

Teacher to Teacher

DoDEA Teachers of the Year Publication



Spring Issue 2003



Making a Difference, Shaping the Future!

By Debbie Hadley
DoDEA 2003
Teacher of the Year

The 2003 DODEA Teacher of the Year Forum in Arlington, VA during the week of November 11, 2002, gave

me an opportunity to meet teachers representing all Department of Defense schools worldwide. I was most inspired by the fact that although the teachers represented all grade levels and subject areas; they overwhelmingly shared a deep commitment to students. The desire to help students gain faith in themselves and their future was truly motivating. This edition includes stories on how all teachers who serve military children are making a difference and shaping the future in their schools and communities.



Learn from the Best

By Daniel L'Esperance
2003 Heidelberg District
Teacher of the Year

Like successful learners throughout history, I've learned my craft by borrowing great ideas from the

best. I confess that this whole concept of sampling ideas did not come fast or easy for me. After all, we teachers have been taught to set up independent and "self-contained" classrooms full of independent and self-contained students. Gradually, we in the teaching profession have begun to move away from this disconnected approach, and have been given "permission" to share not only teaching units, but actual approaches to teaching with each other.

I stand in awe as I watch people who have themselves learned how to create these bonds of learning in brilliant ways that I've never dreamed of. Here is a good example. One year in the Azores, I team taught with a master teacher who had his students laughing as they were learning. Before they ever realized it, he taught them how to smile at themselves and their own mistakes. I hold great respect for this teacher, and so do his students.

Make a point of searching out the best teachers in every school at which you teach. You will find teachers who are masters in the effective art of patience, organization, music, magic, puppetry, creativity training, pacing, learning centers, parent communications, and an endless array of other skills. These are valuable techniques that we all must learn in order to most effectively reach the academic, social, and emotional needs of every individual in our classroom.

We can never become that teacher we all dream of until we figure out the simple truth that the messenger is as important as the message. The best way to become that effective messenger in the classroom is by sharing our best ideas with each other. We don't need to always import so-called experts to serve as our sources of inspiration. Our own colleagues are doing wonderful things right across the hall from us.

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Planting a Love for Literacy

By Marilyn Carter
2003 Fort Stewart/Robins
Air Force Base
Teacher of the Year

When you enter the doors of Brittin Elementary School your eyes will be attracted to the

Brittin Literacy Garden. It is an outdoors, hands on, learning laboratory that grew from a shared vision. Faye Hodges, Vicki Byrne, and I planted a dream in 1999 that continues to grow and enhance the love of literacy in all students and staff. The garden is funded by donations, environmental grants, and from the sale of "lollipops for literacy".



Brittin's Literacy Garden is a reading retreat and home to many storybook themes. As you stroll through the garden, you will find Frog and Toad, the Itsy Bitsy Spider, Mr. McGregor's Garden, and Jack

in the Beanstalk's castle. In Mr. McGregor's Garden, the students plant seasonal crops that are harvested during the school year. Some of these are carrots, radishes, mustard, turnips, sweet potatoes, and onions. The students have their individual garden tools and are responsible for the maintenance of the vegetable garden.

The butterfly garden is a main attraction in the spring. It is enhanced with plants that attract butterflies and a gazing ball for viewing the reflections of the



beauty that are within the garden. The center of the Literacy Garden is a "garden classroom". It is equipped with benches made from cypress trees. The backdrop is an arch made out of bamboo draped with

vines of morning glories. The Literacy Garden has also played hostess to a published author. All students shared this literacy experience.

The literacy garden has been the setting for cross-curricular lessons. Fourth grade students conducted a study on student created weather stations and the effects that outside elements have on them. The compost pile is an ongoing science project for our students. They observe food and plants decomposing to produce fertilizer for our plants. This is a wonderful way to emphasize the recycling process.

During the winter months, visitors are greeted in the garden by a snowman. The snowman was created out of cypress wood. He watches over the many garden projects. One of these is providing food for the birds during the cold months. The official "Christmas Tree" of the garden is a variegated Leyland Cypress tree. It houses the many winter bird treats made by the students. The first grade classes also use their talents and create ornaments that have a literacy theme to be displayed on the tree during the holidays. If you look hard, you will find the very hungry caterpillar in the garden. Words of wisdom and smart choices that promote the school's Court of Character program are found throughout the garden. Reading in the Literacy Garden is the way to grow at Brittin Elementary School.



Lifelong Learning

By Naomi Fung Mayer
2003 Japan District
Teacher of the Year

Education is a process that instills passion in an individual for lifelong learning. We learn best when we are learning something that is useful and connected to our lives.

As teachers, we need to be mindful of developing strategies for our students, which is a process of thinking rather than isolated skills creating fragmentation. In order to drive a car which assessment would you prefer to test your skills? The road test or the written test? All of us probably feel that skills and rules are necessary to learn but it is important to have road practice in numerous situations to become a competent driver. The applications of skills that are meaningful to the learner develop the thinking processes that can be implemented in other settings.

Two years ago at the National Science Teacher's Conference, I heard Dr. Lawrence from the University

(continued on page 3)



Shaping the Future as We Shape Up Our Students

By Betty Yundt
2003 Fort Knox
Community Schools
Teacher of the Year

Walker Intermediate School at Fort Knox, Kentucky is *shaping the future* by helping students

shape up and become physically fit. Walker holds the unique distinction of being the Kentucky State Presidential Physical Fitness winner for four consecutive years. The Presidential Physical Fitness Award is presented to students achieving high standards on a series of physical fitness tasks. The top school in each state in three enrollment categories is determined by comparing the percentage of students receiving the coveted award to the total enrollment.



Walker's achievement is even more impressive because students choosing to play in the fifth and sixth grade band do not participate in regular Physical Education classes. Students not enrolled in band

receive Physical Education classes either once or twice a week depending on the quarter.

Jeff Davis, PE instructor, is quick to give credit for Walker's continued success to his cadre of volunteers from the school's sponsor unit USAREC, United States Army Recruiting Command, headquartered at Fort Knox. The volunteers assist with pre-testing at the beginning of the school year and post-testing later. They also serve as role-models for the children encouraging them to make exercise a part of their lifestyle. Volunteers can be observed running with the students and shouting encouragement during the "dreaded" mile run. This partnership embodies the Community Strategic Plan goal of creating "a network of

partnerships to enhance optimum student achievement".

The sustained success of the program creates a self-perpetuating spirit of positive attitude and teamwork among the students. They want to be members of the winning Walker team. The confidence and self-esteem boost they gain carries over into every facet of their lives resulting in enhanced social, emotional, and academic skills, as well as physical fitness.

(Lifelong Learning, continued from page 2)

of California at Berkeley. He shared information that excited him. He had been doing brain research and found by using infrared cameras what happens to the brain when the learner actually does the task. When the learner constructs his/her learning, the brain creates neurons or connections. Every time they touch, neurons are created. If we have students only do the pencil and paper tasks, then connections are not created in the brain. The knowledge is eventually forgotten.

Learning is something that happens everyday in our lives. Whether you are learning a lifelong skill as tying your shoes or taking a first step after a stroke, learning is a step-by-step process that establishes connections in our lives. As learners, we remember best when we can apply our knowledge and in turn teach it to another person. Have you ever been so excited about an accomplishment that you immediately call up a friend to share it with them? The passion is passed from one person to the next!

Children come to school fresh with the wonder of learning, excited about every crawling creature and that the sky is blue! This excitement is ours to nurture so that learning is a flame that burns throughout their lives. Asking questions and knowing the process of thinking that help them find the answers or solve the problem become a way of life.

Our school theme this year is: "DODEA Reads." If we build the connections for our students, then the reading that surrounds their learning will be meaningful. Watching my own children grow-up there were times when they were so immersed in a book that the tub water got cold or they would literally fall asleep with the book over their faces. Reading allows us to be able to look into worlds untouchable in our lifetime; like climbing Mt. Everest or hiking through the rainforest; but we can experience them through the magic of books.

Together as a community of learners working hand in hand, the world will become a better place. The connections we make, both interpersonal and in our thinking, are powerful tools to make the difference.



Educating Children to Become Adults Who Care

By Mark Love
2003 Isles District
Teacher of the Year

Eight-year-old C.J. was finishing his second full year at a school that, under my leadership, had

initiated a form of service learning we called "We CARE" (for We Care and Respect Everyone). C.J. announced to me that when he grew up he thought he'd train guide dogs for the blind.

As part of the structure for "We CARE" our school had decided to sponsor a school wide charity, selecting United Kingdom Guide Dogs for the Blind. Teachers could opt to have their students fund raise and to use these experiences to make a match with educational standards. Some visited a guide dog training center and then wrote about their trip. Teachers had children read about guide dogs and animals with caring jobs. Some children read letters from Ron, our first sponsored dog (sent via his puppy walker on email). Others wrote about how good it felt to do something for others. Classes learned to count money and graph collection growth. The impact of the program on C.J. had obviously been great.

At our second annual check presentation to the Guide Dog Association there in the front of the gymnasium sat eight visually impaired adults, their dogs, and a beaming C.J. (We felt it might



further his ambition to be there). And out in the audience were over 1000 children, about two-thirds of them

seeing this ceremony for the second year running. Thinking of C.J, I wondered what the impact "We CARE" would have on the future of all these other children, what path their journey into adulthood would take, and what should be the role of teachers in educating them while they are on it?

In answer, I believe schools have a major responsibility to mold the WHOLE child on this journey, to work with both their cognitive and affective domains.

And with service learning it can be done simultaneously reaping powerful results. C.J.'s current aspiration might just guide him into a caring profession and, if so, "We CARE" would have been the catalyst. So I would ask educators and community members alike to think if their schools provide strong service learning models, as early as the first year of a child's schooling through graduation. If they don't, I would urge them to consider becoming advocates and assuming roles to plan, implement, and fund them. Then more C.J.s will have the advantage of practicing and internalizing caring as they prepare to become successfully educated and productive citizens. One of our school counselors said it best: "You can't just teach children to care; they have to practice it."



AP Language and Composition: Making a Difference and Shaping Future Writers

By Leticia Solis-Jordan
2003 Antilles Consolidated School District
Teacher of the Year

At Antilles High School in Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico twelfth grade AP English Language and Composition students spend a lot of time reading great writers from the past and the present. They analyze the rhetoric, and try some of that rhetoric themselves on a regular basis (sometimes too regularly according to the students).

When the class begins in the fall, I tell the students all the goodies which we will have an opportunity to taste in this course. This obviously produces some curiosity and here is where I make my entrance! Just as all of us do, I thoroughly go over the syllabus with them, injecting the love and excitement which I feel for all of these experiences. After our introductions, theirs and mine, our likes, dislikes, abilities, frustrations, and special requests, we set on to the task at hand. The first three quarters of our class are spent in diligent preparation through high level reading, discussion, papers, timed writing, multiple choice AP practice items, coaching workshops, etc. Finally during the latter part of the third quarter, I introduce my students to writing proposals for their culminating activity in the AP composition class: writing a book of their own! This produces mixed feelings at first, but in no time at all we begin to feel and see the excitement of great possibilities brewing. *(continued on page 5)*



Making a Difference – Shaping the Future

By Barbara Culwell
2003 Fort Benning/
Fort Rucker
Teacher of the Year

First Grade Writing
Workshop...

GIVE ME AN S! GIVE
ME A C! GIVE ME A W!

GIVE ME AN O! GIVE ME A V! GIVE ME AN I! What do you have? The Six Traits of Writing, of course. Children in Jackie Mumpower's first grade classroom at Stowers Elementary School, love to be actively involved in the various reading/writing workshop areas set up around the classroom. Posted in large bold letters on the wall are the Six Traits of Writing: sentence fluency, convention, word choice, organization, voice, and ideas.

The students look around the room at posters, the word wall, thematic word charts, dictionaries and the six traits posters while working on individual or group projects. Children look at the workshop management poster to see which stations to go to on that day. Jackie's classroom is constantly abuzz with the sound of children working together on writing poetry, writing a rough draft of a story, creating a poster, retelling favorite parts of a story, writing a new ending for a familiar story, typing completed works on the computer (using spell check) and reading self-selected books for enjoyment. All children are involved in developmentally appropriate work that challenges and enhances the learning for each individual child. "Children of any ability can write whether it is the beginning stages of stringing together beginning consonants, forming words, creating sentences or writing complete stories," says Mrs. Mumpower.

This is truly a classroom where "no child is left behind." Throughout the day, Jackie is constantly observing, assessing, guiding and providing assistance. At the Writing Station when the writing has been completed, the child compares the written piece with the writing rubric posted on the wall. If the work meets the specifics then it goes into the



"Author's Chair" box. The child reads the completed work with the teacher to see if it meets the standards. At the end of the day the child will share his/her piece with the rest of the class. The audience will then provide feedback by sharing two comments and two questions about the work. The completed work will then be displayed on the bulletin board for one or two weeks.

The children demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be an author. They willingly share their written work with others. Jackie's classroom fosters a sense of cooperation and teamwork. The children love to participate in the reading/writing activities. Educators, such as Mrs. Mumpower who go the extra mile to ensure success for all students, are an inspiration to Fort Benning teachers. Her enthusiasm and commitment to her profession set an example for all educators to follow.

(AP Language..., continued from page 4)

Each student prepares the proposal with objectives, activities ("To Do" Lists), resources (both human and materials), time lines, and commentaries. I



become both the mentor and the publisher they work with throughout their journey. We, as a team, decide the grade value that each part of the process will have, so

that at the end their grade will depend on the total points possible that they themselves set forth. Each step in the process of writing their book is carefully studied, planned, and many times revised. The fourth quarter becomes a one-to-one mentorship program. At the end...Wow! If you could only see and read their books. A day is designated at the library for presentations of books—first class, book presentations by the authors themselves! The impact is incredible, not only for the proud writers themselves, but for their peers and faculty members who witness their process and are able to savor their books and ultimate success. We have made a difference—our program and the future writers that evolve from this program. As their mentor, coach, teacher, I feel quite satisfied in providing the challenge for that difference.



DoDDS-Korea Schools Play "Santa"

By Ken Younkin
2003 Korea District
Teacher of the Year

Seoul American Middle School and DoDDS Korea-wide recently played "Santa" to American soldiers and their Katusa (South Korean) counterparts at the

Demilitarized Zone (or DMZ as we call it)! First Lieutenant Dominic Mirabella of the 516th PSB, Seoul American Middle School teacher William Byrd, Specialist Knight, and Katusa Sergeant Lee spearheaded this activity, which was appreciated greatly by the soldiers at such a "lonely post".

Christmas cards were designed and decorated by students and delivered to the single and unaccompanied soldiers serving in Area 1 along with cookies and candy. They were presented these reminders of a Christmas at home on 20 December at Camp Red Cloud and were assisted by the postal unit there in distributing the holiday cheer to other camps in Area 1.

Chris, a 6th grader at Seoul American Middle School said, *"My dad is a soldier here in Seoul and got to spend Christmas with us. It made me feel good to make Christmas a little brighter for soldiers NOT with their families. They do so much to keep us free. They should be remembered year round."* As the United States deals with this troubled area and seeks dialogue and stability in what has been called the "world's most dangerous spot" let's keep the soldiers there in our thoughts and prayers.



Creating Knowledge from Woven Threads

By Nancy Cooper
2003 Maxwell Air Force
Base
Teacher of the Year

I applaud the changes I see going on in education today. These changes will better prepare DoDEA students and others for the

future. As educators we must prepare students to tackle problems that we have never encountered. We must also prepare students for jobs that are on the horizon.

These changes are evident in our teaching today. Classrooms are using standards to drive the curriculum instead of textbooks. Small groups of students are actively engaged in learning. Students are acquiring skills that will enable them to take responsibility for their own learning throughout their lives. These small flexible groups describe, analyze, compare, problem solve, and evaluate outcomes. Students use computers to gather data, and then use this data to weave their knowledge into presentations to share and teach others. Assessments are varied and often performance driven. Literacy is evident throughout the curriculum. Academic subjects are integrated with other subjects in the same way life is integrated.

A single thread of knowledge is easily lost, or forgotten forever, just the same as a single thread of cotton would be. However, that single thread of knowledge integrates with other threads of knowledge to create a piece of cloth or even a larger bolt of material which is much harder to lose. A piece of cloth can grow into whatever is needed at the time. This simple analogy is what is taking place in education today. We at Maxwell Elementary School and other schools are actively engaged in creating woven blankets of knowledge instead of isolated single threads.



Nominations for the 2004 DoDEA Teacher of the Year will be sought beginning April 1, 2003. Letters of nomination should include reasons why your nominee should be chosen as Teacher of the Year. Colleagues, supervisors, parents, students, and/or community members may submit nominations. Letters of nomination should be addressed and forwarded to your nominee's supervisor.



Teachers Make a Difference Overseas

By Janann Stroud
2003 Okinawa District
Teacher of the Year

I feel so lucky to be the Teacher of the Year for the Okinawa District. I love talking to teachers and this has given me the opportunity to meet more of them

and hear about the lives that they have led and the people they have become.

I really enjoy the teachers, the people, the students, and the whole school environment overseas. When I was teaching in Georgia in 1980, my principal was so excited about getting a teacher from overseas who had been teaching on a military base. He knew that she would be great and that her discipline must be exceptional if she had taught "military children". We were so curious that we were all watching to see how she would look and act. To have a teacher who had taught overseas coming to our school was about the biggest thing that had happened in years. I decided that I wanted to try teaching overseas – especially if DoD would pay for my move!

My first overseas assignment was at Ramstein Elementary in Germany. The school was huge but I met a truly wonderful group of teachers and made many long lasting friends. I truly felt that I had died and gone to "teacher heaven." We went on volksmarches at dawn, the club on Friday afternoons, bus trips every weekend, and more. We had about four faculty meetings a year that were mainly "Hail and Farewells". They were "covered dish" with some fine German wines and they gave us a chance to meet and talk together.

Later when I was teaching in Spain, we had faculty parties at Moroccan restaurants where they brought out roasted goat while we sat on cushions on the floor. We had outings to Chinese restaurants, rib houses, paella restaurants and more. We took our third graders to Botin's for lunch and the Royal Palace for a field trip.

I love to be around teachers like the ones in DoDDS. They all have a story and a history that could make a book. We have such responsibility at the same time. Parents trust us to know what to do to help their children. We can't break that trust because it affects all of the teachers down the line.

I was talking to a Marine last spring who was from Louisiana and he said that nobody in his family had ever gone to college and most of them had never

finished high school. When he was 16 he had decided to drop out and make some money. Each of his teachers had to sign off on his paper so that he could quit. This worked great for the first 2 or 3 and then he went to one of his older female teachers. She just stared at him and said, "No, you have too much to give and you don't need to waste it." He tried to get her to sign the paper but she told him to go home and imagine what the rest of his life was going to be like and come back tomorrow and ask her again. He did what she asked and the next morning went back to her and the other teachers and said he would finish the year. Well, he finished high school and now has even finished 2 years of college. He gives that teacher all of the credit for the life he has now. We hold that power - to change lives, to make a difference in the lives of so many.

Today, I can't think of a better place to be than right here in Okinawa, in the sun, at my school by the sea – Kinser Elementary. Wherever DoDDS goes, I want to go. Wherever a DoDDS teacher goes, I want to hear about the experience. Wherever a DoDDS student goes, I want him to be prepared. So let's remember yesterday, think about today, and anticipate tomorrow and what it will bring. Thanks for making a difference in my life and in the lives of our students.

Coming in our Fall 2003 issue are articles from the following 2003 District Teachers of the Year:

Pam Satterfield
South Carolina DDESS

Rochelle Grey
New York/Virginia DDESS

Daniel Nukala
Kaiserslautern District

Martha Sudo
Guam District

Temple Wood
Fort Bragg Dependent Schools

Wilhelmina Pearson
Bavaria District

Vanessa Coleman
Camp Lejeune Dependent Schools

Melora Cann
Mediterranean District



Parachute Team Drops in to Help Out Lucas Readers

By: Debbie Hadley
DODEA 2003 Teacher of the Year

The reading committee at Lucas Elementary School wanted to have an opening of school ceremony that all students would remember for a long time. In May

2002, before school was out for summer, our teachers met and decided our reading theme for the 2002-03 school year would be "Lucas Troopers; Shaping the World, One Child at a Time". We formed a committee and by working with our school's Parent-Teacher Organization, were able to have Apache and Blackhawk helicopters fly in for the students to examine. They were able to talk and ask questions of the pilots, who also happened to be some of the lucky students' dads! At 10:30, the Blackhawk took off with a trio of soldiers from the Screaming Eagles Parachute demonstration team, while all students, teachers, and parents watched. The Blackhawk climbed higher and higher toward the sky as all spectators stood with craned necks in awe of the height from which the paratroopers would jump. When the helicopter finally reached the right altitude, the trio of soldiers jumped and spiraled downward toward the school. Sometimes they

were going faster than 120 miles per hour as they made their descent and maneuvered to land on a target placed on the field in front of the crowd. As they landed, they brought a book for the students to read about the importance of reading. They discussed reading with the students, and how each student should stay committed to education and learning at school. The students were amazed and said, "It was like meeting superheroes at school".

This was definitely a great start to the school year and gave everyone something to look forward to as they learn about the history of Ft. Campbell. Being teachers of military children, we believe it is important to educate them about their military heritage and let history come alive for them. HOOAH!!!



2003 Teachers of the Year
celebrate excellence
during the DoDEA
Teacher Forum,
November 14, 2002.

