The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

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The Bulletin, the official journal of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, promotes professional and personal growth of members through publication of their writings.

The Bulletin invites materials appropriate to the Society's Purposes: position papers, applied and/or data-based research, reviews of literature, program descriptions, and other articles on announced themes or other topics of interest to educators; letters to the editor; book and technology reviews; poetry; and graphic arts.

Prose manuscripts for the Bulletin, a refereed journal, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on relevance of the topics addressed, accuracy and validity, contribution to the professional literature, originality, quality of writing, and adherence to Submission Guidelines (see page 55). Editorial Board members evaluate each submission's focus, organization, development, readability, and relevance to the general audience of Bulletin readers. Due to the diversity of the Bulletin audience, material that expresses a gender, religious, political, or patriotic bias is not suitable for publication.

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Call for Submissions ........................................................................................................... 4

From the Editor ..................................................................................................................... 5

On the Theme: Civic Engagement
It Takes a Village to Start the School Year: A Community Rallies after a Natural Disaster
By Kathy Hintz ...................................................................................................................... 6

Crisis Planning: Building Enduring School-Community Relationships
By Sondra (Sandi) Estep ..................................................................................................... 13

The Sycamore Readers: Partnering with Nonprofits to Help Struggling Readers
By Debra Knaebel, Kathryn Bauserman, and Diana Quatroche ......................................... 21

Reading Promotion: Maryland Humanities Council’s One Maryland One Book Program
for High School and Adult Readers
By Frances D. Luther and Ada Woods ................................................................................. 25

The Mountain View Braille Facility Program: An Interview with Warden Melodye Nelson
By Beverly J. Irby .................................................................................................................. 29

Early-Childhood Teacher Candidates’ Service Learning with Family Book Celebrations
By M. Susan McWilliams ...................................................................................................... 34

Service Learning: Extending the Classroom to the Community
By Jennifer L. Stringfellow and Christina R. Edmonds-Behrend ........................................ 42

Clothing and Connections: A Partnership for Civic Engagement and Service Learning
By Linda Manikowske and Sara R. Sunderlin ....................................................................... 46

Autism: A Gift with Challenges Overcome by Determination and Family, Teacher,
and Mentor Support
By Sharon Gunn and Dixie McCollum ................................................................................. 50

Reflections
By Suzanna Bevins Mullins, Janye Brainard, and Anne S. Haynes .................................... 54

Submission Guidelines ....................................................................................................... 55

Submission Grid .................................................................................................................. 56

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Call for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the Bulletin Editorial Board. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin accepts Action/Classroom Research, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Reviews of Literature, Program Descriptions, Position Papers, Book/Technology Reviews, Graphic Arts, Letters to the Editor, and Poetry for print issues (spring, fall) and online issues (summer, winter). Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for Bulletin readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines on page 55 and the Submission Grid on page 56. Listed below are the suggested themes of upcoming issues.

Fall 2013 (80-1) The Future of Education (Print)
(deadline is June 1, 2013)
International Teaching and Learning • Constructivism • Technology • Crisis Management • Safety/Violence • Changing Role of the Teacher • Emergent Learning

Winter 2014 (80-2) Educational Technology (Online)
(deadline is September 1, 2013)
Tools • Software • Learning Content • Community Building • Emerging Technologies

Spring 2014 (80-3) Purposeful Communication (Print)
(deadline is December 1, 2013)
Personal • Professional • Organizational

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In an introduction to a course entitled Civic Engagement and Education at Georgetown University, visiting assistant professor Heather Voke amply captured the significance of the theme of this issue of the Bulletin:

Throughout history, philosophers, political theorists, and citizen activists have argued that the existence of a vibrant and just democracy demands much more of citizens than a vote cast in a ballot box periodically; citizens must become actively engaged in addressing the social and political problems facing their communities and the larger society. In turn...effective engagement demands that all youth be educated in particular ways so that they are able to participate in this activity. (http://courses.georgetown.edu/?CourseID=AMST-157)

The articles in this issue explore both branches of civic engagement suggested by Voke, suggesting ways in which community members have worked to aid education—both directly in local schools and in terms of overall mission—and ways in which educators strive to create citizens who will bring value to their communities.

Detailing the devastation caused by massive flooding and the ways in which community members helped schools recover, Hintz provides a poignant example of collaborative crisis management, while Estep explores how planning for such crises can build enduring school-community relationships. Knaebel et al. and Luther and Woods explore programs developed and implemented in communities to supplement and support literacy efforts in the schools. Considering a very unique segment of community providing educational assistance, editorial board member Irby provides an interview with a prison warden who explains how inmates contribute by creating braille materials for the blind.

Shifting the focus to the notion of service learning, which is at the heart of many efforts to instill volunteerism and a spirit of community service within young people, McWilliams and Stringfellow and Edmonds-Behrend detail how college students expand their horizons by working in real-world settings involving early-childhood education and special education. Manikowske and Sunderlin, who previously published an article about developing students’ leadership skills in a charitable setting, describe a second program that provides a service-learning setting for students in apparel design and merchandising. The issue closes with yet another poignant story—in this case, showing how school, community, and individual determination brought achievement for a “multitalented young man who just happens to have autism.”

Writing in 1624, poet John Donne argued that “no man is an island.” In 1996, politician Hillary Clinton suggested “it takes a village.” As they explore the theme of civic engagement, the authors in this issue continue the enduring consideration of the connections that exist between the individual and the community—and of the reciprocal impact of these two entities—within the context of education.

Judith R. Merz, EdD
Editor
It Takes a Village to Start the School Year: A Community Rallies after a Natural Disaster
By Kathy Hintz

Flooding in Minot, North Dakota, destroyed schools, businesses, and more than 4000 houses during the summer of 2011. The author explains how the community cooperated to relocate seven school settings quickly so school could begin. Many schools were displaced for 1-2 years, and the author describes the ongoing challenges of dislocation and unexpected surprises and lessons that emerged from these relocations.

Situation

After a wet and snowy winter, citizens of Minot, North Dakota, expected spring runoff. Few, however, expected a major flood that devastated more than 4,100 houses in the community of 41,000. During much of spring, the city built up levees along the Souris River, which runs through Minot, but the mayor ordered evacuations for 11,000 people in early June when the river was predicted to crest near the tops of the levees. Homeowners, businesses, and schools removed belongings from their threatened buildings but then breathed a deep sigh of relief when the levees held. Two weeks later, the mayor informed the community that, because of a significant rainfall in the upstream watershed, the city was threatened a second time and that the river would reach levels never before seen in Minot. Citizens had approximately 40 hours to remove belongings from properties. Business and school personnel and a few homeowners built dikes around their properties in hopes of protecting them.

Water began spilling over the levees on June 22, 2011, and the river crested 4 days later, flooding many building to the rooftops. In addition, the volume of water was so large that the water did not recede immediately, and most people had to wait between 2 and 4 weeks to get access to their properties.

When the water receded, the damage became clear. Approximately 4,100 homes were uninhabitable, and most families needed to strip the houses down to the framing in the basement and first floor. Some houses were condemned because of structural damage, and the flow through the middle school was so strong that interior cinder block walls collapsed. Minot is a rural community already challenged by a housing shortage due to oil drilling in the western portion of the state. The 11,000 evacuees lived with friends, families, and strangers and in hotels and shelters. Temporary housing arrived in September and October from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an agency of the U.S. government designed to provide large-scale disaster relief. In addition, houses in the small towns up and downstream suffered similar flooding.

Damage to schools in the city was extensive. The Minot Catholic schools had an elementary school building in the flood zone, and the community rallied to build a dike
and make sandbags, but the effort failed. In the Minot public schools, six buildings were damaged beyond use, including Lincoln and Longfellow elementary schools; Erik Ramstad Middle School; the ninth and tenth grade alternative high school, called Central Campus Plus; the Adult Learning Center; and Head Start, a preschool for children from low-income families. A dike around Perkett Elementary School successfully protected the building in general, but repairs were needed. These flooded schools had previously served almost 1,300 students. The good news for school personnel was that surrounding towns did not have schools in flooded areas.

School was scheduled to start in 6 weeks. How the community collaborated to get the schools up and running is an instructive and inspiring tale that offers lessons for communities challenged by natural disasters. It really does take a village to start the school year when so much has been damaged!

Literature

In spite of detailed instructions on planning for many natural disasters (Minnesota Department of Education, 2005; Zantal-Wiener & Horwood, 2010), a disconnect often occurs between the perceptions of risk by community members and by risk managers, because few people believe disasters will strike their communities (Gordon, Matarrita-Cascante, Stedman, & Luloff, 2010). Students react to disasters based on the characteristics of the disaster, their degree of exposure to the disaster, their individual characteristics, their family factors, and their social factors (Pfefferbaum, Houston, North, & Regens, 2008). Teachers can help students by monitoring them, encouraging them to express their feelings, reassuring them of their safety and security, and preserving routines even as the teachers themselves adapt teaching to accommodate differences in processing the disaster (Bender & Sims, 2007; Gurwitch, Silovsky, Schultz, Kees, & Burlingame, 2002; Jacobs, Vernberg, & Lee, 2008). Personnel at other educational institutions have been challenged by natural disasters and have identified key factors in getting services running, including a quick response to immediate concerns (Brousard, 2011; Dufresne, 2009); staff who can collaborate with disaster-relief agencies (Brousard, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2008); and good communication with the media, parents, and students (Johnson, Nolan, & Siegrist, 2006; Kennedy, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Typically, recovery from disaster takes between 2 and 8 years (Kates & Pijawka, 1977). This article focuses on the first year of recovery for the city of Minot.

What Worked

Rethink the calendar. With the devastation, public school administrators knew in mid-July that schools would not be ready to start in 6 weeks. Negotiations with the governor produced a calendar with a start date that was 8 days late, with 5 of those days forgiven as part of the state requirement. Professional development days were moved to the beginning of the school year and became instructional days to fit sufficient days into the calendar.
**Make contact with families.** With 11,000 displaced residents, contacting the families to find out who was planning to attend school was a key priority. The public schools had an automated outgoing message system for emergencies and had many phone numbers, but landline service was disrupted because of the flood, and many of the evacuated families were staying with family and friends. Eventually, however, principals and secretaries called every family in the school district to learn if their houses were flooded and where they were living temporarily. Callers also asked about families’ plans and concerns about the upcoming school year and updated contact information. This personal contact allowed all school staff to prepare for and understand the challenges their students would face when they arrived at school.

**Be creative with space.** A huge challenge was finding a place to hold classes for 2 years, and, in this area, community collaboration provided a tremendous support. The population of one damaged school, Lincoln Elementary, met in the Presbyterian Church. Longfellow Elementary School administrators placed portable classrooms and a gym/lunchroom next to the damaged building on what had been the ice skating rink and softball fields. Erik Ramstad Middle School was relocated about a mile away to the city auditorium with portable classrooms in back. Physical education classes were held in the armory attached to the city auditorium and also in the city auditorium in a shared space with the lunchroom. Central Campus Plus, the alternative school for ninth and tenth grade students, shared space with the federally-run Job Corps campus. Head Start students and the Adult Learning Center students relocated to the Jefferson Early Childhood Center, which previously had been an elementary school and was being used as a center for students with special needs. The elementary building of the Minot Catholic schools moved permanently to the secondary school. The flexibility of community organizations to accommodate classes for a few months up to 2 years allowed the schools to run, albeit in some odd and challenging environments.

**Look for donations (and sometimes they just arrive).** In the frenzied rush to evacuate, most people moved items from their houses, but few teachers had time to move personal items from their classrooms. The school district was able to move some equipment—such as interactive white boards, computers, sewing machines, library books, and musical instruments—but was not able to move desks, chairs, teachers’ personal items, small equipment such as microscopes, and some very large equipment for the middle school technology classes. Donations from corporations, organizations, and individuals helped begin to bridge the gap.

To help schools replace equipment, local and national organizations sought out unusual fundraising opportunities. One service organization sponsored a magic show to raise money for new playground equipment. A vocal music group gave up their tour and instead donated money for a new piano and instruments. Community members sought national contests that involved online voting to win money for restocking of the band room at the middle school. A rock band that was touring the country raising money for schools offered

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to do a concert to benefit the middle school music program. Soliciting donations was not always easy, but community members found creative opportunities by doing nationwide searches for contests and enlisting friends and relatives to help.

To help students and families, organizations donated school supplies and backpacks. At the middle school, the portable classrooms did not have space for lockers, so students carried everything in their backpacks. With a generous corporate donation, the school purchased a second set of textbooks for students to keep at home so they would not have to carry all sets of textbooks with them. The photographer who handled the school pictures reprinted all of the previous year’s school pictures to replace at least one set of school photos for families who had lost such possessions.

To help teachers, groups donated books and supplies. The local chapter of the teachers’ union and the reading council collaborated to set up a central location for teachers with flooded homes or classrooms to pick up replacements for some items. Many teachers refused to take the supplies because they could think of someone who was worse off and wanted to save the supplies for others. Overwhelmed with the donations, organizers finally invited teachers from surrounding areas to take books and supplies. Many schools sent left-over books and supplies home with children who had lost their possessions. Later, many of the schools asked for gift cards to local stores for teachers to replace specific classrooms items.

In addition, 23 members of the two local Delta Kappa Gamma chapters, Gamma and Nu, were completely surprised to open their mail and find generous checks of $500 from International Headquarters. Many said they cried when they opened the envelope. A first-grade teacher, Harrietta Summers, said the check “was like someone threw out a life ring to me. It let me know that I wasn’t as alone as I felt.” Second-grade teacher Sherry Heilman commented that the check “was a magnificent example of the love, hope, and support from the beautiful people of DKG. It gave us the energy to do the exhausting, emotionally draining work of throwing out 90% of our possessions.” Teachers reported using the money for a wide variety of purposes, including replacement of classroom supplies, replacement of household possessions, hiring of workers to clean their houses, replanting of their lawns, paying for lengthy motel stays, or purchasing gift cards to thank friends and relatives for helping to clean out houses.

Ongoing Challenges

Space challenges. Using a building for a different purpose than it was originally designed created challenges. Before the flood, Minot First Presbyterian Church leased some classrooms to a preschool and a daycare. When Lincoln Elementary needed a home, the daycare had to move. Church activities such as meetings could often be scheduled around the school schedule, but funerals were harder. When it snowed, the parking lots and sidewalks had to be cleared before school started, so the school and the church facilities personnel collaborated. Space was at a premium, and there were no rooms for activities such as assessments of students and gifted and talented groups.

At Ramstad Middle School, called Ramstad @ the Aud, the school shared space with the city auditorium for 2 years. Physical education and lunch were in the same room at the same time. The secretaries, principals, and counselors all shared
one big room until the offices could be built. Band and orchestra classes were held in the front entrance, so when the building was used for tournaments, all the instruments, which were stored on floor, needed to be moved. Elective classes such as family and consumer sciences and technology education had half the space of the flooded building, and the technology education instructor lost all of his equipment. For the first semester, municipal court shared the building with the middle school, and court schedules had to be arranged so prisoners were not brought in when students were coming and going from school.

At Longfellow Elementary, there was no gym and no lunchroom for the first semester. Students ate cold lunches in their classrooms every day, and physical education classes were held outside until the weather got too cold, when they moved into a hallway. In the Minot Catholic schools, elementary students moved to the secondary school, but there was no time to build a playground. There was also no time to remodel bathrooms, so on the first day, a number of early elementary children got stuck in the bathrooms because the doors were too heavy to pull open from the inside. At the Adult Learning Center, students did yoga in the computer classroom. The key to making all of these challenges work was school staff who practiced flexibility, patience, and good communication.

**Uncertainty: To rebuild or not to rebuild?** Several months into the school year, FEMA declared some schools eligible for rebuilding and condemned other schools. The school board proposed a number of plans and held forums to present them to the public. In the end, one elementary school, Lincoln, was deemed unable to be repaired, and students were assigned to other schools. As might be imagined, the decision saddened the staff and families as they split up among other schools. The school board decided to rebuild Longfellow and construct an addition to accommodate additional students.

The decision about the middle school was more complicated as FEMA declared the middle school property to be located out of the 100-year flood plain—in spite of its having flooded twice in 50 years and being a block from the river channel. After multiple appeals to FEMA, ultimately the school district leaders decided to purchase land and build above the river valley. The additional price tag of nearly $6 million was more than outweighed by the fear of additional flooding.

Approximately 1 year after the flood, Lincoln Elementary and Erik Ramstad Middle School were decommissioned and then destroyed. Head Start and the Adult Learning Center were rebuilt. More than 2 years after the flood, students will get to attend a remodeled Longfellow Elementary and a newly built Erik Ramstad Middle School.

**Stressed-out families and school personnel.** As the school year started, many families waited for temporary housing. Most lived with family or friends and moved into FEMA temporary housing units when they became available. Some units were placed on homeowners’ property and some in centralized locations. Some families chose to rebuild and relocated back into their homes as early as November 2011. Some families wanted to rebuild but could not start until the spring because there were not enough contractors to complete the work before winter. Others waited for the city to announce plans to construct additional levees next to the river for flood protection, which involved tearing down houses. The stoplights in the flooded neighborhoods were not repaired until more than a year after
the flood, which resulted in stressful driving to and from schools. The stress level for both children and adults in the schools was high for much of the first year.

**Unexpected Bonuses**

Everyone’s behaving at the middle school (well, almost!). Tardies between classes are almost nonexistent. Behavior referrals are way down. The halls are much quieter. What is going on here? There was not enough space for 500 lockers at Ramstad @ the Aud, so there are no lockers. Because of a generous donation to give each student a set of books to keep at home, students carry only their supplies in their backpacks. This means the passing periods are quieter because there are no lockers slamming. Students have all their work and supplies, so no one is returning to a locker in the middle of class. Students are on time because they are walking from class to class and not going to their lockers. In addition, the halls in the auditorium were designed for much larger crowds, so there is enough space for everyone to walk without running into each other. In the gym/lunchroom, the sound travels up into the ceiling and seems to disappear, so the lunchroom is much quieter than the old one. Furthermore, it turns out that the children eating lunch like to listen to the upbeat music and watch the students in physical education class playing volleyball—although the youngsters playing volleyball do not always like to be watched! An occasional volleyball in a lunch tray more than makes up for the decrease in behavioral problems!

Seating in the main space at the auditorium allows for a different experience, too. When Ramstad hosts a speaker, the students sit in the fold-down wooden seats with armrests and are not on top of each other. When Ramstad has a pep rally, the students sit on the bleachers, and there is enough space for everyone not to be crowded. No one is really sure if the changes in behavior are because of the flood or the new building, but they reflect the flexibility of middle school students to respond positively to changes in their environment.

Modern technology helps students and teachers. It will come as no surprise to anyone who has taught in an older school that older schools do not have enough electrical outlets. The modern portable classrooms at Longfellow School have plenty of outlets, so many teachers have created reading corners with lights. Portable classrooms also have air conditioning, which none of the flooded schools had. Not so amazingly, students can focus better when they are comfortable. Gail Schmidkunz, a math teacher at Ramstad, commented, “In 37 years of teaching, I have never accomplished so much with the students in the first month of school. The kids are more productive and comfortable.” No one wants a disaster in order to get the schools that young people deserve, but having students and teachers able to focus certainly helps engagement.

**Conclusion**

Starting school after a natural disaster is something that few people want. However, with some creative problem solving and the collaboration of teachers, families, and the community, schools can recover. Providing a safe, stable environment for children and staff is one of many steps in helping communities rebuild, but it often takes a village to accomplish the task.

*Thanks:* The author thanks the faculty, staff, and administrators who shared their experiences and provided tours of the buildings.
References


Crisis Planning: Building Enduring School-Community Relationships
By Sondra (Sandi) Estep

The author outlines a process for forging long-lasting relationships between school districts and the communities they serve through the process of creating a crisis plan. School personnel too often only view the process of crisis planning with the single goal of creating the crisis plan, when in reality such planning is the most natural event that takes place in a district for building relationships with the community. The author provides a 12-step process for creating a crisis plan and explains how each step builds and cements enduring school-community relationships. A strategic planning model is applied to crisis planning to form the 12 steps, including the most important last step of looping back to the beginning.

Creating a well-thought-out district crisis plan is a necessity in today’s turbulent world. National and international events have caused schools to review their readiness to deal with security and safety situations. After the carnage at suburban Denver’s Columbine High School in 1999 where two teenagers killed 13 people and themselves (Raywid & Oshiyama, 2000), schools across the nation were pressured to find ways to prevent school shootings. The terrorist events of September 11, 2001 in New York City prompted many schools to immediately go into a lock-down mode. The 2012 tragedy in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, in which 20 children and 9 adults were killed, has brought additional attention to school preparedness.

Unfortunately, some schools continue to operate with the attitude that those kinds of things happen elsewhere. The not my school syndrome can result in people making reactive decisions during highly charged times rather than being proactive so that everyone knows exactly what he or she needs to do. It was impossible for anyone to have predicted that two commercial airliners would be flown into the Twin Towers in New York City, causing both towers to collapse into a super-heated pile of rubble. Nearly 4,000 people perished that morning in New York; yet, thousands of people escaped through the emergency stairways by following procedures for an orderly evacuation.

The term lock down once was associated only with securing prisons during times of prisoner turmoil. Now, it is a term that schools commonly use when they go into a high security mode. Once, metal detectors were most commonly associated with passing through airport security. Now, it is common for schools (particularly secondary schools) to have them at building entry points.

Safety is the pivotal component of crisis management. The most important considerations for a school district are the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff. A crisis-management plan details how to "identify, confront and resolve the crisis,
restore equilibrium, and support appropriate adaptive responses” (Virginia Department of Education, 1999, p. 1).

Although it is impossible to predict every type of crisis that might occur, a comprehensive plan should at least address commonly identified threats to the safety and welfare of students and staff. A comprehensive plan might include responses to

- Armed intruders
- Bomb threats
- Suicide
- Severe weather: tornado, hurricane, earthquakes, etc.
- Death of a student or staff member
- Loss of power or phone service
- Child abuse
- Sexual assault
- Fire
- Hostage situations
- Serious physical fighting
- Lethal violence
- Possession or use of firearms or other weapons
- Chemical, gas, or biological contamination
- Terrorist activities
- Pandemic.

Schools must develop procedures for dealing with existing and potential student and school crisis by preparing a comprehensive plan. An important component of any plan is a set of interagency agreements with various local agencies to aid timely communications, coordinate services, and affirm responsibilities.

All this said, school district personnel tend to complete the master plan and then put it on a shelf, regarding planning as a one-time event. School district leaders seldom bring the participants back together until 5 or 10 years down the line when there is a governmental requirement for submission of a revised plan. Unfortunately, all members of the community who helped create the plan are rarely kept engaged through an ongoing process. The relationships that are built during the creation process tend to wither over time because the group is dismissed when the plan is completed.

Crisis planning can be a dual process. It may even be viewed as duplicitous because it has a second, hidden agenda. That is, creating a crisis plan is certainly the primary goal, but the process can also be a way of creating a robust community-relations team that consists of a cross-section of community leaders. Regrettably, the second goal of using the crisis planning process to create a community-relations team is often completely overlooked.

Regardless of whether the process is dual-goaled or duplicitous, it still is an opportunity that school district personnel need to seize. The crisis-planning process forces school districts to bring community leaders together to work on the plan with school personnel, and

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that process provides district personnel an opportunity to build long-lasting relationships with community leaders. Those relationships can have benefits that reach far beyond just creating a crisis plan.

Following a strategic model for planning builds in a means for garnering long-term community support. District personnel who use a strategic planning model to create, review, and revise their crisis plan not only have staff members who are well prepared to handle a crisis, but also have a community that is prepared and supportive. The trust and support that are built during the process should be embraced as the substance for building transformative communities of involvement (Young & Carpenter, 2008).

Creating a Crisis Plan

Development of a crisis plan offers an opportunity for school district personnel to create a close, working relationship with many local community agencies and community leaders. A community-based, team approach to crisis planning has both obvious and hidden benefits for a school district.

Creating a crisis plan is a process, not an event. Designing a plan for creating the crisis plan is essential. Simply put, one must create a plan for planning. Often, when some note that a plan failed, the reality is that people failed to plan. The pedagogy and paradigms of strategic planning (Cook, 1988) can and should be used to create a framework for the process. The Estep (2003) model, 12 Steps for Creating a Comprehensive Plan, provides a strategic plan for creating a crisis plan and includes the following steps:

1. Form a broad-based committee.
2. Define the kind of the crisis that you will include in your plan.
3. Conduct an internal and external assessment of current safety.
4. Create the crisis plan.
5. Secure board approval.
6. Create a file of at-your-fingertips information.
7. Distribute the plan widely.
8. Select the spokesperson and the crisis team leader.
9. Train the staff at both the district and building level.
10. Annually retrain the staff.
11. Assess and revisit the plan.
12. Loop back to Step 1.

Although a superintendent can appoint a designee to chair the crisis-planning committee, this is not a time for the superintendent to be invisible (Moore, Gallager, & Bagin, 2012). Because many key community leaders will be invited to participate on the crisis planning team, it is essential that the superintendent demonstrate leadership and commitment to the process.
Stakeholders must communicate to all involved that developing a comprehensive plan can be a hefty commitment of time: approximately 6 months to a year to complete a well-developed plan. This is where using the crisis-planning process to establish relationships with the community begins.

District personnel who use the 12-step process for creating their crisis plan need to understand that nearly each step provides an opportunity to build relationships. The first step brings the team together, but the twelfth step is probably the most important: looping back to Step 1. The final step builds into the process the means for a district to create enduring support and cement long-term relationships between school and community leaders because the process never ends. Step 12, looping back, is what moves crisis preparedness from a one-time event into an ongoing process. The following explains how each of the 12 Steps for Creating a Comprehensive Crisis Plan (Estep, 2003) can provide the circumstance for building relationships.

**Step 1: Form a broad-based committee that involves all the people and agencies who might be called upon during an emergency.** Cooperation of law-enforcement agencies, fire officials, mental-health providers, HAZMAT (Hazardous Material Action Team), civil defense, evacuation-site representatives, hospital personnel, parents, community leaders, politicians, local clerical leaders, media representatives (newspaper, TV, radio), business leaders, and others will result in a creditable planning team. School-district members of the team could include administrators, counselors, school psychologist, transportation director, technology director, union representative, teachers, students (where age appropriate), custodians, secretaries, and school board representatives.

District personnel can develop a sense of ownership in a plan through the active involvement of those who might be first responders or first reporters in a crisis situation. Involving interagency leaders in the process demonstrates a unified approach. Bringing the community members into the process from the beginning is the first step in relationship building. Giving community members a role in planning for the safety of the children in their community and the employees of the schools is a powerful way to build ownership and involvement.

**Step 2: Define the kind of crisis that will be included in the plan.** The list of crises provided earlier in this article is a good beginning. Districts need to include items that may be specific to the uniqueness of the local community as well as those that are state-specific or national issues. For example, Florida would include a section on hurricanes, whereas North Dakota would not.

Step 2 provides a place for local experts to be heard and their expertise appreciated. The local police chief and fire chief may want to contribute other items to the list based on their knowledge.

**Step 3: Conduct an internal and external assessment of the current safety level**

Meeting regularly reinforces the readiness of the team to respond and keeps community leaders regularly involved. Again, involvement leads to ownership, which leads to support for the schools and maintains the school-community relationship.

Every time community members contribute to the crisis plan, ownership is building. As ownership grows in each step of this process, so does the school-community relationship.
of the schools in the district. When personnel assess the current reality of safety within the schools, three things happen: First, information regarding what is or is not in place is gathered. Second, perceptions and important issues are identified. Last, the base of involvement in the planning process broadens. Analysis of the data can provide the planning team with valuable information to guide them in creating the plan.

**Step 4: Create a plan.** The plan should include a district policy, identify the crisis-response team, include response procedures and medical protocols, and delineate roles, responsibilities, training, practice, and an ongoing assessment process. The plan should include a short, concise checklist of the types of crises, the responses, who is responsible, and who is the spokesperson(s).

Taking these steps in creating a plan begins with appointing the crisis-management leader. Appointing a team leader is a very important step. If a crisis-counseling team needs to be summoned into action or staging needs to be readied for media briefings, someone who knows the crisis plan inside and out must be ready to hit the ground running. During a crisis, the last thing a district needs is the appearance of being disorganized or ill prepared to handle the event. Coordination of resources and key people needs to be decided before a crisis, not during. Any appearance of incompetency or unreadiness will not bode well with the community and could endanger students and staff.

A crisis-management leader should be appointed as soon as the plan is formally adopted. This gives the leader time to bring members of the response team(s) together. Multiple teams may exist depending on the crisis that is presented. The size of a team will vary from 5 to 12 people (Moore, Gallager, & Bagin, 2012). The district team leader should meet regularly with the crisis-management team, as should building-level team leaders. These meetings should focus on bringing clarity to individual roles and responsibilities. Meeting regularly reinforces the readiness of the team to respond and keeps community leaders regularly involved. Again, involvement leads to ownership, which leads to support for the schools and maintains the school-community relationship.

**Step 5: Secure board approval of the plan.** Before a crisis plan is activated, it must be reviewed and formally approved by the school board. Board approval makes the plan official and gives legal protection for employees who follow the emergency-response procedures.

This step is not as obvious in the relationship-building process, but it provides another opportunity to connect with the community. First, the board’s taking action on the plan will more than likely be reported in the local media. That will bring assurance to the community that district personnel take the safety of the children seriously and that they are well prepared to face an emergency. Second, many of the community members of the team will then take the approved plan back to their workplaces. That is to say, the police chief will report to the police board, the fire chief to the fire board, the mayor to the town council, the president of the hospital to the board of directors, and so on. Each leader will be reporting his or her involvement with the planning process and role in emergency response. This sharing will broaden the scope of community involvement, and the local media will most likely also carry another article about what was reported to the respective boards. This step expands the level of relationship building to include people who are not directly on the crisis-planning team and sends a clear message regarding interagency preparedness and the common goal of providing a safe school environment for children.

**Step 6: Create at-your-fingertips information.** Information should be organized so that administrators can have it readily available during a crisis. This step is more organizational and less about relationship building. Some things an administrator, at either the district or building level, might want to include in an at-your-fingertips file are checklist
pages from the crisis plan; a cell phone contact and copy of important phone numbers (district- and building-level administrators, interagency representatives, key parents, and media); staff and student directories; media guide or fact sheet about the school; daily attendance record; evacuation site contact numbers; directions for disconnecting Internet and television leads; and phone trees.

Administrators should also create an at-home packet for themselves. A crisis can happen in off-school hours. For example, if a principal were notified of a malicious school break-in where, among other things, the phone system had been destroyed, that principal would need to have immediate access to school and district phone directories. The first call any administrator should make is to the superintendent at home.

Step 7: Distribute the plan widely. All members of the planning team, even those who are not first responders, should have a copy of the plan. Key communicators should spread the good news throughout the community that a comprehensive plan for crisis management has been completed and has been adopted by the school board. Using crisis-plan team members to communicate the plan to the groups they represent is an effective way to get the word out. The support of the planning team in making the plan publicly known is profound.

Step 8: Select the spokesperson. During a crisis, one person—and only one person—should have the responsibility to speak for the district. In the absence of an official community- or public-relations person, superintendents normally assume this role. Superintendents believe that they are ultimately responsible and that the community would expect to hear the news directly from them.

Step 9: Train the staff at both the district and building level. This step provides the opportunity to review and practice. If the plan is not communicated and practiced, it might as well not exist. Too often, the crisis plan becomes a dusty binder sitting on a shelf. In the event of a crisis, the real crisis may be that nobody knows what to do. To avoid a crisis within a crisis, it is imperative to provide the entire staff with training. However, reviewing the crisis plan is often welcomed by faculty and staff with a yawn. Principals have been known to distribute the plan and then just tell the staff to read it. A comprehensive crisis plan can be more than 150 pages long. It is not likely that the principal will get 100% compliance.

Training does not need to be a task that the school principal does in isolation. Asking members of the plan team to come to a building-level faculty meeting to do training is a wonderful way to bring attention to the seriousness of being prepared for a crisis. It can also bring key community members into the school. Every time a community member walks through the school door, an opportunity exists to build an enduring relationship.

Step 10: Annually retrain the staff. During a crisis, all personnel must know their roles and responsibilities. A staff that annually revisits the crisis plan will be prepared to care for the safety and security of students and colleagues. Therefore, a savvy administrator will annually (if not more often) bring members of the crisis team
to the school to train or retrain the faculty and staff. The principal may even want to have some team members provide training sessions for students. Once the foundation for a relationship has been laid, it should be easy for the principal to pick up the phone to call the fire chief, for example, to come do a session with the students about both home and school fire safety.

**Step 11: Revisit and assess.** After every crisis, the crisis team should assess how well they responded to determine if there are areas that need to be improved. Their suggestions should be forwarded to the planning team for review and action. Assessing the effectiveness of how the crisis team responded is an essential component of the overall process. Taking time to assess and reflect will lead to improvement of the plan.

This very essential step is often done internally by the school personnel. However, if the relationship between the key community leaders who are members of the crisis-plan team is going to endure, then these people need to be brought back into the fold after every crisis.

**Step 12: Loop back to Step 1.** This last step is where the relationship is cemented. This step builds in the mechanism to bring the group back together regularly. Members of the planning team should convene yearly, if not more often, for the purpose of reviewing, revising, or making drastic modification to the plan. School personnel need to reevaluate the plan to keep it up to date.

The last step is probably the most important step in the entire planning process. Rapidly changing events in a global society can present school personnel with devastating situations that are presently unknown. In 1998, prior to Columbine, a student using deadly force at school was unimaginable—yet now preparation for such an event is part of every comprehensive crisis plan (Trump, 2009).

In this turbulent world, new types of crises continually present themselves. It is imperative that districts’ crisis teams meet regularly to determine how to address those missing parts of their plan. Whether to address acts of terrorism or the possibility of a pandemic, district personnel need to keep their crisis plans current.

Of course, over time, planning teams will change. The police chief will retire, the school board will change, the superintendent will move on, but student and staff safety will always remain a priority. Therefore, annually bringing the planning team together provides an opportunity not only for review and revision of the crisis plan, but also for new members to become acquainted and old members to renew relationships. Bringing the entire planning team together allows for recommitting, building ownership in new members, communicating revisions, reestablishing bonds among planning team members, providing channels for the input of new ideas and concerns, and evaluating the advances in technology used for crisis management.

**Summary**

Using the crisis-planning process to build school-community relationships should not be overlooked. Step 12 makes crisis planning an ongoing process. Reconvening the
planning team no less than annually gives the school district the opportunity to have direct and meaningful contact with their external constituents on a regular basis. Making this group of key community leaders feel and believe that they are valued members of the school community opens the possibility for other endeavors in which the schools could benefit from the established relationship.

School districts often fail to take advantage of these relationships by merely viewing the involvement of community members serving on the crisis-planning team as an isolated event. However, when planning is a formal, ongoing series of events or steps, school personnel do not waste the opportunity to move the participants from crisis-plan team members to true partners in the school-community relationship. Rather, because school personnel already have such partners involved in crisis planning, they can use the opportunity to move involvement to the next level: the level of an enduring and meaningful relationship between local community leaders and the schools in their community.

References


The Sycamore Readers: Partnering with Nonprofits to Help Struggling Readers
By Debra Knaebel, Kathryn Bauserman, and Diana Quatroche

The authors explain a tutoring program in which university students partner with the local public library to assist elementary-level struggling readers in the community to become better readers. Through such service learning and volunteerism, tutors increase their teaching skills and confidence. Outcomes for those tutored include increased reading levels and increased enjoyment of reading.

Introduction

“America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters... And the race starts today” (Obama, 2009, para. 1). One of the areas stressed by U. S. President Obama’s Race to the Top reform is using effective approaches and innovation to turn around struggling schools. Faculty in the education department at one midsized midwestern university have implemented a program in which the goal is to have students use effective approaches, innovation, and a partnership with the local public library to turn around struggling readers.

Overview of Program

For the past 7 years, the Sycamore Readers of Indiana State University have been implementing a successful reading tutoring program that motivates struggling readers by improving their reading abilities. Both undergraduate and graduate students from the university volunteer or use their work-study hours to tutor struggling readers in Kindergarten through Grade 5. The Sycamore Readers program has a partnership with the nonprofit local public library. The free tutoring sessions take place at the library from October through April. Tutoring sessions are twice a week for 40-45 minutes after school from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The tutors are trained in the Sycamore Readers Tutoring Model, which focuses on using authentic children’s literature at the elementary student’s instructional level, vocabulary from the literature, prediction and higher order thinking questions, and literature-based writing activities. Tutor training consists of 4 hours of intensive training covering lesson-plan development, training in use of the Basic Reading Inventory (BRI; Johns 2005) and surveys, and adding sparkle to lessons. Students are recruited by (a) word of mouth, (b) returning students, (c) younger siblings, (d) fliers sent to principals of local schools, and (e) a short statement on the local public library’s web site.

Goals, Resources, and Outcomes

The goal of the Sycamore Readers is to use effective approaches, innovation, and a
partnership with the local public library to motivate struggling readers by improving their reading abilities. Resources used to implement this program are volunteer or work-study university students and tutoring space provided by the program partner, the local public library. Tutors can use the resources of the public library when developing their lesson plans for the struggling readers.

Over the past 7 years, the average yearly gain in reading has been 2.58 grade levels as determined from a pretest and posttest using the BRI. The Sycamore Readers cannot take the credit for all the reading growth, as the program is a supplemental program for struggling readers. Elementary students were also administered a postprogram survey asking about their perceptions of the tutoring program. Across the 7 years, elementary students indicated that the program helped them to be a better reader (88%), want to read more (75%), enjoy reading at home (70%), like reading in class (74%), and learn more from reading (83%).

Implications and Recommendations

There are some practical suggestions for classroom teachers for using aspects of this program within the elementary classroom to help struggling students and involve volunteers. These practical suggestions are divided into five categories and emphasize methods to get students motivated and engaged in reading. These recommendations are, of course, only a few of the possible methods that can be used to make reading promotion more effective.

Use props to get students excited about reading the story. Many different ways exist for tutors to introduce literature and story vocabulary creatively to encourage students’ excitement and motivation about reading. An example of a creative introduction is to use cookie sheets with refrigerator magnets to introduce vocabulary for the story Chicka Chicka Boom Boom (Martin, 1989). Place a construction-paper palm tree on the cookie sheet and have students pull refrigerator magnets out of a bag and place them at the bottom of the palm tree. Tell the students that today they are going to read a story in which the characters are the letters of the alphabet and the letters have an adventure climbing a palm tree. As early-elementary students are reading the story, they can select the letters that go into the tree and place those letters on the cookie sheet palm tree. As another example, an instructor using the story of Click Clack Moo, Cows that Type (Cronin, 2000) might, as the anticipatory set, tell students there are some items that relate to the story in a bag. Pulling one item from the bag and discussing the item, the teacher can then have the students...
guess how that item might belong in the story. Props that might be brought to discuss *Click Clack Moo, Cows that Type* include an old fashioned typewriter (if available); a stuffed cow, chicken, or duck; a farmer’s hat; and an electric heating blanket.

While students are reading the chapter book *The Cricket in Times Square* (Selden, 1970), a teacher might use a map of Grand Central Station as a prop for an anticipatory set that introduces that setting or might display a map of Connecticut during the chapter that mentions coming from that state. One of the props for a different chapter could be a cricket. Many times local public libraries have interesting props that can be used for various pieces of literature.

**Use literacy kits to give students extra practice.** For selected books in the classroom library, the classroom teacher can type some higher-order questions (without the answers) in a Word document, print the questions, and glue them into the back of the book. This will provide ready-made reading questions of various types for students to answer after reading the story. This strategy is especially useful for volunteer tutors who are not education majors. Media specialists at schools and public libraries can also create literacy kits that can be checked out by both teachers and students.

**Use volunteers.** Parents or grandparents can easily be trained in a basic tutoring model and be utilized to provide some free one-on-one tutoring for struggling readers. These volunteer tutors can use the literature books for which the instructor has previously made higher order questions.

Another suggestion would be for high school students who participate in cadet teaching programs in elementary classrooms to be trained in this model. These high school students could then give struggling elementary students some one-on-one tutoring in reading. This approach is especially beneficial because elementary students are excited to work with cadet teachers from high school, facilitating a win-win situation where both the cadet teacher and the elementary student improve their reading abilities. The cadet teacher also gains experience in working with children.

**Extending the School Day**

**Book clubs or after-school tutoring.** This tutoring program lends itself well to after-school tutoring by the teacher or other trained volunteers. If a school has weekly after-school clubs, another possible approach is to give students extra opportunities to enjoy books through book clubs. Organizers can create a special week of school activities to celebrate books and even host a Friday night sleepover party at the school as a culminating activity. Ensuring that the focus is on a favorite book or author theme is important.

**Summer reading program at the school or local library.** Schools can partner with the local public library to develop a summer reading program. The summer program
The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

coordinator should choose an overarching theme based on a popular children’s movie or popular topic. Then, on each day of the program, implementers have a book related to the overall theme and use reading, writing, activities, and crafts to present the theme of the day. A summer reading program can use the assistance of high school volunteers and senior citizens who enjoy volunteering to provide reading tutoring for the students of the school or district.

Conclusion

A partnership with the local public library to tutor struggling readers can bring rewards to all involved: the local library personnel, elementary students in the community, and those providing the tutoring. Over the past 7 years, the Sycamore Readers tutoring program has partnered with the local public library to have Indiana State University students help struggling readers make gains. The average gain for students in the program has been 2.58 grade levels, with 70% or more indicating increased interest in reading. The program is but one example of how civic engagement in education can enhance outcomes for all involved.

References


Reading Promotion: Maryland Humanities Council’s One Maryland One Book Program for High School and Adult Readers

By Frances D. Luther and Ada Woods

The One Maryland One Book Program is a reading program sponsored by the nonprofit Maryland Humanities Council. The program involves an annual focus on promoting one book title for high school and adult readers. This article provides an overview of the program: a review of its oversight and funding, goals, implementation, resources, and outcomes. Also discussed are various partnerships with the nonprofit organization and issues of diversity.

Introduction

The One Maryland One Book Program (OMOB) is a reading program sponsored by the Maryland Humanities Council (MHC), a nonprofit organization. The goals of this program, which involves an annual focus on promoting one book title for high school and adult readers, are an extension of the MHC’s goal of “...using the humanities to stimulate and promote informed dialogue and civic engagement on critical issues” (MHC, 2012a). The Maryland Center for the Book, as “...one of 50 state affiliates of the Library of Congress Center for the Book” (MHC, 2012a) and part of the MHC, maintains oversight of the OMOB Program. The population of Maryland is very diverse, with many factors such as English as a Second Language programs and socioeconomic levels being addressed in the state’s numerous school systems (Maryland Department of Education, 2012). The OMOB helps meet some of these diverse needs.

This overview of the reading-promotion program provides a review of its oversight and funding, goals, implementation, resources, and outcomes. Various partnerships with the nonprofit and issues of diversity are also mentioned.

Oversight and Funding of the Program

Several funding bodies sponsor the program, including federal and state library departments, the state education department, local bank foundations, and local utility and communication company foundations. The program is partnered with the major public library in Baltimore City. Because this strong funding base involves special requirements for philanthropy and because it carries nonprofit status, the MHC emphasizes in its publications that all events organized by the community around the OMOB Program themes and topics must be free for all attendees (MHC, 2012a).

Goals of the Program

The OMOB Program endeavors to bring together diverse parts of the population in the
State of Maryland by involving them in reading and discussing the same book. Promoting one book—and one book only—each year is intended to create a shared reading experience across the state for that year. The target audience includes high school students and adults, although school librarians have used the program’s materials with middle school students as well. In order to sustain the program, organizers strive to select titles thought to have a wide range of appeal to a variety of people.

Implementation of the Program

A new program around a new book title is implemented each year. The time line and activities for the program include selecting and announcing the title in the spring, distributing promotional materials by the end of the school year in June, and undertaking sponsored program activities in September and October. To select the book for the upcoming year, organizers issue a public call for books centered on a chosen theme in the fall. A different theme is used each year. The initial theme of the program was race and race relations, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Subsequent themes have centered on diversity issues and courage and unity in a time of war.

A list of criteria used in the selection of the book each year can be found online (http://www.mdhc.org/programs/one-maryland-one-book/omob-faq/). Certain criteria, such as a length of no more than 350 pages and availability in multiple formats, carry over from year to year. A selection committee of 15-25 members is created to choose a book from the titles received from the public call. Promotional materials such as bookmarks, posters, and teachers’ guides are made available to entities that want to partner with MHC to promote reading and be included in the book discussion. Partners who want to be involved in the program must register with the MHC, which distributes limited copies of the books, such as review copies for school districts and class sets of 30 copies per school partner. To raise the profile of the program, the state’s first lady acts as honorary chair and introduces the visiting author at select venues (MHC, 2012b). Partner bookstores feature book displays to promote the program.

Examples of Resources and Discussions

The title chosen for a specific year, the discussions that follow its selection, and the resources used to stimulate those discussions are at the heart of the program. For example, one choice for the OMOB Program was The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Alexie, 2007). The book—and consequently the program themes and topics—focused on various aspects of diversity such as physical disabilities and cultural differences. The author, born with hydrocephalus (water on the brain), recounted his struggles with being physically challenged. He was called names by other children because of his physical deformity, and he
felt he was not physically attractive. He also faced the problems that came with being a visible minority as a Native American. He was harassed, not only by the majority White population, but also by his own culture when he decided to leave the reservation and go to the school that was located in the predominantly White village outside the reservation. His own people accused him of betraying his culture and becoming “an apple,” that is, “red on the outside, but white on the inside” (Alexie, 2007, p. 132). Previously chosen titles for the OMOB Program are listed on the program’s website (http://www.mdhc.org/programs/one-maryland-one-book/past-omob-picks/).

Under the auspices of the OMOB Program, academic and school librarians engage in deliberation over the themes in the book. When Alexie’s book was presented and discussed at a book club meeting at an academic library that services a college of education faculty and students, an academic librarian asked how middle school students had reacted to the sexual components of the book. The academic book club leaders subsequently asked this question of middle school librarians at the Maryland School Library Association Conference presentation regarding the OMOB Program. Several school librarians in the session who had run a book club with middle school students on The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian stated that their students seemed comfortable with the sexual content. For example, there was no snickering by the adolescents when it came to the parts of the text that included such content; instead, the students expressed concern for the characters in the book who were experiencing hardships.

Regarding the above-mentioned academic library and conference book club sessions, the following Web sites were used to stimulate discussion and were recommended by the book club leaders:

a) for providing Native American context for this book:
   - http://www.native-languages.org/states.htm
   - http://www.native-languages.org/washington.htm (WA tribes)
   - http://www.bia.gov/

b) for addressing cultural stereotypes:
   - http://www.osi.hu/iep/Workshops/anti_bias/ten_ways.htm
   - http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/links/links.asp?idLinksCategory=4

Outcomes of the Program

Several outcomes of the OMOB Program were evident in its fifth year of service in 2012. First, promotional materials were requested by and distributed without charge to a variety of venues where discussions of the one book occurred, such as secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, state school library association conferences, book fairs, correctional institutions, bookstores, museums, senior citizens’ centers, and public libraries. Second, several author visit events were funded by the MHC to provide access
for Maryland residents to hear and be in discussion with the featured book author for that year. To bring the author to Maryland to speak at postsecondary institutions and selected high schools, the program sponsored transportation, accommodations, and a stipend for the writer. A shuttle was funded for free transportation for students and faculty at other educational institutions who wished to attend the author’s presentations and book discussions. In addition, MHC furnished newspaper advertising to promote the author’s presentation and book discussion at a city book fair that was free and open to the general public. The postsecondary educational institution and city book fair events were attended by capacity crowds. More than 7,600 Maryland residents, in 22 out of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions, participated in the 2011 Program (MHC, 2012b). The same promotional material distributions and funding for author visits have been planned for subsequent years by the MHC.

**Conclusion**

The MHC promotes reading in the State of Maryland by providing oversight and funding of the OMOB Program, setting goals for the program, implementing the programmatic discussions in various venues for diverse parts of the population, and identifying resources to be featured in the program. Through this program, the MHC helps school districts and communities address the needs of students and others, such as those who are socioeconomically deprived. For more information on the program and for annual updates see www.onemarylandonebook.org.

**References**


Interview

The Mountain View Braille Facility Program: An Interview with Warden Melodye Nelson
By Beverly J. Irby

This interview continues a series initiated by members of the Bulletin’s Editorial Board. The goal of the series is to feature interviews conducted with Delta Kappa Gamma members or other educational leaders on a topic related to the theme of the issue. Here, Dr. Irby interviews the warden who oversees a program in which inmates contribute to the community by creating braille materials for the blind.

Introduction

Community engagement is not particularly thought about in a prison setting. However, a model program of community engagement can be found in one women’s prison in Texas: Mountain View in Gatesville. The program of community engagement is described by Warden Melodye Nelson in this interview. One of the main purposes is to provide gainful employment upon release from the prison and to prevent recidivism. But something far better comes from this program: education. The inmates both intentionally and inadvertently receive an education. The intentional education is via the learning of a vocation in braille translation. A braille translator can earn as much as or more than $50,000 annually working from home. The inadvertent education is via the sheer volume of books they translate to braille. By having to read, understand, and translate books in the humanities, sciences, and arts, as well as trade books, they learn. The other component of education is the giving that the inmates provide—the giving of education—through the books they translate for the visually impaired. This community engagement program is unique and serves as a model reengagement education program for prisons.

Warden Nelson, please explain the Mountain View program as it relates to community engagement and service.

The Mountain View Braille Facility program relates to educational issues in that it provides textbooks to the blind. The motto of the Braille Program at the Mountain View Unit is Changing Lives One Cell at a Time. The program allows the offenders to transcribe
textbooks and novels. They are helping students and readers hold a book in their hands and read by touch. The program has completed work for the states of Georgia, California, Texas, and Kentucky and for Washington, DC.

The actual production of a print textbook into a braille textbook is a several-step process. Correct formatting is essential in the creation and development of a braille textbook as the transcriber must also include tactile graphics just as a print book. The tactile graphics are produced in-house using a variety of methods such as collage, laser engraver, and computerized drawing programs. However, it is the basic shapes such as circles, squares, and rectangles created when transcribing for lower-level grades that allow the young braille readers to see the world at their fingertips. This gift of sight is unparalleled.

In many instances when a blind student enrolls in a class, the textbook is needed days before the class begins. When we receive the textbook, we are able to break the book into sections and assign the book to several transcribers so that it can be completed quickly to allow the student the same access as the sighted student. Braille books are very costly compared to their print equivalents. One print page equals approximately three braille pages. Allowing inmates in the Braille Facility Program to transcribe brings the cost down: the book can be produced at a lower rate.

The offenders assigned to the program many times work their shift (required hours) and then take work into their living quarters to proofread. The offender-transcribers spend much of their personal time proofreading—sometimes 3 to 5 hours a day. The transcribers aspire to provide the community with the best, most accurate, error-free product. This dedication on their behalf goes beyond the job requirements.

To become a braille transcriber takes about 3 to 5 years. The cost of a braille program is minimal, but the implementation of such a program requires hard work and dedication. In this case, the program offers the offenders the opportunity to learn a skill set. It is up to the offender to actually do the work and learn all that is required to transcribe books. The Literary Certification provided by the Library of Congress is the first certification that transcribers receive after completion of 19 lessons. When they have achieved this level, the transcribers can go on to learn Textbook Formatting Rules, which requires a proctored test provided by the National Braille Association; offenders are required to pay for this exam. When they pass the test, they are awarded the National Braille Association Certification in Textbook Formatting. The Nemeth Math Course is also available. The brailling of math is different than literary brailling, and special code rules must be followed. The transcribers must again complete 16 lessons and a required test in order to receive certification in this area. Music, foreign language, and proofreading are other certifications that are available to the braille transcribers to expand their skill sets. The educational cycles of learning are never completed as rules change and are revised.

Although the program provides the necessary tools to achieve the skill set to be a certified braille transcriber, it is up to the offenders themselves to take advantage of what the program can provide. Upon
release, transcribers are able to braille from their own homes, doing contract work for various agencies.

**What do you see as the most beneficial part of the project?**

The Mountain View Braille Program provides quick and accurate delivery to blind students and readers because of the large group of qualified transcribers. Braille books are very costly because of the education required to transcribe correctly.

**How long has the project been in place?**

The history of the Mountain View Braille Facility began on September 1, 1983, when it opened as a reproduction braille facility. The facility employed approximately 50 offenders while, on an average, 10 offenders enrolled with The Library of Congress correspondence course. During this time, several offenders and one staff member finished the course and became certified braille transcribers.

Then in November 1994, a data-entry section was formed; that is when the facility became a dual-industry operation. More computer stations were added to accommodate work production in three shifts. Each day approximately 200 offenders worked, and 2 million records were keyed annually. These offenders benefited from the on-the-job training and enrolled in the Key Punch Apprenticeship classes. This facility became known as Records Conversion Facility (RCF).

On March 15, 1994, the last orders for braille were completed. The braille library and referrals were sent to Dallas Services for the Blind. The RCF continued and, during this time, work was done for many state agencies, including Texas Treasury Department, Texas Workers Compensation Commission Reports, and Computerized Image Coupons. In January 1999, we became a translation facility also.

**What do the inmates think about participating in the program and how do they get to participate?**

The initial requirements for an interview at this facility may include a certain I.Q. level; at least a GED; availability as an 8-hour worker; limited work restrictions; a minimum of 5-8 years left in the prison term; willingness to participate in various short courses leading to certification in Braille; and a clean disciplinary record for the past 30 days.

Training at the Mountain View Braille Facility is certified and accredited through Windham School District, which offers two forms of training:

1. **On-The-Job-Training**: All OJT programs are at least 6 months long. These require a monthly evaluation of the offender’s improvement or learned skills. A documented evaluation is done by the supervisor and is then sent to Windham for accreditation purposes. Certain criteria, set by the Windham School District, must be met in order for the offender to receive certification. This program is designed to provide additional opportunities for offenders to gain employable skills training. The OJT Program is administered at the facility level.

2. **Short Course**: All short-course classes are at least 6 months long and take place in
in an actual classroom setting with homework, studying, and testing. The class instructor must be certified in the area he or she is teaching. These classes require an evaluation of the offender’s improvement or learned skills. A documented evaluation is done by the supervisor and is then sent to Windham for accreditation purposes. Certain criteria, set by the Windham School District, must be met in order for the offender to receive certification.

The Mountain View Braille Facility also offers many other types of training such as daily mentor classes in Braille 2000 (software), computer skills, small-business skills, life skills, tactile graphics, and textbook formatting.

What are some of the comments of the inmates who have participated?

Inmates’ thoughts on the Mountain View Braille Program include the following:

- The program is something meaningful and positive to do with my time. It is a place where I can develop my computer, communication, people, and time management skills.
- I have an opportunity to learn a trade and make a career to produce material for students and readers out there that need them.
- The Braille Program has been a blessing to me. It was a second chance that I can do something for someone else. Someone is using something I’ve done to better themselves.
- I am actually building and growing a career. I have a sense of achievement, something positive [so] that [when] I get out [it will not be] just for parole when I go home.
- The Braille Program allows me to learn a skill that I can build on and that I will one day be able to earn income while producing braille material. The program is providing great foundational support to enhance my braille skills and knowledge base. I apply myself to learning all I can, and in the process I am providing a blind student or reader with information for them to enhance their knowledge base. It is a win-win situation.
- I am able to give back to the blind community with the skills I learn at the Mt. View Braille Facility. When I am producing the tactile graphics for some of the early-grade textbooks, I am able to show them the world.

What are some of the comments of the recipients of the braille books and materials?

- To those who made the braille calendar: This past year I was blessed with a student who was blind. I also had a student whose mother shared a braille calendar with me because she knew a blind child was in my class. He loved that calendar and read it every single morning. …I am writing to say “thank you” and “God Bless You” for my blind student. I gave it, along with his other braille material, to his next-year teacher. I know [he] will continue to use it.”
- Thank you for sending the braille calendar. I’ve never had one before! Please convey my appreciation to the apprenticeship class. I’m impressed with their knowledge and skills.
• You are all just AWESOME!! Thanks for all your preparation and help before and during the time we were training. What an utterly fantastic program. You all should get an International Award for the work you are doing. Creating what you have takes vision and foresight – thank you for your exceptional work.

Perhaps the contribution made by the inmates to education in this unusual form of civic engagement is best summarized by an executive director of a regional services office in Texas. He commended the program “for continued excellence in training outstanding Braille Transcribers and quality production of a significant number of textbooks. Your hard work has made a substantial impact on the quality of education for the visually impaired students.”
Early-Childhood Teacher Candidates’ Service Learning with Family Book Celebrations
By M. Susan McWilliams

An associate professor and a public school district administrator formed a family-school-community partnership to introduce family book celebrations to an early-learning center located in a high-poverty area in a midwestern city with more than 80% of children (n=75) who attended the center qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Primary goals for the celebrations were (a) to offer a venue for book-related experiences with families of children attending the early-learning center; (b) to engage early-childhood teacher candidates in service with families in an authentic and meaningful way; and (c) to analyze efficacy of the service-learning experience on teacher candidates. Overall, teacher candidates reported benefits in working with families, fostering interaction, and using props and concrete materials to promote successful book celebrations. Although this service-learning experience was relatively small, limited, and exploratory, it served as an initial study to inform further inquiries into early-childhood undergraduate service-learning experiences with families.

In early-childhood teacher education, one overarching goal is to develop undergraduate teacher candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions in developmentally appropriate practice (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Core to the multiple components that formulate developmentally appropriate practice is an education based on relationships.

Service learning in teacher education is a venue for developing and nurturing relationships (Swick, 1999). First, relationships with children enable a pedagogy of care when teacher-education students both engage in service-based community work and also develop their knowledge of children’s strengths, group stamina levels, interests, and developmental steps (Noddings, 2005). Next, professional relationships with colleagues expand inservice learning experiences when teacher-education students plan, implement, and reflect on experiences with each other, as well as with classroom teachers and community members. Cultivating professional relationships is important to the teaching profession because child outcomes are strengthened when professional, collaborative-learning communities develop and grow, drawing upon strengths of individual members within educational settings (McWilliams, Maldonado, Szczepaniak, & Jones, 2011). Finally, service learning offers a venue for growing relationships with parents and families, typically difficult to offer as part of a college course due to timing and access to families. In early-childhood education in particular, teachers and families work together to support the development of common educational goals such as transitions to and from school.

Service learning offers an especially beneficial pedagogical approach for teacher educators (Alverez, 2009; Root & Furco, 2001; Swick, 1999). When quality-driven service-
learning experiences are part of teacher education, teacher candidates are offered venues for action research, reasons for authentic inquiry, and contexts for building and applying knowledge of children and families (Swick, 1999), as well as potential to develop awareness of how relationships serve effective teaching in early-childhood education. Among some of the many other benefits of service learning in teacher education is the potential for developing awareness and sensitivity to diverse ethnicities (Anderson, Daikos, Granados-Greenberg, & Rutherford, 2009).

Quality service-learning experiences in teacher preparation programs have potential to produce positive outcomes (Anderson, Daikos, Granados-Greenberg, & Rutherford, 2009). Faculty and students in colleges of education across the country engage in service-learning activities as a means for facilitating the development of responsible citizens. In addition, service learning is practiced and accepted within school districts across pre-K-through-Grade-12 settings (Fair, Davis, & Fischer, 2011). Anderson and his colleagues (2009) indicated, however, that collaborative service-learning partnerships between teacher educators on the university level and pre-K-through-Grade-12 school administrators and teachers are more difficult to implement. They suggested a myriad of reasons why partnerships with pre-K-through-Grade-12 school districts could be challenging, and their rationale ranged from lack of time to develop trusting relationships required for true collaboration to differing cultural norms between higher education and public school education to the current culture of assessment-driven curriculum that discourages service learning at all.

Alvarez (2009) identified a general overview of the benefits and intentions of service learning in teacher education.

Service-learning is a teaching method that encourages students to employ the values, skills, and knowledge learned in the classroom in real-life experiences through engagement within their schools and communities. In public school settings, service-learning provides both the pedagogical framework and the educational practice necessary for novice practitioners, while assisting schools to achieve designated goals. The intent of service-learning, ultimately, is that the activity is useful to both the recipient and the provider; hence, everyone benefits. (p. x)

Alvarez’s summation was synchronous with my goals and intentions as an associate professor at an urban-based midwestern college of education who teaches a course with a service component. Feedback from student-teaching evaluations led faculty members in the early-childhood program at University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) to create intentional experiences with families of young children for teacher candidates prior to their entering into the student-teaching experience. Fortunately, a project director in a local school district was seeking support in developing family-literacy sessions for an early-learning center run by the district.
Service-Learning Objectives

The early-childhood course that includes the department’s service-learning requirement is Trends in Early Childhood Education. Service learning provides a natural connection to multiple trends: family education and programming, multicultural education, and English Language Learners, for example. Creating service learning with families also addresses feedback received on student-teaching evaluations from cooperating teachers indicating that students needed more experiences with families prior to the student-teaching experience. My over-arching goal was to create an opportunity for children, families, and teacher candidates that focused on literature and the joy of reading.

Three key objectives drove initial planning and subsequent assessment of this project’s impact on teacher candidates. First, after learning from the district administrator about the stories and ethnic histories of families they would be serving, teacher candidates would create authentic, centers-based learning experiences to promote interaction, relationship building, and literacy learning. Second, teacher candidates would reflect on the impact of the project on their own learning and also on enjoyable, family, book-related fun. Throughout, the district administrator and I strove to fulfill a third goal: to create an undergraduate service-learning project that offered a new and joyful book-related experience for all family-school-community partnership members engaged in the project: teacher candidates, preschool teachers and school staff, families, and children.

Family Book Celebrations

I chose the term Family Book Celebrations to differentiate our program from existing, district-sponsored Family Literacy programs offered elsewhere. Family-literacy programming most often includes four components: parent education, student education, parent-child-together time, and assessment of program impact. One of our objectives was to support the school personnel in building trust with preschool families, and we believed that asking families to complete an assessment held potential to defeat our purpose. Several families in this population had generational histories of mistrust of public education, particularly among urban Native American families. Others, such as refugee families, were in the process of having initial family-school experiences in a new country. Because our primary funding source was philanthropic and thus did not require assessment of impact, we planned family book celebrations without asking families to complete assessments.

Our family book celebrations were inspired by the Pearson Foundation model of Family Book Nights (Pearson Foundation, 2012). During these Nights, families, school personnel, and volunteers come together to share books, create books, have a snack together, and read. We adopted and modified their centers-based approach in working with families with their permission and, in turn, the Pearson Foundation offered to supply us with training via teleconference, books for families, and professional assistance and support materials for our first family book celebration (J. Malchiodi, personal communication, August 2011).

Personnel from the Pearson Foundation, the district administrator, and I planned the first session with the expectation that early-childhood teacher candidates would plan and implement the second and third events. Once the semester began, we found that, due to scheduling conflicts, only 13 out of the 17 students enrolled in the course could participate in the family book celebration service learning due to scheduling conflicts. The remaining 4 students conducted service learning at a school site with kindergarten teachers.

Family Book Celebrations were held on three Friday afternoons outside of teacher candidates’ typical class time. Timing for families worked at this early-learning center because most parents were unemployed. Events took place in the school gymnasium,
allowing teacher candidates to arrive 1 hour early to set up four centers and stay up to an hour after the experience to debrief with the professor and take down materials without disturbing children. During implementation, each of four pre-K classes rotated through 20 minutes of centers’ time. The Table summarizes Family Book Celebration centers and activities. Note that preschool and kindergarten teachers typically use centers-based learning approaches; therefore, children’s and teachers’ familiarity with our format allowed for an easy transition into the project. Teachers who wish to replicate or modify our plans for their own classrooms may find the information in the Table particularly useful.

The support from the Pearson Foundation (2012) proved invaluable because our first event was scheduled just 3 weeks after the start of the semester, potentially offering planning issues for students just getting underway in a new course. The Pearson Foundation model offered teacher candidates high expectations for planning the two remaining book celebrations. The first event, although planned by me with Pearson Foundation staff, was set up, implemented, and deconstructed by teacher candidates. The remaining two Family Book Celebrations were planned and implemented by teacher candidates with support from me and from teachers of preschool classrooms. Teachers who wish to replicate Family Book Celebrations in their classrooms may benefit from viewing the short video on the Pearson Foundation Web site (Pearson Foundation, 2012).

Undergraduate-level teacher candidates (n=13) included 12 females and one male, all of whom were self-reported Caucasians. The early-learning center educated 75 children of multiple ethnicities, including children of refugees and immigrants, as well as high percentages of urban Native American, Latino, and African American children. During the spring 2012 semester, more than 80% of the children attending the school lived in poverty as defined by the federal government.

Outcomes and Implications for Early-Childhood Teacher Candidates

One key data source informed the project: undergraduate teacher candidates’ descriptions, reflections, and analyses of their service-learning experiences. In this regard, the study was very limited, as few conclusions can be drawn from this analysis due to a lack of multiple data sources; however, value can be found in telling the story of teacher candidates’ responses to this one unique service-learning experience.

As an assignment, undergraduate candidates were asked first to describe their roles and responsibilities in the service-learning project; second, to reflect on the value of their work to children and families; and third, to analyze how their experiences connected with the course objectives, readings, and class discussions. I copied, cut apart, and sorted students’ work according to themes. After sorting data, I analyzed topical themes for predominant patterns to discern what most teacher candidates were saying within these themes.

Overall findings indicated that teacher candidates reported the benefit of the experience with planning and implementing a family event to their development as professionals. Within the overall benefits of the experience expressed by students, themes included (a) interactions are integral to working with children and families; and (b) working with props yielded more interaction between children and families and teacher candidates and families. Not surprisingly, teacher candidates did offer suggestions for the next class of early-childhood candidates—an indicator that they cared about their work and wanted it to continue. Under the suggestions for next time theme, teacher candidates encouraged a heavy use of props and learning materials for successful Family Book Celebrations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January 27</th>
<th>February 24</th>
<th>March 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td>Books are Fun!</td>
<td>Nature Fun</td>
<td>Mother Goose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility for planning</strong></td>
<td>McWilliams, district administrator, Pearson Foundation</td>
<td>Early-childhood teacher candidates</td>
<td>Early-childhood teacher candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Title (one book went home per child)</strong></td>
<td><em>Earl the Squirrel</em> by Don Freeman (2005)</td>
<td><em>Over in the Meadow</em> by Ezra Jack Keats (1999)</td>
<td><em>Each Peach Pear Plum</em> by Allan and Janet Ahlburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center #1</strong></td>
<td>Children pose with 8 props and have photos taken and immediately printed on labels. Photos are inserted (with help from parents, volunteers, and teacher candidates) in a pre-made book donated by Pearson Foundation. Books are read with children (1:8 ratio plus volunteers).</td>
<td><em>Over in the Meadow</em> story is read and retold using teacher-candidates’ prepared props (tongue-depressor puppets). After hearing the story once, children select an animal puppet to become when their page comes up in the story (large group).</td>
<td><em>Mother Goose</em> rhymes: Participants sing the rhyme then sing and act-out the rhyme with teacher-candidate-made props (1:4 ratio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center #2</strong></td>
<td>Eric Carle Book Center is available with related stuffed animals and also Fisher Price stacking alphabet blocks and Little People (large group).</td>
<td>Books are available (selected by teacher candidates) with related teacher-candidate-made learning materials and games (1:4 ratio).</td>
<td>More <em>Mother Goose</em> rhymes are used: repeat and chant new rhymes and story-act with props (1:4 ratio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center #3</strong></td>
<td><em>Earl the Squirrel</em> readers’ theater (with puppets and props) is led by ECE teacher candidates, followed by dog/squirrel mini-race if time allows (large group).</td>
<td>Children sing <em>Over in the Meadow</em> together with a teacher candidate who will use the book as a prop for remembering the story song. Make bookmarks with animal stickers, crayons, and markers.</td>
<td>Reading of <em>Each Peach Pear Plum</em>; children and families create a story-retelling prop (a tag-board pie pan and crust that opens, held together on one side with a brad; glue paper peach, pear, and plum inside the pie (large group).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center #4</strong></td>
<td>Enjoy snack and stories with dialogic reading (<em>Zevenbergen, &amp; Whitehurst, 2003</em>) and intentional interaction (animal crackers and juice).</td>
<td>Enjoy snack and stories with dialogic reading and intentional interaction (animal-shaped cookies and frosting applied by children and family members; water).</td>
<td>Enjoy snack and <em>Three Bears</em> puppet show (gummy bears and water).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interactions are integral to working with children and families. Students predominantly discussed the importance of interacting through their vocabulary: the words communicating, talking, and speaking were most often used. Some commented on their fears of teaching children and working with families who did not know English (with no interpreters present). Below, a student comments on how she viewed interaction with families.

The most powerful experience that I experienced from the service-learning projects was interacting with families. They all seemed so thankful that we were there even if we spoke different languages. Finding ways to communicate was a learning process, and I now know the significance and importance of finding ways to help your ESL students understand within your class. (MS, personal communication, May 2012)

Interaction is based on relationships (Pianta, 1997) and has been demonstrated as a key indicator of quality education in the early-childhood years (Burchinal, Howes, Pianta, Bryant, Clifford, & Barbarin, 2008). Relating to and with people with intentional educational or social goals was at the heart of our service-learning work. Yet, none of my students used the word relationship in their papers. Instead, the term interaction was used, and for good reason. Due to awareness of the importance of interaction in effective teaching, current early-childhood literature points to dimensions of interaction as quality indicators for teachers of young children (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Left unanswered in teacher candidates’ papers was whether or not they conceptualized dimensions of interaction as inclusive of relationship building. Teacher candidates’ comments revealed the need to unpack interaction terminology in the context of service learning. Debriefing with teacher candidates regarding the role of relationship in successful interactions may shed light on their understanding.

The use of props yielded high interaction among participants. Teacher candidates observed the correlation between number of props used while interacting with children and the responses of the children and their families. They put their observations into play, especially during the last Family Book Celebration event.

I thought that the props we made for the nursery rhymes were the most meaningful because I found that most of the parents participated in this activity... It was nice to see the parents get involved in acting out the nursery rhymes. (JP, personal communication, May 2012)

The most frequent reference to props by teacher candidates was related to the wildly successful puppet show (Three Bears) provided to the children at the last Family Book Celebration. Using props, concrete materials, and learning materials or games with families is part of developmentally appropriate practice in early-childhood education (Lilly & Green, 2004). Teacher candidates appeared to have internalized the concept as their own discovery, in spite of the fact that they had learned this concept in multiple course readings and discussions. In this case, service learning offered an authentic way to experience and discover the power of developmentally appropriate practice with families.

Changes in the attitudes, dispositions, and thinking of teacher candidates were not assessed because the assignment involved a reflective self-report. In future projects, a survey would substantiate self-claims by students who report change in attitude about poverty, race, and working with families. In summary, emerging themes demonstrated a value in working with families, the importance of interaction with children and families, and the need for props and learning materials to serve as a venue for increasing interaction among children and families and among children, families, and teachers. I observed that, minimally, teacher candidates’ quality of work far exceeded past assignments that required
former students to create hypothetical lesson plans and learning materials.

Parting Thoughts

According to a review of the literature of service learning by Anderson and his colleagues (2009), one indicator of quality service learning is a provision for student decision-making in the service-learning experience. In this case, the undergraduate assignment had flexibility within the boundaries of requiring children’s literature selections (and subsequent use with families). Students selected the books and created designs for their own reading extensions, games, crafts, and activities; supplied materials lists to the professor; and had to suffer natural consequences if they did not get the list to her on time—all work-related skills. As a result, service-learning students took ownership of the Family Book Celebration events and sincerely cared about their performances, about outcomes, and about helping lay the groundwork for future service-learning groups.

My overarching goal was to facilitate a literature-based service learning project centered on the joy of reading for all participants. One of the reasons teacher candidates cared about their project was because they were focused on fun. Their successes with fun through joyful book celebrations made them proud of their work. Important to their learning was experiencing something they already knew: props and concrete materials made teaching young children more successful.

Teacher candidates’ continuous reflections about the importance of interaction without mention of the word *relationship* troubled me because our early-childhood profession and service-learning work both hold relationship at the center of learning. Did teacher candidates understand that at the core of interaction is relationship (Pianta, 1997)? My concern motivated me to revisit Mem Fox’s (2001) work on reading aloud to young children. A well-known author of books for young children, Fox often focuses on an adult imperative—for teachers and parents alike—for creating joyful, relationship-based, reading experiences with children:

> The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks between a child, a book, and the person reading. It isn’t achieved by the book alone, nor by the child alone, nor by the adult who’s reading aloud—it’s the relationship winding between all three, bringing them together in easy harmony. (p. 10)

Ultimately, although my students did not use the word while reflecting, they certainly experienced *relationship* in the Mem Fox sense of the term.
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References


Service Learning: Extending the Classroom to the Community
By Jennifer L. Stringfellow and Christina R. Edmonds-Behrend

Service learning is increasingly used as a valid means of enhancing the learning and practice of teacher candidates at institutions of higher education. The purpose of this article is to describe a service-learning program that aims to help teacher candidates learn the social context of disabilities and its impact on such adults in real-world settings. The special-education teacher-certification program at this 4-year university has included a requirement of 30 service-learning hours for 10 years. The description of the service-learning piece is grounded in four components defined in the Serve America Act of 2009: (a) active participation that requires collaboration, (b) integration of academic curriculum, (c) use of pedagogy in real-world settings, and (d) reflection. The impact of service-learning experiences is demonstrated through the dispositions of teacher candidates in this program.

Service learning is a learning activity increasingly used in higher-education programs leading to teacher certification (Butin, 2006). One of the purposes of this type of activity is to build communication and relationships with communities surrounding institutions of higher education with the hope of enriching the experiences of teacher candidates and individuals in those communities (Mayhew & Welch, 2001). Initially characterized in the 1993 National and Community Service Trust Act, service learning was more completely defined when reauthorized as the Serve America Act in 2009. At this time, four components were delineated to emphasize (a) active participation of teacher candidates in organized activities that require collaboration with the school and community, (b) integration of academic curriculum to enhance the learning experience of teacher candidates, (c) use of knowledge and skills of pedagogy in real-world situations, and (d) reflection on the experience to enhance learning for teacher candidates (Pritchard & Whitehead, 2004). In addition to enhancing the learning and use of pedagogical knowledge and skills, service-learning activities have the potential of developing a stronger sense of citizenship, social justice, and volunteerism in teacher candidates. These qualities are introduced and developed in their teacher-education program and become an avenue for lifelong learning and commitment (Iverson & James, 2010; Kirk & Riedle, 2005; Pritchard & Whitehead, 2004).

For those teacher candidates in special-education certification programs, service-learning projects with individuals with exceptional needs—whether early-childhood, school-aged children, or adults—have the potential of providing an enriched understanding of the social context of disability (Santos, Ruppar, & Jeans, 2012). These projects also promote communication and collaboration with various caregivers and service providers.
with whom teacher candidates will have working relationships once in their own classrooms. The purpose of this article is to use the four components from the Serve America Act (2009) to explain, support, and distinguish the service learning in a special-education teacher-certification program at one institution of higher education.

Since 2002, faculty in a special-education teacher-certification program at a 4-year university in a midwestern state has used service learning as a required component of the program for teacher candidates. At that time, the state board of education changed the licensure of special-education teachers, abolishing categories for certification (e.g., Learning Disabilities, Emotional/Behavioral Disorders). Instead, special-education certification became a noncategorical license that covered Kindergarten through Grade 12 or 21 years of age. With the new licensure requirements, all special-education teachers would be licensed to teach any and all individuals with exceptional needs, regardless of the specific identification category or level of significance of the disability, excluding visual and hearing impairments. In order to assure that teacher candidates had appropriate experience working with this wide range of identification and abilities, faculty included a requirement of 30 hours of service learning in addition to the required coursework and field experiences in the teacher-certification program.

The purpose of the service learning in this program is to support and enhance the knowledge and skills of teacher candidates in working with individual children and adults with exceptional needs across the lifespan. Additionally, the faculty teaching in the program expect that candidates will develop an understanding of the potential adult outcomes for some individuals with exceptional needs and make links to how special-education teachers and special-education programs, Kindergarten through Grade 12, may affect these outcomes. As a minimum of 300 field-experience hours is required of all special-education teacher candidates prior to student teaching, the required service-learning hours may not be completed in a school setting. The purpose and intent is to form a bond with an individual and provide experience and learning within the surrounding community or in the teacher candidate’s home community. The bond and experience are for the benefit of the individual with an exceptional learning need as well as the teacher candidate.

**Service-Learning Components**

The first component of service learning in the Serve America Act (2009) requires active participation and collaboration between the school and community. The teacher candidates in the program described in this article are expected to set up their project with agencies in and around the community of the university they attend or near their home. By having the freedom of conducting their required hours near the university or their homes, candidates are able to adjust the hours of service to their needs and those of the individuals served by the agencies. In all of their networking with agency personnel and individuals with exceptional needs, teacher candidates will have working relationships once in their own classrooms.

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needs, the teacher candidates are expected to conduct themselves professionally and ethically. During coursework at the university, at least one class period is spent discussing the dispositional expectations of all teacher candidates, special education and general education, who represent the university. Additionally, special-education teacher candidates are introduced to and expected to absorb the code of ethics of the Council for Exceptional Children. Teacher candidates have worked with agencies to set up special events (e.g., picnics, dances) and awareness walks. Candidates have worked with individuals with exceptional needs of varying ages to improve academic skills (e.g., reading, mathematics) or functional skills (e.g., voting, using the library). Candidates have been employed at day camps or in family homes providing one-on-one care.

The second component of service learning is to enhance the learning experience of candidates by integrating their academic curriculum. Teacher candidates in the program must demonstrate their knowledge of the characteristics of individuals with exceptional needs across the lifespan, disability identification, and significance of disability. They must demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a professional and ethical manner. For example, a teacher candidate could work with an individual with an exceptional need by reteaching a skill, modeling appropriate behavior, or redirecting that individual in how to greet a stranger appropriately. Similarly, teacher candidates need to provide age- and ability-appropriate activities to the greatest extent possible to demonstrate understanding of respecting adults with exceptional needs.

The third component is using knowledge and skills of pedagogy in real-world situations. Teacher candidates engage in various types of activities in the community with individuals with exceptional needs. These activities are designed to occur in social settings and to include modeling, instruction, and generalization of skills. For this purpose, service-learning activities of teacher candidates may include but are not limited to grocery shopping, holiday or birthday shopping, and cooking or baking. Additionally, teacher candidates may teach specific job skills or how to use public transportation. These activities, while including an instructional component, are conducted in social, less-formal settings in order to be more natural and potentially less stressful.

The final component is to have teacher candidates reflect on their service learning in order to enhance learning. A formal reflection is not a required component of the program described here. However, throughout the coursework, faculty members stress using service-learning experiences to maintain positive dispositions across settings (e.g., classes, community, and vocation) and to all individuals. Teacher candidates use their experiences to enhance their understanding of theories, practice, and policies that impact communities and individuals with exceptional needs from early childhood through adulthood and with mild through significant needs. Further, teacher candidates use their experiences and activities to enhance class discussions and provide background that leads to richer and greater understanding of individuals with exceptional needs; the communities in which
they live, work, and play; and the role of special-education teachers in developing and supporting these relationships.

**Conclusion**

Service-learning experiences have the potential for developing a commitment to lifelong learning for teachers. They may also afford teacher candidates opportunities to expand and enhance understanding of the real-world experiences of individuals with exceptional needs in natural settings. With increased public and legislative attention to teacher-preparation programs, it may be important to follow teacher candidates into their teaching positions to learn how these experiences inform their instruction and interactions with students with exceptional needs and their families. It appears beneficial for teacher candidates to engage in activities that extend from the classroom to the community in an effort to enhance learning and understanding and to promote the principles of global citizenship within the teacher candidates.

**References**


Clothing and Connections: A Partnership for Civic Engagement and Service Learning

By Linda Manikowske and Sara R. Sunderlin

Community service has been a normal part of growing up for many of today's college students. University personnel encourage and support volunteer activities as an opportunity for service learning. The authors describe how partnering with a nonprofit organization results in civic engagement of college students with the community. A program called Clothing and Connections provides apparel, retail merchandising, and design students with the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained through their coursework to serve others in need.

Civic engagement plays a key role in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The young-adult years are a time when civic values develop. “Opportunities for engaging with others to address civic concerns make it more likely that … young people will identify with and contribute to the common good” (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 163). In recent decades, university personnel have moved toward an outreach-scholarship model of undergraduate education, helping students find meaning in roles other than their jobs. Public and civic issues are integrated into courses by offering such opportunities for students to engage in volunteer work in their communities (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003).

Studies have shown that socializing with diverse groups of peers, discussing social issues, and participating in cooperative learning will strengthen students' community orientation and their personal feelings of social responsibility (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). Service learning through volunteer work has thus become an increasingly accepted teaching strategy on college campuses, providing relevant experiences for students. It has been an effective tool for exposing students to diverse populations and positively changing prejudices they might hold (Goldberg & Coufal, 2009). Students gain real-world experience as they learn to be responsible citizens functioning outside the classroom.

In Millennium Rising: The Next Great Generation, Howe and Strauss (2000) stated that today's college students are accepting of diversity and open to experimentation. They are enthusiastic about creative learning opportunities that respect their skills and knowledge. These students enjoy activities that require rapid responses and the opportunity for multitasking. When service learning is integrated into a course, it can provide a context for building the communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills important for students' employability.

Service-Learning Opportunity

In Fargo, North Dakota, where our university is located, Clothing and Connections
Clothing and Connections is a community program that helps men and women make a successful transition into the workforce. One service provided by this program is called Individual Dressing. Those who meet low-income guidelines receive free professional career wear for an interview or a job. These individuals must have been referred by a case manager of a human-services agency in the community. They are then able to schedule an appointment to select clothing that meets their specific needs. Another service, First Impressions, is a 2-day training workshop geared toward helping clients achieve success in finding and keeping a job. Participants in this program receive a makeover and select appropriate professional attire. Since 1999, when the program began, more than 35,000 articles of clothing have been distributed to more than 3,200 clients. In addition, 2,858 hours of training have been provided to 2,117 clients.

Clothing and accessories are donated to the Self-Sufficiency Center by residents of the Fargo/Moorhead community. The donated items are organized by type of garment or accessory and stored at the Center for distribution to clients. Space is limited, and the organization’s closet is packed with items. Once every 3 months, the Clothing and Connections program has a Surplus Giveaway during which clients and community members have access to unlimited clothing items free of charge.

Clothing and Connections personnel are also in the process of starting a small retail store using the donated items as inventory. The goal of this retail store will be to provide clients a hands-on opportunity for retail training. The development and set-up of this store will provide additional service-learning opportunities for retail merchandising students in the university’s academic program.

Learning Experience for Students

Each student in the entry-level Aesthetics and Visual Analysis of Apparel Products class is required to complete 2 volunteer hours for Clothing and Connections outside of regular class time. First the students travel together by city bus to attend a training session with the director of Clothing and Connections. All students are trained together on how to work individually with the clients. Their 2 volunteer hours can be done in conjunction with the First Impressions class, the Individual Dressing dates, or the Surplus Give-Away. With more than 40 students in the class, this adds up to more than 80 hours of volunteer service each semester.

Upon completion of their volunteer hours, the students are required to write a two-page summary paper reflecting on their experience. The students are asked to connect concepts that they have learned...
in class with those that they experienced while working with the clients at Clothing and Connections.

One of the teaching objectives for the Aesthetics course is to understand diverse aesthetic responses in others based upon age, gender, contexts, and cultural experiences. The students work one-on-one with a diverse population of people at Clothing and Connections. They are able to find the most appropriate garments for each client's body shape and distinctive coloring. The students are often challenged by the types of items that are available. Although many generous donors give items to the agency, the items are not current fashion and thus are different from what the students are accustomed to working with in their usual jobs. Students quickly learn that they need to make the best of what they have available to help the clients. The students are also very encouraging to the clients, letting them know that the garments they have on really do look good. This is one of the most important contributions of the students as they build the self-esteem of each individual. This confidence is clearly seen on the faces of the clients and in their attitudes of appreciation.

Outcomes

Students wrote the following comments about the experience as part of their assigned reflection work:

- During this whole process, I became super grateful for the blessings I have been given. It was a rewarding experience for me because I felt as though I was doing good for someone else. Donating the time to do something like this will positively impact a life. This experience really showed me how much work others do for those around them.
- Along with the experience of volunteering at this place, I also got the opportunity to work with fellow classmates that I have never talked to before. We found ways to work together and communicate effectively to get the work done.
- I learned that you need to be able to put aside what you like because, more often than not, people don't like the same things you do. You have to be more aware of their needs.
- It taught me to think about the people all around us. We get so caught up in ourselves, we forget about the rest of the world and the problems faced.

Conclusion

Student-learning outcomes have shown that this is a valuable experience for students in the Aesthetics class. The activity has continued to be a class project for 7 years because of the positive learning that has taken place. As students apply what they have learned in class to a real-life situation, they learn at the application level. They learn about people,
about caring, and about their community, and they develop many transferrable skills: being sensitive, listening, providing support, teamwork, and problem solving, to name just a few. Through civic activities such as the Clothing and Connections service-learning experience, this young generation of college students is able to gain appreciation for their identities as members of a caring community. They become engaged in civic life through the opportunity to work in a setting that connects their lives with others, working together for a common purpose. “Civic engagement of young adults is important both for the functioning of a democratic society and for individual development” (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 173).

References


Autism: A Gift with Challenges Overcome by Determination and Family, Teacher, and Mentor Support
By Sharon Gunn and Dixie McCollum

The impact of one’s interactions on the lives of others frequently is an unknown. This impact can be crushing, or it can be the impetus for that life to grow into productivity, as was the case with Taylor Crowe. The authors explore the often-unknown world of influence and guidance that community—parents, teachers, and mentors—can have on children with challenges and abilities by providing the example of Crowe, a multitaled young man who just happens to have autism.

According to Gardner (1993), “It is the job of [teachers] to understand as sensitively and comprehensively as possible the individual abilities and interests of the students in a school” (p.10). Openly embracing individual-centered education will increase the likelihood that students will achieve their maximum potential (Gardner).

Gardner may have had children like Taylor Crowe in mind when he made this statement. No doubt, it was teachers, doing exactly what Gardner suggested, who changed the course of Taylor’s life. Teachers possess the skills and heart to make a difference in the lives of all students. With this power and responsibility, a teacher must focus on the ability in disability to challenge all students to achieve—a concept that Taylor’s teachers believed and applied.

Taylor and his father, Dr. Crowe, sat with us one afternoon and freely discussed Taylor’s experiences from diagnosis to present-day life. Dr. Crowe explained that physicians at Barnes Children’s Hospital diagnosed Taylor with autism when he was 4 years old. Today, he is a graduate of California Institute of the Arts, professional cartoonist, author, illustrator, children’s tutor, nationally recognized public speaker and presenter, and advocate for individuals with autism. Thank goodness his teachers did not focus on what he could not do but challenged him to grow and develop his skills.

The Early Years
Storch (Crowe, 2006) reported Taylor initially displayed typical development and was even considered to be advanced. However, shortly after his second birthday, his ability to share interests, engage in conversation, and express emotions all began to unravel and were completely gone within 6 months. Interviews with Taylor and his father revealed that key to his recovery was hard work on Taylor’s part and that of his teachers, both formal and informal, who recognized his talents and strengths and used them to promote his resurgence.
Taylor first began to sketch early in life. However, it was his kindergarten teacher who was first able to look past the barriers created by autism to understand this talent. While watching this 6-year-old student sketching a stick person spinning on a stool, she recognized this young child was able to express himself through exceptionally detailed drawings. Taylor’s kindergarten teacher went on to encourage his family to capitalize on his artistic skills and talents. This was the beginning of Taylor’s journey toward his later educational and artistic accomplishments.

**Mentoring is a Key to Successes**

Many teachers, tutors, and mentors became integral components in Taylor’s successful development of skills and talents. Recognizing that the enhancement of Taylor’s language and social skills would be pivotal to his future success, Taylor’s father, Dr. Crowe, worked in conjunction with local educators to initiate the national program *Circle of Friends* (CoF) in Taylor’s schools. Created in 1999 on the campus of Santa Monica High School in California, CoF provides students, with and without disabilities, opportunities to develop, through first-hand experiences, a strong sense of social awareness and social relatedness by developing an understanding and acceptance of individual differences.

During the interview process, Dr. Crowe proudly watched Taylor as he so ably conveyed his thoughts and experiences. He interjected only occasionally as Taylor turned to him for confirmation. However, Dr. Crowe resolutely made one point. Throughout his life, there were many who assisted Taylor in reaching higher for what he wanted, but no one factored more into his success than Taylor himself. The young man’s resolve and innate desire to succeed were essential factors leading him to becoming who he is today.

**Successes by Building on Talents and Interests**

As Taylor grew, so did his drawing talents. He soon identified sketching cartoons as his one true love. Grandin and Duffy (2008) emphasized, “To build success, parents and mentors should help children develop their natural talents. . . these talents can often be the first steps toward a viable and intellectually satisfying career” (p. xv). In accordance with Grandin and Duffy’s recommendations, it was one of Taylor’s high school teachers who took intense interest in his artistic talents and who pointed him in the direction of becoming a professional cartoonist. Exploring this thought, Taylor contacted a local...
newspaper as a venue to publish his work. To get his foot in the door, he volunteered his first cartoon for free. Recognizing this young man’s vision and talent, the editor quickly negotiated a per-cartoon fee to run Taylor’s satirical cartoons in the editorial section, thus launching Taylor’s vocation. He has now been hired as a satirical cartoonist for a local newspaper.

With support and guidance from crucial teachers and mentors such as his father, Taylor developed a portfolio of his works, which became a key to his future successes. With Taylor’s love of drawing and his varied experiences, he decided he wanted more and became determined to earn a college degree. As usual, he challenged himself to go for the gold and applied at the California Institute of the Arts. Acceptance to Cal Arts is very competitive, with only 28% of those who apply being accepted and only one out of five being accepted on their first attempt (CalArts, 2012). Submitting his portfolio for a blind review, Taylor was accepted on his first attempt.

After his initial acceptance, Taylor and his father visited the campus and the administration to discuss some of the challenges Taylor would confront, and soon after that visit, he became the first student with autism to attend the university. His parents visited the campus at spring break, keeping in mind there was the possibility they would have to take Taylor home. To the contrary, the chair of the department told the Crowes that Taylor was very talented and, even though some challenges had been encountered, he was welcome to continue pursuing his degree at the university. The chair encouraged Taylor’s parents by sharing that Taylor would interact with mega talents and would share his talents with others.

The Crowes frequently visited Taylor as he earned his degree. Toward the end of his college career, they had the opportunity to meet with the academic dean. The dean shared that he had initially been skeptical of this new challenge for the university, but it had been an invaluable experience. He included that having Taylor as a student had been as much a learning experience for school personnel as it had been for Taylor. Not long after, Taylor graduated with a degree in character animation.

**Developing Independence through the Journey**

Today, Taylor continues using his talents. He has an art studio displaying his many art projects. Many pieces of his art feature the heart as his connection to his experiences growing up and to the many mentors, friends, teachers, and family who supported and guided him in his journey. Taylor and his family are also the founders of the Tailor Institute associated with Southeast Missouri State University’s Autism Center. The mission of the Tailor Institute is to assist individuals with autism to identify their talents and strengths and create a future of independence.
Taylor also found that he could inspire the learning of others by using his artistic skills. He partnered with Dr. Ann Porter Gifford to write and illustrate two sets of children’s books, 26 books in each set, published in 2012. These books currently are used successfully to tutor at-risk readers in the Blanchard Elementary School in Cape Girardeau, MO. Plans for use included introduction in all Cape Girardeau Public Elementary Schools beginning in fall 2012.

Most importantly, when talking with Taylor, the listener smiles profusely and intently listens as he describes his mission to increase the awareness of others regarding the talents and challenges of those with autism. As part of his life’s calling, he became a national presenter, increasing the understanding of others to the challenges of autism. When asked “What is the most important thing you would like others to know?” he did not hesitate to share the challenges he has faced and some he will continue to address. But he quickly pointed to the most important things he wanted others to know he has gained: “My friendships!” These are the innumerable friendships he developed through his journey with autism.

Conclusion

Robert Brooks (1993) opened his seminars challenging teachers with the following question: “Do you believe you have a long-lasting impact on the lives of your students?” It can be safely said there were several teachers in the life of Taylor Crowe who could answer this question with a firm yes. The two questions for each reader are: Five, 10, or 20 years from now, what experiences will your students remember from your classes. Will these experiences reflect someone who took a deep interest in their lives, recognized how their minds, talents and abilities were different from those of others, and helped them to use these minds, talents, and abilities to grow and develop successfully?

References


Reflections

Sowing Benevolence
By Suzanna Bevins Mullins
Alpha Psi Chapter, Virginia

The teacher places a lifelong gift in the hands of her students
A seed
An opportunity
A desire to help others grows as they grow
Fruits, though invisible, are priceless
Watered by good deeds—not the praise of man—
Become tastes of hope, encouragement, strength

Learning to make a difference,
Her students cultivate a garden of invaluable goods
Honor, generosity, kindness, charity
The harvest will be bountiful
Reaping baskets overflowing with lives changed
Through their service to fellow man

Sharing Cultures
By Janye Brainard
Kappa Chapter, Texas

We met tonight at your place
To share good food and fellowship.
You opened to us your heart.

Together we joined cultures
That span the globe:
Mexico, Japan, and the United States.

Thank you for allowing us in
To eat with you,
To share your presence,
To spread our love.

Tonight we met at your place.
Next time it will be mine
Or somewhere else allowing us
To share good food and fellowship.

DKG
By Anne S. Haynes
Beta Epsilon Chapter,
North Carolina

Delta Kappa Gamma
Donate Key Gifts
Define Keen Grammar
Describe Knowledgeable Gains
Decipher Kaleidoscopic Grants
Do Keep Going.
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Submissions from members will be accepted for review provided that:

- The submission is not being considered concurrently in whole or substantial part by another publisher.
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- Although there is a suggested theme for each issue, manuscripts on all topics are welcome.
- Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for Bulletin readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. Topic headings should be inserted where appropriate.
- Please see Submission Grid on the following page for specific requirements of the types of manuscripts appropriate for publication.
- Double space the entire manuscript, including quotations, references, and tables. Print should be clear, dark, and legible. Pages must be numbered.
- References should refer only to materials cited within the text. Nonretrievable material, such as papers, reports of limited circulation, unpublished works, and personal communications, should be restricted to works absolutely essential to the manuscript.
- Abbreviations should be explained at their first appearance in the text. Educational jargon (e.g., preservice, K–10, etc.) should be defined as it occurs in the text.
- Place tables and figures on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Use Arabic numerals and indicate approximate placement in the text.
- Photos, graphics, charts, etc. that may enhance the presentation of the manuscript may be included. Contact the editorial staff (bulletin@dkg.org) for information regarding the use of photos.

Submission

- One submission per author per issue.
- Submit electronically, in Microsoft Word format, to bulletin@dkg.org. Do not submit PDF files. For a manuscript, include definitive abstract, photo of author(s) [see below], and biographical information. Biographical information must include author(s) name(s), occupational position(s), Society and professional affiliations (list offices held), address(es), phone number(s) and e-mail address(es).
- Electronic/digital photo files must be saved in JPG or TIFF format and must be a minimum of 1.5” x 1.5” with a 300 dpi resolution. For photos submitted to enhance text, include caption/identification information.
- For poems and graphic arts, submit name, address, and chapter affiliation. A photograph is not required.
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# Bulletin Submission Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission Type and Description</th>
<th>Word Length</th>
<th>Abstract or Introduction</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action/Classroom Research: Organized, systematic, and reflective observation of classroom practice that also addresses areas of concern.</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed Methods Research: Essentially narrative with nonstatistical approaches and a focus on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meanings from their experiences (Qual)/Gathers and analyzes measurable data to support or refute a hypothesis or theory through numbers and statistics (Quan)/Utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to explore a research question (Mixed).</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position Paper/Viewpoint: Defines an issue; asserts clear and unequivocal position on that issue, and argues directly in its favor.</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of Literature: Presents supporting and nonsupporting evidence on a topic of interest and value to educators; synthesizes and critiques the literature; draws conclusions; describes procedures for selecting and reviewing literature; may include narrative review, best-evidence, synthesis, or meta-analysis.</td>
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<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Encouraged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book/Technology Review: Combines summary and personal critique of a book, Web site, or app on an educational topic or with educational relevance.</td>
<td>400-700</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<td>200-300</td>
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<td>Poetry/Graphic Arts: Original expressions in any brief poetic format or through drawings, sketches, etchings, woodcuts, photographs, cartoons.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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