Welcome

Welcome to our summer edition of the CPEP newsletter. I know that summer is a busy time for everyone, but I hope you will take a few minutes to learn more about what is happening with teacher education at Western Illinois University.

One of the main functions of the Center is supervision of field experiences and student teaching. In this newsletter, you will have an opportunity to learn more about our supervisors as well as the role of a student teaching supervisor. We continue to search for ways to enhance our teacher education candidates’ experiences in both urban and rural schools. Due to our location in a predominantly rural area, the majority of field experiences are in rural schools, so student teaching is usually completed in an urban setting, although we do have some teacher candidates who remain in rural Illinois to student teach. This newsletter will give you an opportunity to learn about one candidate’s student teaching experience in a rural area and another candidate’s experience in an urban setting. Other articles provide information on candidates and graduates’ involvement in research, mentoring programs, and conferences that enhance learning opportunities.

Please remember that the Center is available for administrators, teachers, current students, and prospective students who need information on any education programs, certification, and/or endorsements. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need additional information related to any programs that Western Illinois University offers.

Have a good summer!

Linda L. Tomlinson, Ph.D.
Director, Center for the Preparation of Education Professionals and Certification Officer
Greetings from Dean Smith-Skripps

A critical component of ensuring a quality teacher education program is the feedback we receive from our graduates once they are in the classroom as well as from their principals. We were pleased to find that the second-year results of the Statewide Teacher Graduate Follow-up Survey reflected the high degree of satisfaction with our programs that was demonstrated the first year of the survey. We continually receive informal feedback from the field as well, but it was especially nice this spring to find that seven of the 12 Quad Cities-based teachers recognized this spring at The Dispatch and The Rock Island Argus Master Teacher Awards banquet were graduates of WIU’s teacher preparation program.

Every day, our faculty members demonstrate their commitment to teaching and learning, and to their students in their approach to teacher preparation. It’s especially gratifying to run across testimonials from our former students about their experiences with our faculty. Recently, I saw the feature story on Lavern Logan, a science education professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, in the alumni publication, Education@Iowa. A former graduate assistant of Dr. Logan’s stated, “Working for Dr. Logan was one of the greatest opportunities of my life. He is an effective professor, mentor, and role model.”

Carol Reilly, who is now teaching in Anamosa, Iowa, said the thing that impressed her most about Dr. Logan was his student-centered approach to teaching and his compassion for those around him. “In every capacity, Dr. Logan worked to model to his students what a good teacher does to facilitate learning,” she said. “His classroom was always a friendly environment that encouraged discussion and inquiry into not only science, but into all aspects of education and teacher preparation.”

The story can be found at www.education.uiowa.edu/edatiowa/features/story5.html.

Have a great summer; enjoy family and friends; and take advantage of some professional development opportunities.

Bonnie J. Smith-Skripps

WIU . . . New Zealand . . . CPS

The hours in the air were many, but the end destination was fantastic. Shane Green, Kinesiology major, spent the Fall 2006 semester studying courses in religion, history, and Chinese culture at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. Shane found the professors to be very helpful. The classes (60 students average) were interesting and very challenging. The grading scale was on the 10-point system. One of his professors was from Wales and knew every student’s name by the third time the class met. When he traveled during the weekend, he found the local people to be very friendly and helpful. He also discovered a focus on environmentalism among the people of New Zealand.

A quick change of geography in January 2007 brought Shane to Hitch Elementary, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), where he completed a student teaching assignment in physical education. At Hitch, he experienced a diverse student population in grade levels K-8. He found his mentor teacher, Keith Knapcik, to be a great example of a highly effective educator. Mr. Knapcik is retiring, and Shane will be teaching at Hitch in that position beginning Fall 2007. Shane graduated from Maine West High School in Des Plaines. What a great year it has been, from WIU to New Zealand to CPS. The journey continues.

Shane Green
Generating Success, One Teacher at a Time

Once the program begins in the fall, there are no entries later in the year. It is a two-year commitment beyond the already identified workload. The Teacher Mentoring Program (TMP) at Elgin U-46 School District has a proven track record in assisting new faculty to be successful educators. Bill DuBois, Teacher Leader for the TMP, directs and facilitates this very important component of the District Improvement Plan. He projects enthusiasm for the profession as he conducts eight seminars a year for new teachers. His attention to individual teacher needs and concerns is evident in the follow-up survey results.

Equally important, he continues to focus on positive communication with the experienced faculty who volunteer to be mentors for new teachers. In 2006-2007, Bill worked with 600 new teachers and mentor teachers, meeting with the entire group four times. The meetings were designed to share activities, talk about their classrooms, and learn “best practices” in teaching as well as District Initiatives. Mentors are trained for their roles in working with new teachers.

Bill graduated from WIU with a BS in Elementary Education. He student taught at Willard Elementary (U-46) and then began his first teaching position in that same school. After teaching in several U-46 elementary schools, he moved to the Central Office position. Bill identifies the past six years as a great experience for him as director of TMP. He has presented at many state and national events, carrying the U-46 TMP success story to conventions and conferences. For new teachers in U-46, generating success in the classroom is almost a given if they have participated in the TMP. With Bill DuBois’s assistance, U-46 is generating success, one teacher at at time.

WIU and Elgin U-46 have an established partnership for training student teachers in Elgin U-46 District’s schools.

Improve Logic???

The whole question was “Does Math Improve Logic?” Stephanie Heaton, Mathematics major, completed a research project on this topic for Math 391, Writing in Mathematical Science. She believes logic and reasoning skills to be important to a variety of education majors. As part of her research, she surveyed WIU student teachers in the field. Her research pointed to the theory that individuals perform better on logic math problems if they have completed a college calculus course. Her professor was Dr. Shameddine in the Mathematics department. She is already thinking of ways to expand her research to include college education majors before they enroll in a calculus class.

Stephanie is a graduate of Darnell High School, Geneseo, Illinois. She has worked the past several summers at Follett Educational Services (Chicago suburbs) in the Customer Operations Department. She is scheduled to student teach Spring 2008 in the Quad Cities region. When asked why she wanted to be a math teacher, she replied, “I have a passion for math. I want to help kids find that passion. I love to work with numbers.”

Calendar of Events

June 4
Summer Classes Begin

July 4
University Closed

July 27
Summer Classes End

August 20
Fall Classes Begin

September 3
University Closed

September 7
Student Teacher Return Seminar

October 14
Homecoming

October 26
Student Teacher Certification Seminar

November 19-21
No Classes

November 22-23
University Closed

December 15
Commencement – Macomb

December 16
Commencement – Quad Cities
Decisions, One Step at a Time

He leaves home early in the morning. The destination makes that decision for him. Once he arrives at his workplace, there are multiple procedures to go through before he reaches his classroom located at 2701 S. California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois (Cook County Jail). Shawn Coffey is one of 19 educators who daily offer high school educational opportunities to male inmates, ages 17-21, of the Cook County Correctional Facilities. York Alternative High School (approximately 300 students) is a Chicago Public School (CPS) operating entirely within the Cook County Department of Corrections. Shawn will soon complete his second year as a social science teacher in this classroom setting. The school year begins the first week of September and concludes the first week of August the following summer.

The overall curriculum is largely limited to core subjects and some vocational training. Only students who qualify are admitted. Specific guidelines must be followed by the students to stay in the program. All students are in the correctional system awaiting trial. Specific services are available (as in other public schools) to assist the students in their efforts to secure a GED certificate or a high school diploma. These services include social worker, librarian, special education teacher, counselor, and school psychologist.

When the regular school day is over, Shawn teaches a social studies class several nights a week (4:00-6:00 pm) for NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Evening High School Programs through CPS. Students from York may qualify to participate in this accelerated cohort program offering science and social science options at this location. Participation in this program requires more intense study from the students, and the pace is faster.

Shawn is a strong supporter of community service. On the weekends during the summer, he coaches a little league baseball team (9- and 10-year-olds) in one of the City's diverse neighborhoods. As one might predict, the players on the team have high hopes for the season.

Shawn's background and training brings valuable experiences to this diverse urban educational setting. He is a native of Dixon, Illinois, and a graduate of Dixon High School. His four years in the U.S. Marine Corps (motor transportation for special operations capable unit), with assignments in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, have provided a unique framework for this teaching position.

A Spring 2005 graduate of WIU, Shawn majored in History Education. He chose to student teach in the City. His student teaching experience was at Sheridan Math and Science Academy (CPS). He was selected as a participant for the CPS Summer Fellows Teaching Program in 2004 and a resident assistant for that same program in 2005. He also worked with Human Resources for CPS in summer 2005.

“WIU did a great job preparing me to become a teacher. Teaching has been worth it every day. If I had it to do again, selecting a college and later where to begin my teaching career, I would make the same decisions,” Shawn shares. He was very proud of three of his students who earned enough credits to graduate from high school this spring. By example, Shawn continues to be a positive influence in the lives of students. His students are also making decisions, one step at a time.
They made the decision. For some it was easy. There were many things to consider. Sixteen teacher education majors elected to student-teach Spring 2007 in Chicago Public Schools within the City of Chicago. The CPS District is the largest in the State of Illinois with 623 schools and 420,982 students (2005-2006). Twenty percent of the students in Illinois attend CPS schools.

Due to its size, CPS offers 115 high schools, with 12 being college preparatory sites. Some of the others focus on math/science, technology, vocational, or fine arts. Four of the high schools are military academies.

Of the elementary schools, 409 have traditional Pre-K-8 classes. Chicago offers a wide variety of cultural/ethnic diversity opportunities for student teachers to experience. The average class size in the elementary schools is approximately 20 students.

Second semester classes began on January 8 for students and faculty. Katie Airheart and Molly Deserf, both Kinesiology majors, were at Lane Technical High School and Audubon Elementary. Lauren Cochran, Elementary Education major, spent 12 weeks at Jahn Elementary; Patrick Cunningham student taught kinesiology classes at Kennedy High School and Hale Elementary; and Marijo Muhr taught in an elementary classroom at Hale Elementary.

All of the student teachers identified their mentor teachers as positive influences. Ashley Davis taught English at Kennedy High School. Shane Green, Kinesiology major, worked at Hitch Elementary with a focus on K-3 and 7-8 levels. Classes in grades 7-8 provided great opportunities in mathematics for Daniel Gustafson at Wildwood Elementary.

The high school setting was the location for Mark Hlavacik (History) at Juarez Academy, Mykah Newman (History) at Brooks College Preparatory Academy, and Kevin Proper (History) at Kennedy. John Knytych was at Chicago High School for Agriculture Science and Clissold Elementary teaching physical education. Phillip Ondera was a student teacher at Brooks College Preparatory Academy and Cassell Elementary in music.

As a Special Education major, Katherine Lynch had a variety of experiences at Cassell Elementary in grades K-3 and 7-8. Andrea Schrock worked with students at Newberry Elementary Math and Science Academy. Fort Dearborn Elementary was the school setting for Ciji Henderson, Elementary Education major.

L to R: Andrea Schrock, Ciji Henderson, Lauren Cochran, Marijo Muhr

Were they successful? Did they have valuable experiences? Were they motivated? The answers are yes, yes, and finally yes. All 16 student teachers completed their assignments with positive results. As one of the student teachers identified, “I feel fortunate to have worked with the students in my school. The experience helped me to focus more clearly on my career as a teacher.”

L to R: Andrea Schrock, Ciji Henderson, Lauren Cochran, Marijo Muhr

Western Illinois University Websites

- Center for the Preparation of Education Professionals www.wiu.edu/cpep
- Admissions www.admissions.wiu.edu
- Alumni Association www.wiu.edu/alumni
- Bookstore www.wiu.edu/bookstore
- Career Services www.careers.wiu.edu
- Financial Aid www.fa.wiu.edu
- Foundation Office www.wiu.edu/foundation
- Graduate Studies www.wiu.edu/grad
- Library www.wiu.edu/library
- Registrar www.wiu.edu/Registrar
- Scholarships www.wiu.edu/scholarships
- Student Activities www.osa.wiu.edu
- Student Services www.student.services.wiu.edu
E + E + F = Success

Education plus Experience plus Focus equals Success. Student teacher (clinical) supervisors at WIU approach their responsibilities with advanced and ongoing educational training. They have many years of experience (in the classroom and administratively) in the public schools. Their concentrated focus on the goal of guiding students through the last semester of training to become teachers makes the difference between success and failure.

The responsibilities of the student teacher supervisors are many. Supervisors communicate with school districts to secure student teaching sites. Orientation workshops are facilitated for mentor teachers and student teachers at the beginning of each semester. Additional workshops are organized during the semester for student teachers focusing on topics such as classroom management, classroom procedures and routines, developing résumés, securing the first job, school public relations/politics, and communication issues.

Supervisors visit student teachers in the classroom. Sometimes the visits are planned; sometimes they are a surprise. Mentor teachers observe student teachers on a daily basis and communicate their observations to the supervisors weekly. If students have difficulties, supervisors are available as a resource and often assist in problem solving. Supervisors serve as student teacher advocates if issues arise. Written and verbal communication between student teachers and supervisors is ongoing during the semester.

As a supervisor for the City of Chicago region, Dr. Victor Tocwish has had 35 years of experience in Chicago Public Schools both as a classroom teacher and administrator. Dr. Keith Erickson works with school districts in the Quad Cities and the surrounding areas as a supervisor. He has 35 years of experience as a classroom teacher and administrator in that region. Dennis Cromer supervises student teachers in the Chicago Suburbs region and brings 32 years of experience as a teacher, coach, and administrator to the position. Charles Bolton was in the public schools for 35 years as a teacher, coach, and administrator before coming to WIU as a supervisor. He and Ben Bishop share the supervising responsibilities in the West Central Illinois region. Ben had been affiliated with public schools in the area as a teacher, coach, and administrator for 30 years.

It all counts. It is important. Supervisors with a strong educational background, many years of experience, and a serious focus on student achievement make the difference between success and failure for student teachers at Western Illinois University.

Looking for a Strike

To be a part of the team required 2½ hours of practice a day, three days per week. There were 13 to 14 tournaments per season, usually held on weekends at sites like Las Vegas and Atlanta. Theresa Wimberley has been a member of the WIU Women’s Bowling Team for the past four years. She was captain of the team her senior year. WIU’s bowling teams are coached by Randy Widger. She was also a member of the Lake Park West High School (Roselle) Bowling Team for four years.

Theresa is an Elementary Education major and will be student teaching at Harding Elementary in Monmouth, Illinois, during Fall 2007. As a student teacher in third grade, she believes her experiences on the team will help her in the classroom. Theresa sees the experiences in leadership, team concept, and mentoring as invaluable when working with students and their parents. Her goal for each student to experience the feeling of rolling a “strike” when learning in the classroom will soon be put into action.
**Autism Will Be the Focus**

It is complicated. The symptoms vary. Diagnosis is often difficult. Katherine Lynch, Special Education major, was fortunate to student teach at Cassell Elementary, Chicago Public Schools, where her interest in teaching autistic students became a reality. Her 16-week experience included working with K-3 and 6-8 grade level students. Katherine identified Cassell Elementary as a wonderful place to teach or attend school. She also participated in parent/teacher meetings, IEP development, and curriculum discussions while there.

In the fall of 2007, Katherine will begin a teaching assignment for A.E.R.O. Special Education Cooperative in Burbank, Illinois. Her responsibilities will focus on students who are diagnosed as autistic. She has had a variety of experiences that will assist her in the future. As a teaching assistant for the Special Recreation Association of South Suburbs and a site supervisor for one of their summer camps, her depth of resources has greatly expanded. She is currently organizing a Special Olympics Bowling Program for children. When reflecting on her training and experiences in special education, Katherine said, “Field experiences prepared me for student teaching. Student teaching prepared me for the real world.”

Her mentor teachers were Mary Jo Lamb, Sandra Quinn, and Ann Ferguson. The school had 312 students enrolled in K-8 classes with a 0% truancy.

Resources on the topic of autism are available from the following organizations:

- Autism Society of America
- National Autism Association
- Autism Speaks

**Western’s Mission**

Western Illinois University, a community of individuals dedicated to learning, will have a profound and positive impact on our changing world through the unique interaction of instruction, research, and public service as we educate and prepare a diverse student population to thrive in and contribute to our global society.

**Western’s Teacher Education Mission**

To prepare versatile teachers who appreciate the importance of our diverse population; who adapt to emerging social, economic, and demographic patterns; and who are skilled in the use of technology tools to promote teaching and learning in our nation’s schools.

**Quotes**

Teaching is not the filling of the pail, but the lighting of the fire.  
— W. B. Yeats

Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.  
— John Cotton Dana
So Many Choices, So Little Time

Both sets of eyes scanned the list of options. There were only a few minutes to narrow the focus. The two teacher education majors each selected workshops to attend for the three concurrent sessions that day. They were part of the 2007 Pre-K-8 Science Education Update Conference held at Western Illinois University. Participants who attended the conference were classroom teachers from area school districts and teacher education majors at WIU.

Lauren Gogolew, Elementary Education major (Carl Sandburg High School) from Orland Park especially liked “Watermelon Lab: Integrating Math and Science” and “Archaeological Dig: Indiana Jones and the Temple of Snoop Mini Dig.” She will be student teaching Spring 2008. Her focus will be the middle school level.

Heidi Olson, Special Education major from Naperville High School, identified her favorite mini session as “The Exciting World of Bubbles.” She said, “We came away from the sessions with many ideas for lesson plans. They were on multiple grade levels and related subjects. It was a great experience, and I plan to go again next spring.” Heidi will student teach Fall 2008.

Presenters demonstrated, organized, and facilitated 35 different sessions to educate and inspire participants.

Some of the presentations covered were science-related topics such as “Fermilab’s Fermilabyrinth: Technology Based Engaged Learning,” “Pond Critter Collecting and Observing,” “NASA: We’re Not Just Space Anymore!,” “Classroom Cubed,” and “Forensic Science: Lessons and Activities.” Conference exhibitors included 14 commercial and agency vendors. They also provided door prizes for participants.

Continuing Professional Development Unit (CPDU) opportunities were available to participants for accredited staff development. Dr. Donald Powers, professor (science educator), Department of Curriculum and Instruction, WIU, organized and facilitated the conference. Dr. Powers has taught at WIU for 18 years. He has presented at the local, regional, and national levels. The conference was co-sponsored by the Maurice G. Kellogg Science Fund, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and the College of Education and Human Services at Western.