

Teacher to Teacher

DoDEA Teachers of the Year Publication



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Jolene Jenkins
2002 DoDEA
Teacher of the Year
Fort Campbell, KY

One of the greatest pleasures as the 2002 DoDEA Teacher of the Year has been the opportunity to share with colleagues and the public the outstanding dedication and contributions of DoDEA teachers

to the education of our young people. This commitment to student learning is evident in DoDEA classrooms throughout the districts. This edition includes best practices and what districts are doing to ensure that “no child is left behind.”

Don't Lose Your Childlike Wonder

By Valerie Krum
2002 Fort Bragg District
Teacher of the Year



One of my best science teachers when I was a child was my father. It never occurred to me how much I learned from him until I became a teacher twelve years ago. You see, my father was a farmer. As a child, I loved to hop on the tractor with him or go work with him out in the orchards. I learned so much about nature and the science world around me. As I sat by him in the combine, he would explain how the grain would be planted and harvested. He taught me about pollination, as the bees would swarm around the blossoms of the peach and apple trees. I learned about the changes in the weather and how to read the types of clouds that were in the sky. At night, he would sit with me outside on the front porch steps staring at the stars and point out the “shooting stars.” I would listen to him with childlike wonder, asking him tons of questions, just like our students do day to day.

Children are amazing and fascinating to watch. For instance, have you ever watched children at the beach? They jump and fight the waves that come crashing in; they spend hours searching for all types of seashells, and try to build the largest sand castles with the deepest moats. Wouldn't it be awesome to bottle that childlike wonder and bring it into your classroom? That is what many teachers do everyday already! Teachers that take students' curiosity and questions

about the world around them and create an incredible learning experience surround me on a daily basis. The sixth grade teachers at Irwin Middle School celebrate history



by organizing a Medieval Fair. The students, teachers,

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Publication Layout: **Melanie LeVault**



Learning Mobiles

by Bonnie Higbee
2002 Japan District Teacher
of the Year

President Bush has challenged all educational stakeholders to see that "No Child is Left Behind." Art and visual learning are two instructional methods that reach out to a majority of learners. Learning

Mobiles are a terrific means for integrating learning for students of all ages.

Learning Mobiles provide students with a "big picture" dimensional look at disciplines because they represent a visual frame of reference by which information is organized. Learning Mobiles are three-dimensional floating sculptures that communicate organizational structures by symbolic use of images and words. Some examples of Learning Mobiles content might include the five themes of geography, the scientific method, the writing process, elements of art, problem solving strategies, biological classification, information processing skills, and critical, creative and visual thinking skills.



The successful construction of a Learning Mobile teaches students about elements of artistic design, order, balance, contrast, rhythm, and harmony. Mobiles move and cast shadows through the interplay of light source, air currents and the mobile itself. Learning Mobiles add meaning by communicating abstract thoughts. While the content of the Learning Mobile helps to communicate interpretations of disciplines, the success of the mobile depends upon creating forms in

space. One of the best aspects of Learning Mobiles is they involve students in visualizing and simplifying complex learning concepts.



Uniquely American

By Jan Bennett
2002 Wuerzburg District
Teacher of the Year

I have had the opportunity in my eighteen years of teaching in the states and overseas to observe many different educational systems. I believe the American system rises above the rest

in several ways, but specifically in one uniquely American way. We are, by far, the most compassionate educational system I have ever observed. We are an unusual blend of practicality and idealism. All nations want to produce well-educated youth, but we, as Americans, want to produce well-educated and well-rounded students - no matter what their background or learning level. We strive to develop the physical, emotional, and social skills of our children as well as strong academic skills.

Teachers, you further this aim every time you help a struggling student build his self-esteem along with his skill level. You further this aim every time you encourage an advanced student to experiment with different ideas and perspectives on how things could be - without his fearing societal restriction or political obstruction. You further this aim every time you inspire that middle-of-the-road "C" student to strive for excellence.

It occurs to me that this fervent desire has its roots in our independent American spirit. We value freedom and want others to share it. Our educational system is not without its problems, of course. However, with this commitment as our foundation, we cannot help but turn out capable, knowledgeable citizens who have the freedom - and understand its inherent responsibilities - to forge ahead to an unknown future with the same pioneering spirit as always.

This pioneering spirit and compassionate approach will continue to do what it has in the past - ensure that no child will be left behind.

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forward to minimizing the number of students requiring the tertiary level of prevention even further in upcoming years.

It is the goal of all Pierce staff to ensure that indeed no child is left behind. To that end the staff and community are working cooperatively and diligently.



Focus on Literacy

By Claudia Castenir
2002 Fort Knox District
Teacher of the Year

Through our school improvement plan, the Pierce Primary School staff has focused much of its efforts on literacy this year. This has impacted many facets of instruction. Staff members have been

honing their skills in taking running records and utilizing this information. DoDEA standards have been integrated with Literacy Place, providing for greater integration within daily instruction. Related arts teachers have incorporated Literacy Place in their lessons, utilizing the "behind the tab" section of the manuals as well as their own creativity. Word walls have sprung up in hallways, in the gym, art and music classrooms, as well as in the nurse's office.

President Bush's philosophy of "no child left behind" provides a perfect match to the mission statement of our school. The above ideas are indicative of our commitment to improving instruction to make this come to pass. In this article attention will be focused on our efforts to assist those students who are at greatest risk of being left behind.

There are three levels of prevention in early literacy. **The primary level is making good classroom instruction available to everyone.** It is our goal to provide teachers with the support needed to make this happen. We are doing this by building on the belief that all children can read and write. The language arts/reading specialists have provided professional development based on Dr. Marie Clay's theory of literacy acquisition to create a common understanding from which we all can work. As we all know, good instruction is driven by authentic assessment. Therefore, training in taking and utilizing running records has also been provided. One of our classroom teachers provided us all with training on effective word work, including the appropriate use of word walls. We have been examining our rooms to make sure that our "literacy places" are well organized and interactive. The district, with the support of headquarters, has worked to make sure that everyone has the materials they require to do the best possible job.

In addition to the above activities, our school has developed an atmosphere of collegiality that allows for and encourages staff members to learn from one another. Every classroom teacher has a buddy

teacher; these pairs determine the extent to which they develop this partnership. Large blocks of time have been provided for grade level teams to observe one another teach as well as time for debriefing, a sort of modified peer coaching approach. Teachers frequently call upon the language arts/reading specialists to assist them with such things as selecting appropriate materials for guided reading groups, developing skills in prompting for strategy use in reading, and working with flexible grouping.

Classroom teachers also identify students for inclusion in our extended school program. Certified staff members provide tutoring sessions both before and after school. The size of these groups varies, depending upon the students' needs. This is a prime opportunity for reteaching within the Mastery Learning model to occur.

The second level of prevention in early literacy is providing early diagnosis and treatment for those students with a higher probability of being left behind. The Reading Recovery and Reading Improvement classes meet this need within Pierce School. We have two Reading Recovery teachers servicing first grade students who, by their performance on the Observation Survey of Early Literacy, are determined to be in the greatest need. Reading Recovery has a wealth of research documenting its effectiveness as a safety net for these struggling emergent readers. The extensive training and continuing professional development required by Reading Recovery not only assists these teachers in accelerating the progress of their students, but also assists them in fulfilling their roles as language arts/reading specialists. Reading Improvement students in first through third grades are serviced by these specialists using both pullout and inclusion models. Kindergarten students are serviced in a combined consultation/inclusion model. In each program the emphasis is on developing the students' processing, teaching them the strategies that research shows that good readers use instinctively.

The tertiary level of prevention tends to become more an intervention than a prevention. It **would include special education and long-term remedial education.** The percentage of students requiring this level of support is very small due to the extent of the effort placed in the first two levels to make sure no child is left behind. Using the information in a book entitled *Closing the Gaps*, available from the New Zealand Office of Education, a school district in California has had great success. This book has been ordered by a Reading Recovery teacher, and we look

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Integrating the Kindergarten Learning Environment

By Earnestine A. Ezekiel
2002 Fort Benning District
Teacher of the Year

In the last thirty-five years of teaching kindergarten in an average size classroom, finding space for this or that activity has always been a challenge. There never

seems to be enough space to provide for the many learning activities that must take place in the kindergarten classroom. However, in recent years, this challenge has been lessened by integrating several learning areas to create additional space where meaningful, active learning can take place.

I would like to discuss how at least three of these

areas come together to enhance the total kindergarten learning environment - the classroom, the garden and the kitchen lab. Integrating these areas not only provides additional



space where active learning can take place but also a more meaningful productive way of teaching across the curriculum. Whether it be math, science, social studies or language arts skill and concepts, all come together in a meaningful, active way. For example, a large turnip pulled from the garden may serve as a prop for the story *The Enormous Turnip*, or a peck of peppers picked from the garden may enhance the poem *Peter Piper Picked* or serve as manipulatives in a math sorting activity.

Active learning is most important for the young child. It promotes inquiry, thinking skills, problem solving, critical thinking skills and collaboration, as well as learning in other areas. Having a learning environment that supports active involvement is very important. For example, planting and growing vegetables in the garden is an excellent context for stimulating inquiry and developing science concepts. Bringing vegetables into the classroom to sort and count promotes problem solving and other skills. Taking vegetables to the Homeless Shelter encourages

collaboration and a sense of community. Cooking develops math skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills. These are but a few of the many advantages of integrating several areas to enhance the total kindergarten learning environment.



When children are actively involved in their learning, they are more likely to use higher order thinking skills. They

are more likely to ask insightful and thought-provoking questions. For example, here are a few of the questions that the children asked while working in the garden and in the kitchen: "Why is the skin on a dried English pea seed wrinkled?" or "Will the skin be wrinkled when the new peas grow?" or "Why do the butterflies like the butterfly garden?" or "Why can't you hear butterflies sing?" or "Where do the butter and sugar go when the cake batter is mixed?" or "Why does smoke come from boiling liquid on the stove?" This is an excellent opportunity to explain the difference between smoke and steam or vapor. When children are actively involved in their learning, they like to talk about what they are doing. Using a variety of questioning techniques maximizes learning and involves them in a dialogue that encourages them to describe, analyze, compare, problem solve and evaluate.

Higher order questioning techniques help children develop in several important ways. Descriptive questions stimulate vocabulary. Comparison questions help children learn to sort and classify. Analysis questions help children think critically. Evaluation questions encourage children to use available resources to



include their teacher, family members, peers, books and the internet when making decisions. Problem-solving questions help children think creatively and analyze situations when making decisions. These techniques can best be implemented when children are actively involved in their learning. The way in which the learning environment is organized plays a vital role in the learning process in any classroom, but it is especially true in the learning environment for young children.



DINOSAUR DAYS

By Jan Price
2002 Heidelberg District
Teacher of the Year

*My name is Kindersaurus,
I'm a funny looking dino-
saur.
I go to school, I learn my
ABC's.
I want to learn some more.*

Early childhood classrooms in DoDEA are almost all Full-Day Kindergartens now and I am happy about it! There are many benefits to having the children for six hours a day and one of the wonderful things that can happen began with the above "piggyback" song.



*At times my friends are loud,
LOUD, LOUD!
At rest time, they are not.
I learn some Math, I learn to
pledge and sing.
The kids teach me a lot!*

My children and I began a short mini-unit about Dinosaurs after completing a long and interesting unit about the Human Body. As soon as the first dinosaur book was placed in the classroom library, the excitement could be felt in every center. First, the children went out on the playground and collected rocks to place in the Sand (and Water) Center. Days went by as interested children chipped away at the rocks and discovered fossils, as they worked as paleontologists. In the Math Center, children graphed their findings, worked on dinosaur puzzles, and played child-created dinosaur card games. KidPix, at the Computer Center, lent itself to drawing pictures of dinosaurs. At the Snack Shop, children ate "dino snacks" of carrots, celery, nuts, raisins, and even, lettuce. We didn't have a meat-eater in the bunch!



*My name is Kindersaurus.
Would you like to know what
the kids did?
24 children painted me.
They call me a "Mrs. Price's
Kid."*

The Writing Center was always busy as children created dinosaur books, worked with stencils, and enjoyed the dinosaur books located in the adjoining Library Center. Dinosaur songs on a chart stand were read and sung as the "teacher" used a dinosaur pointer to teach left to right, top to bottom, the reading "sweep" when you reach the end of a line, etc. A class book, How We Made Our Dinosaur, proved to be daily reading for some of the children. The Listening Center contained the same cassette tape and book we were using to learn songs about 6 dinosaurs and, even though the center says, "Sssshhhh...", listeners couldn't help but sing along!



*I like to hear kids talk and
laugh.
I like to watch them play.
When they're at home, I take
a little nap
I get ready for the next school
day.*

The busiest center of all during these "Dinosaur Days" was probably the Art Center. Over a period of ten school days, the children made four legs, a body, a head, and a tail out of boxes, lots of newspaper, tape, and big sheets of art paper. The children then painted Kindersaurus a variety of brown tones (because no one really knows what color the dinosaurs were!). It took several of the children and myself to put Kindersaurus together. Since the dinosaur was created, Kindersaurus has been dressed in a huge tee-shirt saying, "I'm a Mrs. Price's Kid," a festive paper plate hat, and numerous necklaces made by stringing beads. Kindersaurus stands among some grass and rocks left there by the paleontologists.

*My name is Kindersaurus.
I'm a funny looking dinosaur.
The pictures with this article
Will tell you much, much more.*

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Where Children Come First

By Kathy Sheets
2002 Fort Stewart District
Teacher of the Year

Diamond Elementary School at Fort Stewart, Georgia, ensures no child is left behind by successfully using a variety of strategies. The school's mission is to promote

learning, so each child will develop the necessary skills to succeed in school and in life.

Diamond's community works together for children. An extremely active Parent Teacher Organization insures that parent volunteers are visible in the halls and classrooms daily. The community has a strong sense of ownership in the educational process at Diamond.

Children thrive in a nurturing environment, which recognizes individual needs, interests, and aspirations. We celebrate children regularly through our student of the month and VISA (Very Important Student Association) programs. Selected students of the month receive buttons to wear, and their photos hang on a special celebratory bulletin board in the main hallway. We appoint these students as "meeter-greeters" to help incoming students with the difficulty of transition from one school to another.

Diamond provides a learning environment where the community and teachers nurture all children and encourage them to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Our students are eager, curious, and excited to come to school. The key to DES's success is to empower parents and students to take significant responsibility for learning. Parents are partners in the educational process, which focuses on a student-based, shared understanding about achievable, educational outcomes.

The goals for achievable, educational outcomes are clear and explicit. Teachers, education support personnel, students, and parents believe all students can learn and no child will be left behind. Everyone actively seeks to identify barriers to learning by ensuring many safety precautions are in place. We use cooperative problem solving processes, and there is no tolerance for failure at Diamond Elementary School. The faculty employs a continuous assessment of teaching and learning supported by the following interventions: Accelerated Reader, Problem of the Week, Problem of the Day, Math Night, Reading

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Changing the Way We Teach

By Dannette Jackson
2002 Okinawa District
Teacher of the Year

DoDDS children are unique. They come to us with diverse backgrounds. As educators we must be ready to meet the diversity of children's needs. All children bring with them

different perceptions, knowledge, and experiences. Past practices encourage us to place children into ability groups based on their perceptions, knowledge, and experiences. If we want to truly meet children's needs and leave "no child behind", we must realize how much children can learn from one another.

Flexible grouping allows the opportunity for every child to work together and share in the learning process. Groups are organized temporarily to meet needs, or you may group students based on their level of understanding to stretch and challenge a child who may be struggling with a new concept. The key is to ensure that students are not always in the low group. Learning activities should be planned so that students can have the opportunity to work with many of their classmates regardless of ability.

Just as students learn from each other, teachers can also learn and grow by sharing and planning together. Planning with your colleagues can also open doors to a variety of teaching methods that will surely benefit all children. It is important to discuss what works in your classroom. It is also just as important to discuss what does not work. Knowledge is a powerful concept if it is shared. We grow and learn by what others know and have experienced. Listen to what others have to share and experience their knowledge by visiting their classrooms. It is wonderful to look around and watch as educators team together to help students grow and learn.

Dinosaur Days, *continued from page 5*

The children each have a photo of themselves with Kindersaurus and the memories of all that they learned about those animals that lived millions of years ago. Having time to pursue their interests and be so much a part of the curriculum planning was surely one reason DoDEA is offering Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms worldwide. I am happy about it and the kids are too.

Don't Lose Your Childlike..., *continued from front page*

and parents participate together as knights and fair ladies. My fellow fifth grade teachers participate and



schedule an annual rocket launch, so that over three hundred students can build, design, and launch model rockets. I watch these teachers search for exciting ways to

make each child in their classroom be successful and discover the world around them in the same ways that I did as a child. This makes me very proud to be part of the faculty and school system. .. a school system where a child's education about all the amazing facts around him/her is the top priority in every classroom.

One of my students asked me this year, "Ms. Krum, what is the best thing about being a science teacher?" I answered back, "The best thing about being your science teacher is watching you discover new things that you never knew before about that topic." Isn't that an incredible feeling when you watch a child or teenager create or explore some area of academics, and they seem to make all the pieces of the puzzle come together all of a sudden? It makes you go home at the end of the day knowing that you have chosen one of the most rewarding jobs as your lifetime career.

I remember a National Teacher of the Year back in the early '90's referring to educators as being 'molders of dreams'. I never forgot that term that was used to describe a teacher. It is a reminder to me of the impact that we have on each child's education. As we stand in front of our students each day, let us remember how we used to wonder about everything around us when we were young. For me, I think about those nights looking up at the stars. Even now, on my crazy, busy days, I take a moment at night to look for a shooting star to remind myself to never forget the amazing curiosity of being a child. Then, I remind myself of the responsibility I have to encourage each child to wonder about everything there is around them and to search for the answers to those questions. You are a potter, and they are the clay. You help "mold their dreams."



"Molders of Dreams"

Where Children Come First, *continued from page 6*

and Math Resource, Special Education services, English as a Second Language, and Gifted and Talented. The military community is Diamond Elementary's richest resource. The military command actively involves itself in school improvement and is readily available to assist with student support through many community-based programs including D.A.R.E., Partners in Education, Overwatch Battalion Support, and immediate quality medical care (pediatrics & psychological).

Student needs and appropriateness determine instructional materials. As technology continues to be an integral part of our curriculum, teachers and students use computers in classrooms, computer labs, and the information center. The LAN connects all parts of the school to allow for the widest area use. Connectivity to the Internet allows students and staff to experience a truly global society of information and communication.

Diamond's motto, "Where Children Come First," is obvious in each area of the school life. Diamond Elementary School, home of the Diamond Gators, is truly a special place where no child is left behind.

Site Every Standard

(Sung to the tune of "Climb Every Mountain" from *The Sound of Music*)

Site every standard
Assign every role
Follow every benchmark
'Til you reach your goal.

DoDEA content
Teach to the test
Differentiate instruction
Try to do your best.

A planned strategy through the years three to ten
Chart a course for each goal then start over again.

Win that blue ribbon
Foster self-esteem
We all know Ft. Campbell's
A "60 Minutes" dream.

Give heed to the words of the Strategic Plan
May they burn in the heart of each woman and man.

Involve every parent
Challenge every mind
Empower all stakeholders
Leave no child behind.

Kathy Bearden and Mark Russell, Ft. Campbell, KY
May 2002



Jolene Jenkins
2002 DoDEA
Teacher of the Year

Dear Colleagues,
By the time this edition of the newsletter reaches the schools, my time as the 2002 DoDEA Teacher of the Year will be coming to an end. It has been a year filled with activities and learning experiences leading to tremendous personal and professional growth. It has truly been a life-changing experience.

I have attended the National State Teacher of the Year Programs

Conference in Dallas, Texas; the 2002 DoDEA Teacher of the Year Forum in Arlington, Virginia; and the National State Teachers Recognition Activities in Washington, D.C. I have been privileged to meet and form new friendships with outstanding educators from all states and throughout DoDEA. I have been motivated by leaders in education and had the opportunity to greet President and Mrs. Bush at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, and to again shake hands with the President and Secretary of Education Rod Paige in the Oval Office. I sat in the Rose Garden and listened to the President speak on the importance of teachers and was wined and dined at a formal black-tie reception and banquet. There I had the opportunity to meet and speak with executive officers from many professional organizations and companies involved with education.

I was also given the opportunity to learn more about the DoDDS portion of DoDEA by traveling to Okinawa. While I was there, I participated in MiddleQuest training, visited classrooms and chatted with teachers at various schools, and gave a more formal speech to a group of teachers and administrators from the Okinawa district at an evening reception. Towards the end of May I traveled to Guam for a brief visit. During my stay I attended Guam South Elementary and Middle School's eighth grade graduation ceremony and was the keynote speaker for the Guam High School Graduation Ceremony.

My activities did not end with the final days of the school year. Two weeks in June were spent in Washington D.C. as part of the DoDEA writing assessment-scoring team. Seven days spent at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, with the state teachers of the year and other outstanding educators from around the world provided new insights into the learning process.

When not traveling during my second semester

sabbatical, I was able to work within my school and district and continued to coordinate and mentor students in an after school study program. I have had the opportunity to address different groups of educators, present workshops, and developed a district project to assist in the progression of writing skills from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Although I am now back in the classroom routine, all of the wonderful memories remain vividly etched in my mind. If I were asked, however, to highlight only one of these memories, I would choose the opportunity to visit other DoDEA classrooms and talk with teachers who share my passion for teaching. Each visit was a sharing and learning experience. Not only did I view students actively engaged in various learning activities, but I also stood in awe at the creativity and talent of DoDEA teachers.

It was a joy to see young students engaged in the writing process and sharing their writings and projects with their peers. Elementary hallways were lined with the accomplishments of students. Middle school students read and discussed literature in literary circles, answered literature questions on a teacher-created template and used an E-mail system to send unfinished work home and the completed homework back to the teacher, created electronic portfolios, and used the jigsaw strategy to teach and learn new material. High school students performed choral readings, presented skits in Spanish, and completed final exams on computers. These are but a few of the many activities occurring in DoDEA classrooms, and behind each activity are the creativeness and the talent of a DoDEA teacher.

At the Ft. Campbell end-of-the-year district picnic, I witnessed first-hand that the talent of DoDEA's teachers lies not only within the classroom but also occurs outside the classroom walls. Partnering words such as standards, benchmark, differentiate instruction, and no child left behind with the tune of "Climb Every Mountain" from *The Sound of Music*, Fort Campbell music teachers Kathy Bearden (Lucas Elementary and Ft. Campbell's 2001 District Teacher of the Year) and Mark Russell (Jackson Elementary) wrote and performed a song parody entitled "Climb Every Standard."

DoDEA teachers are world-class educators, and even after I pass the Teacher of the Year responsibilities to the 2003 DoDEA Teacher of the Year, I will continue to tell everyone of the commitment of DoDEA teachers and the great things occurring in DoDEA classrooms. Without a doubt, you are making a difference in the lives of our military young people. I thank you for the opportunity to be an ambassador for the teaching profession. It has truly been an honor to represent all of the outstanding educators of DoDEA.