

THE SERVICE LEARNING NEWSLETTER

Fall 2009
Issue #9

Academics with Service build stronger communities

Faculty Voices:

Dr. Mary Borba, Teacher Education

Community Partner: **Sandra Tovar Medeiros Elementary School**

Dr. Mary Borba is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education and Coordinator of the Multiple Subjects Program. For three years, Dr. Borba has been working with her *EDMS 4110: Reading Methods English Instruction* students at Sandra Tovar Medeiros Elementary School in Turlock, Ca. Her essay reflects her outstanding service to prepare CSU Stanislaus students to be effective teachers in diverse and challenging communities.

Each semester students in *EDMS 4110: Reading Methods English Instruction* attend their five hour literacy methods class at Sandra Tovar Medeiros Elementary School, two blocks from the CSU Stanislaus campus. These University students are in the Multiple Subjects Credential Program preparing to become elementary school teachers. The College of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Service Learning, and Medeiros School partner to provide a unique learning experience for new teacher candidates and Medeiros students. The University students observe my instruction teaching in the Medeiros classrooms each week. This shared experience is then discussed and related to the theory learned in the reading methods class, including their reading assignments. Additionally, the new teacher candidates teach weekly literacy lessons to Medeiros students to increase the young students' reading and writing opportunities. This weekly experience offers the University students an opportunity to practice their newly learned skills with real kids.



Dr. Mary Borba

Teacher Education

At left with EDMS 4110 student teacher demonstrating word pronunciation

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Prepared by
The Office of
Service Learning

Teachers are the most critical factor in student achievement, far more powerful than class size, race, socioeconomic level, and classroom homogeneity (AERA, 2004). My approach to instructing aspiring teachers promotes the understanding that teaching children to read and write is complex and requires expertise. Children differ and teachers must be equipped to differentiate instruction to support their learning. The complexity of reading and writing instruction is reinforced for the new teacher candidates as they observe my Medeiros classroom teaching each week. These University students come to understand that they are not just “jumping through hoops” to obtain their teaching credential. Their service learning opportunities in the Credential Program are crucial to their preparation for becoming expert teachers.

Each week the University students prepare a lesson to be delivered to a group of Medeiros students in the after-school Literacy Club. Students attending the Literacy Club commit to staying after school for an additional 45 minutes to receive this special instruction. Before the lessons are delivered, the University students submit their planned lessons to me for feedback. After my students refine their lessons, they come prepared to teach the following week. When students finish their literacy lessons, time is taken to reflect on the strengths of each lesson through class discussions and in writing. This weekly reflective exercise develops in the students the habits of mind characteristic

The weekly reflective exercise develops in students the habits of mind characteristic of exemplary teachers.

Dr. Mary Borba
Teacher Education

of exemplary teachers. The literature indicates that exemplary teachers take the time to think about how their lessons are executed and how well they met the diverse needs of elementary students in their group.

The school community at Medeiros School, parents, teachers, and administration, have been overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the University’s efforts to partner with them and to serve the first through sixth grade students by organizing and providing Literacy Club lessons to groups of children each week. Our hope is that such partnerships will continue to grow in our community.

Dr. Mary Borba, Assistant Professor,
Teacher Education

SERVICE LEARNING **2008 MINI GRANTS ROUNDUP**

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Office of Service Learning offered five Service Learning Mini-Grants to benefit excellence in teaching and service learning at CSU Stanislaus.

Dr. Run Jin, Assistant Professor, Psychology and Child Development, utilized her grant to attend the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Jin presented the service learning work she conducts in *CDEV 3040: Child Development in Cultural Context* with her students and community partners, The Salvation Army in Turlock and Child Development Center.

Dr. Jennifer Helzer, Associate Professor and Director of Geography utilized her mini-grant to support GIS mapping activities in *GEOG 4350: Urban Geography*. Dr. Helzer and her students worked with



Dr. Run Jin

Psychology and Child Development
Child Development students (above right) at the Turlock Salvation Army.

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two communities: 1) the City of Turlock to map unused downtown real estate, and 2) the Airport Neighborhood in Modesto to map a shade tree program with the Modesto Irrigation District to help reduce utility expenses for low income families.

Dr. Mary Borba, Assistant Professor, Teacher Education, utilized her mini-grant to purchase grade specific reading books for her students to use in *EDMS 4110: Reading Methods English Instruction* for their service learning program at Medeiros Elementary School in Turlock.



Dr. Mary Borba

Teacher Education
At left, with a Teacher Education student at Medeiros Elementary School in Turlock.

As a result of the office's fall 2008 workshop, "Service Learning 101", two mini-grants were offered to faculty new to service learning. **Dr. Mark Grobner**, Associate Professor & Chair, Biological Sciences, purchased supplies to install tadpole life cycle aquariums in four Turlock Elementary schools: Crowell Elementary, Julien Elementary, Wakefield Elementary and Walnut Elementary schools. CSU Stanislaus students in Dr. Grobner's *ZOOL 3130: Vertebrate Embryology* class set up over 15 aquariums at the schools and gave a presentation on tadpole development that met the science standards for the younger class level. At the end of the semester, the elementary students visited the CSU Stanislaus campus to release the maturing tadpoles and toured the new Naraghi Hall of Science.

Lastly, **Ms. Tommi Lou Carosella**, Lecturer, Biological Sciences, purchased supplies for a Butterfly Way Station in a community garden at Empire Elementary School in Empire. Ms. Carosella's students in *BIOL 2650: Environmental Biology* worked with Empire students to set up the Butterfly Way Station and help monitor the site.



Dr. Jennifer Helzer

Geography
At left with Urban Geography students in downtown Turlock



Dr. Mark Grobner

Biological Sciences
Speaks to Turlock elementary school second graders visiting the Naraghi Hall of Science

California Campus Compact - Carnegie Faculty Fellows Program



California | Campus Compact



Dr. Nancy Jean Smith, Professor and Chair, Teacher Education, and Dr. Dave Colnic, Assistant Professor, Politics and Public Administration have each recently completed the two-year California Campus Compact - Carnegie Foundation Faculty Fellows Service-Learning for Political Engagement Program. The program was funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, also known as Learn and Serve America. Drs. Smith and Colnic were each one of 25 inaugural scholars across the state to participate in this new, innovative program

that seeks to fulfill three goals: 1) Incorporate service learning pedagogy into the curriculum in a way that increases students' understanding, skills, and motivation for greater democratic participation in their community, 2) Fellows reflect on their own teaching and students' learning to improve their practice, and 3) Fellows share their models of teaching and scholarship with other faculty across the disciplines. Additionally, the CACC-Carnegie Faculty Fellows attended two summer institutes at Stanford University led by renowned senior scholars at the Carnegie Foundation. The scholars gathered to build a cadre of faculty who support and learn from each other.

CSU Stanislaus' Faculty Fellows each developed a model of service learning to prepare students for political engagement.

Political participation is necessary for democracy to survive and flourish, yet political participation by young people, including the college-educated, is distressingly low. Colleges and universities have long claimed a role in educating young people for democracy, but many faculty remain unclear or conflicted about how to do so in ways that are academically rigorous and scrupulously unbiased. These Faculty Fellows will provide models of how to do so."

Tom Ehrlich,
Carnegie Senior Scholar

Parent Coffee Hour, a student art show, and a CSU Stanislaus campus tour.

Dr. Colnic engaged Political Science students studying immigration and refugee policy with three immigrant populations in the Central Valley. CSU Stanislaus students engaged in activities to help immigrant communities acculturate to America and navigate through civic and public services unfamiliar to these groups. Three student groups worked with the following immigrant communities to increase both immigrants' and students' civic engagement: 1) Hispanic immigrant parents were encouraged to



Dr. Dave Colnic
Politics and Public
Administration

become more involved in their children's school activities, 2) A Community Night Out program was organized for different Southeast Asian immigrants that might not typically meet together to discuss issues and possible engagement activities common to each other, and 3) New Assyrian refugees were offered a mentor program with established Assyrians in the community to help navigate through unfamiliar civic and public services in the region.

Dr. Smith developed the Passport to University program with her credential student teachers to implement community-based curriculum to meet the challenges of educating youth in inner city schools in Stockton, California. Student teachers received training on how to incorporate civic engagement in the curriculum to construct democratic pedagogy that includes Stockton students, parents, and community partners in a service learning context, while meeting the standards for their grade level. Students, parents, and community partners were empowered to be involved in their education and community through activities such as Project Citizen,



Dr. Nancy Jean Smith
Teacher Education
*At left handing out awards
at Passport to University
campus tour*

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