



Tom Horne Reports to Educators

December 2008

A Message from the Superintendent

New ELL Models Off to a Running Start:

When the new models were announced for teaching English Language Learners, there was a lot of controversy. However, three school districts started early on the new models last year, and every one of the three more than doubled its rate of reclassifying students from English Language Learners to English Proficient.

We have been doing a lot of training. I have personally read the evaluations of the trainings by participants, and they were consistently running between 90 and 95 percent positive. These are the best evaluations for a professional development program that I have seen. I asked those involved in the training program to write some impressions of what is happening. Here are a few examples:

- Early on in the training sessions, educators asked at the beginning of the three-day training session: 'What are we going to do with four hours daily of English language development (ELD) instruction with these students?' At the end of the three days, after spending twenty hours on ELD and on the Strategies that are an integral part of the delivery of that instruction, the same educators stated, 'How in the world are we going to teach all of this in just four hours of ELD instruction daily?'
- After several presentations by OELAS staff members at different institutes of higher learning, they were asked by class members if the curricular plan for delivering English language development instruction might not be made available for non-English language learners. This was after the presentation of the components of the program and the emphasis being made on the importance of the explicit teaching of English language grammatical structures. They noted just how important it was to teach ALL students grammar, not just ELLs.
- A para-professional in an SEI classroom asked a school official why it was that her own daughter, who is not an English language learner, is not receiving the kind of English language instruction that ELLs are receiving in the classroom where she works. The ELLs are receiving a higher level of instruction, according to this mother and para-professional.

Often, we can all learn from techniques developed by people dealing with students with special needs. Special Education teachers pioneered the kind of individualized instruction that is now becoming more common for all students. Similarly, from the programs developed for English Language Learners, we are reminded to reinforce our efforts to be sure that all of our students are learning to speak and write with proper grammar.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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2009 National Youth Science Camp

The NYSC is one of the nation's premier programs in secondary science education. Since its inception in 1963 as part of West Virginia's Centennial Celebration, the residential summer program has offered educational forums and recreational activities that encourage the development of thoughtful scientific leadership.

Applications to attend the 2009 National Youth Science Camp are now available online at www.nysc.org/2009. Two graduating high school students will be selected to represent Arizona at the all-expenses paid honors program which will be held from July 1 through July 25, 2009. To apply, please download the application packet from www.nysc.org/2009

Siemens
We Can Change the World
Challenge

The Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge gives students the opportunity, tools and inspiration to become those agents of change. Beginning in fall 2008 through March 15, 2009, middle school student teams from across the country will be challenged to create sustainable, reproducible environmental improvements in their local communities.

Top prizes will include a chance to appear on Discovery Network's Planet Green, a share in thousands of dollars in savings bonds, a one-in-a-lifetime Discovery Adventure trip and more.

For more information, visit:
www.wecanchange.com

The web site for the Arizona STEM Center for Teachers (ACST) is now active. We are currently accepting on-line applications for the February short course on evolution.

The Summer Institute on-line application and program description will be available on February 1, 2009.

For more information, please visit: www.az-stem-teachers.org/index.html. If you have any questions, please contact Matt Adamson, Program Coordinator, Sr. Education and Outreach 520.838.6137, madamson@b2science.org.



It's a family affair this year~ the 2008 Grand Canyon State Games Essay Contest has added two new age categories for adults! Pens and paper await the ideas and thoughts of writers nationwide. The Grand Canyon State Games Essay Contest Sponsored by Ottawa University promotes creativity through writing as an effective method for authors to express their dreams and ideas for a successful life and a better community. This contest provides an opportunity to compete as a means of building self-esteem. Brochures have been sent to 2,621 public, private and charter schools in Arizona, 44 other State Games organizations throughout the country, as well as the entire Games family building the magnitude of the contest.

We encourage you to be creative and put into words your thoughts and ideas. Themes range from Character Education, to the Olympics, being Tobacco and Alcohol free, to the importance of taking care of your bodies in a healthy manner and the importance of practicing peace in your everyday life. Click on the picture below to link to our website and view the specific themes and guidelines for this year's contest.



The contest is FREE and begins November 3rd. Entries will be judged on the basis of originality, theme interpretation and use of media. Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded to the top winners from each grade k-12, and two adult categories (ages 19-49, and 50+). There will be two \$2,500 scholarships awarded. One to the participant with the top essay chosen from grades 6, 7, and 8 and the other one chosen from grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Brochures may be obtained by contacting the Grand Canyon State Games office at (480) 517-9700 or online at www.gcsg.org. The deadline to submit entries is January 24, 2009.

All educators and administrators must lecture sometime in their careers. Unfortunately, some rely on lecturing as the primary way of delivering information to their students, but research has surfaced disputing the effectiveness of this method of imparting knowledge to the masses.

- A research study assessed student learning directly after a lecture to see how much students retained. The results showed that students remembered 70% from the first ten minutes. The disappointing news was that the students remembered just 20% from the final ten minutes of the lecture (McKeachie, 1986). Many times educators wait until the end to deliver the most crucial information.
- In 2006, the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) was given to over 81,499 students from 26 states. In the survey, two-thirds of the high school students said they were bored in class every day. When asked why, 75 percent stated "the material wasn't interesting to me" and 31 percent said they had "no interaction with the teacher" (Yazzie-Mintz, E., 2007).
- A study by Ruhl, Hughes, and Schloss found that students retain more if the teacher talks for six minutes or less.
- The average attention span for a college student is between ten and twenty minutes (Penner, 1984).

There are a variety of active engagement instructional strategies to employ when delivering content, and many are preferred over lecturing. Active engagement, discussed in prior newsletters, includes strategies such as "Think, Pair, Share," "Group Alerting," "Choral Response," and "TPR." All contain the necessary components of active engagement which research has shown to increase learning (Meyers and Jones, 1993). Although there are many alternatives to lecturing, there are times and situations when lecturing is the best way to convey information. The following list provides suggestions to enhance lecturing.

1. Begin the lecture with an interesting question or pose a problem that can be solved using the information that will be provided.
2. Ask questions throughout the lecture and respond in a positive manner to the answers.
3. Provide written focus questions, lecture notes, a lecture summary, or graphic organizers to the students prior to lecturing.
4. Have students share answers with a partner for questions posed during the lecture.
5. Add joy to the lecture by including humor.
6. Stay on course and tie in previous student knowledge.
7. Use appropriate tools such as live demonstrations, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and other multimedia.
8. Incorporate "Think, Pair, Share" and let students discuss portions of the lecture as groups to break up the lecture.
9. Keep a brisk pace throughout the lecture.
10. Do not read the lecture to the students. Reading continuously from notes does not allow dialogue and processing time for students to make important connections.

Combining the above strategies and tips while lecturing will ultimately lead to livelier lessons and more meaningful learning that students will retain over the long term.

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