emphasis on testing, I think the systems in both countries are still dramatically different in nature.

In Taiwan how are students with disabilities and those that speak a different language treated in the classroom?

Students with disabilities in Taiwan are given less attention and opportunities. Recently more attention has been paid to special education with the idea that inclusion is better than separation. Most teachers are required to take 3 hours of special education training, but it is still not a big focus. Multicultural education is also a new topic in Taiwan since we are not culturally or linguistically diverse. As the number of inter-racial marriages increase, language barriers coupled with cultural difference lead to serious conflicts. This indeed puts those kids who do not know Mandarin (the official language) at a very bad disadvantage.

1994-2006 NSOE TEACHER EDUCATION ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

Conducted by Dr. Mary Yakimowski, Heather Nicholson, & Cheryl Qing Li

The purpose of this study was to gather information from alumnae of the Neag Teacher Preparation Programs in order to improve teacher education and enhance student achievement. The research questions of this survey focused on alumnae satisfaction with multi-faceted aspects of their program, including diversity.

92% of the responding alumnae would attend UConn again if they could repeat their previous experience.

90% of the responding alumnae graded the teaching training program as an "A" or "B" on an "A-F" Scale.

Dr. Mary Yakimowski

EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

Mary E. Yakimowski is the TNE Assessment Coordinator, Director of Assessment and Associate Professor-in-Residence for the University of Connecticut's Neag's School of Education. She has a joint position with the Educational Psychology and Educational Leadership Departments and is proud to work with TNE. She has her doctorate in Educational Psychology and has certifications in school psychology, intermediate administration and as a school superintendent. Dr. Yakimowski has been the recipient of more than a dozen national and state awards for reports in areas such as enrollment projections, assessment training materials, strategic planning, and reporting of test results. We spoke with Dr. Yakimowski on TNE's Educational Expansion Project.

What is the educational expansion project, and what is its purpose?

The educational expansion project is a series of studies Exploring Student and Teacher Characteristics of the Connecticut Mastery Test results in reading, mathematics and writing for pupils of Graduates from UConn's Neag School of Education's Teacher Preparation Program. The purpose of this project is to study the achievement patterns of preK-12 pupils of graduates from our teacher preparation program. This is designed to provide evidence on the value of the Neag teacher preparation program in promoting pupil learning and relates to the three tenants of the TNE initiative.

How do you plan to determine significant differences between pupils instructed by Neag graduates in comparison to those pupils instructed by non-Neag graduates?

We will focus on Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores in reading, writing, and mathematics of Neag graduate pupils in comparison to non-Neag graduate pupils. In addition, we will focus on the impact of pupil characteristics. For example, results disaggregated by gender, grade, subject area, program, length of time in a particular school etc. We will also focus on teacher characteristics. For example, teacher factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, preparation program completed, content preparation, teacher performance, longevity, retention, etc.

So, What will the Educational Expansions Project ultimately lead to?

These efforts will lead to continued knowledge of the impact of the teacher preparations program on pupil achievement, and curricular enhancements for all education programs.

THE BEGINNING TEACHER'S CONFERENCE

September 29th, 2007

Coordinated by Aja LaDuke
& The TNE Induction Committee

The purpose of this conference was to provide beginning teachers with an opportunity to explore relevant issues in an interactive forum while demonstrating the resources available to them as educators through the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. Approximately 40 beginning teachers attended, which allowed for smaller, more in-depth breakout sessions. Feedback from participants was collected throughout the day in order to gather more specific information about teacher learning occurring at the conference. Participant feedback was highly positive, several participants commented that facilitators had offered new instructional strategies, and specifically listed how they would apply these to their own practice.



"I've learned the importance of teaching, the relevance of education, not just the relevance of the lesson."



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Rosalyn Reese

2007-2008 TNE GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Rosalyn Reese is currently enrolled in the UConn Neag School of Education (NSoE) IB/M program, set to receive her M.A. in Education with an emphasis in Secondary Mathematics. Following graduation, Rosalyn hopes to teach high-school mathematics in an ethnically diverse school setting. An advocate of early intervention for at-risk students, Rosalyn feels her abilities will be best put to use working one-on-one with students. Rosalyn is the 2007 Women's Scholar Award winner for NSoE, and is proud to be one of the five founding members of Determined Educators Emphasizing Diversity (DEED). A hard worker dedicated to the betterment of education in diverse environments, Rosalyn finds herself ultimately inspired by the children she works with. She claims it's the "Ah hah!" moments that keep her going. The moments where a student comes back to her after struggling with a given concept and says, "I finally got it!" This idea of knowing she had an impact in conveying new knowledge to another person makes her ecstatic. TNE is proud to have Rosalyn on the 2007-2008 Graduate Research Assistant team!

LOOKING AHEAD. What's next at TNE?

The Beginning Teacher Workshop Series, Sponsored by TNE & EastCONN

"Lets Talk...About Engaging Parents in Their Child's Education"

December 11, 2007, Lois Luddy, Simpson-Waverly Classical Magnet School in Hartford

"Student Engagement and Performance and your Cultural Competency: 'Is there a connection?'"

January 9th & February 5th, 2008, Diana Kearny, Manchester Public Schools & Mike Greenwood, Windsor Public Schools

"Teacher Development through Self-Reflection"

April 2, 2008, Patric Howley, Lewis Mills High School, Region 10 & Eileen Howley, Ed.D. Farmington Public Schools

For more information, contact Aja LaDuke at aja.laduke@uconn.edu or Nancy Celentano at ncelentano@eastconn.org

American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education 2008 Conference

Scheduled presentation: Dr. Mary Yakimowski, *"Cultures of Evidence: Using data to Improve Programs"*

New Orleans, LA, February 7th-10th, 2008

Academy for Educational Development Institute

Washington, D.C., March 10th-11th, 2008

No Child Left Behind: Positives, Obstacles and Suggestions of Students Learning

The University of Connecticut Student Union, March 19th, 2008 - 9am-3pm

Assessment Colloquia Series (Ongoing)

Scholars from across the campus and State share their insight on assessment

Visit www.education.uconn.edu/events/soa/colloquia.cfm for more details

For further information about these and other TNE events, visit www.tne.uconn.edu.



FRS: 632535

The University of Connecticut

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