The Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts & Education Complex

The Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts & Education Complex ground breaking took place on June 14, 2011. The complex will serve as a premier academic hub of evidence-based, K-12 arts integration research, training, practice and advocacy.

The complex will house a newly created national Center for Integrated Arts into Academic Learning, guided jointly by the U’s Colleges of Education and Fine Arts. A principal goal of the center is to research and facilitate teaching methods for integrating arts education into traditional core subjects such as math, science, history and language arts.

Guests had the pleasure of hearing from Beverley Taylor Sorenson as well as Michael Hardman Dean of the College of Education, Mary Ann Lee Directory of the Tanner Dance Program, Raymond Tymas-Jones Dean of the College of Fine Arts and David W. Pershing Acting President of the University of Utah.

As part of the groundbreaking program students from Tanner Dance preformed for the group. Afterwards they were able to meet Thomas S. Monson, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

To read more about the ground breaking please visit

Technology Integration
By Regina Delong

Technology affords student flexibility and innovative ways to provide a body of evidence of professional competency both in learning and pedagogy. Two grants from the University of Utah’s Technology Assisted Curriculum Center (TACC) Center have been awarded to the UI TE’s Regina Delong. In our efforts to improve access to teacher licensure courses, the Urban Institute for Teacher Education is in the process of implementing several courses using an online format within the context of our Elementary Math Methods and a Seminar in Language Awareness. Technology integration for EDU 1010, Introduction to Teaching is slated for Spring 2012.

Elementary Math Methods goes Online
EDU 5360/6260 Elementary Math Learning Methods was offered online for the first time in Spring 2011. The class provides students seeking an elementary teaching license with the curriculum and learning opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of mathematics content through the application of teaching methods within the context of grades k-6 mathematics classrooms. The online course was written using traditional face-to-face course content, learning activities, and objectives.

The online format provides opportunities for students to share ideas about how to teach mathematical concepts and evaluate peer concept techniques through a cooperative learning environment. One student remarked in the end-of-course summary, “There was a lot of information to take in but it was all useful. The course objectives were clear and met. The information will be extremely useful in the future classroom. All the information was relevant to teaching and we gained plenty of new teaching strategies.” Another student said, “This was a very thorough course, I feel good about going in to teaching with math.”

Students also reported the need for even more idea sharing and collaboration. A hybrid course, offered during Fall 2011 will incorporate online components with a traditional, face-to-face format. The course is designed to blend the best of the online learning with some face-to-face instructor support, small and large group discussions, peer collaborations, and mini presentations by students. Because collaboration is essential among educators, we hope to embed these opportunities more formally in future course sessions.

EDU 5201/6201 Seminar in Language Awareness utilizes the new University of Utah Learning Management System (LMS), Instructure Canvas. Using an online format, this course examines issues related to language awareness within the context of classroom settings. This one hour seminar course accompanies a required three hour field practicum. The course will assist teachers in advancing their awareness of language development for k-12 grade level students with a specific focus on first and second language acquisition within the context of diverse classroom settings. By participating in the seminar and field teaching practicum, students will experience the applications of theories of language acquisition with a specific emphasis on literacy and content area instruction.

Students will exhibit their own understanding of language acquisition through an ePortfolio. Using Canvas, a Learning Management System, that allows students to create and maintain their own ePortfolios. The ePortfolios will provide a platform where students reveal course-based assignments that demonstrate professional efforts, progress, and reflect knowledge of the applications of language and linguistics as they are manifest in classroom teaching.

EDU 1010, Introduction to Teaching is designed to introduce students to personal and professional experiences within the educational community. A modified hybrid format will be implemented Spring 2012 using the new learning management system Canvas.

Benefits of the online format provide students with many resources designed to assist students in their learning and to promote collaboration with others; skills we envision transferring into students’ teaching careers.
Angela Bradbury, an Elementary Education graduate of the College of Education class of 2011, had the opportunity to spend some time in Washington D.C. as part of the Congressional Whitehouse Briefings.

**How did you hear about this opportunity to go to Washington D.C.?**

Dean Hardman gave my name to Jane West (a policy maker in DC). We quickly arranged a time to chat at the beginning of April, and after discussing my experience at the University of Utah and student teaching in Salt Lake City School District, Ms. West made arrangements for me to fly back to DC for the Congressional Hearing. The whole thing definitely caught me by surprise, but it was by far the most empowering experience I've ever been apart of as an educator.

**What did you learn in the Teacher Education Program at the U that helped you while participating in this opportunity and how will those skills impact your work as a future teacher?**

The experience that carried the most impact in D.C. was my ambition to educate all children. The policy being presented was written by three very skilled Special Education teachers, professors, and researchers, so they were very surprised with the Special Education knowledge I had gained through a general education program. The U's Teacher Education Program focuses so much on classroom communities, differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning, which are three key elements that the authors of this policy want more universities to incorporate into general education programs in order to produce more prepared and effective instructors.

**Who was someone you met while in D.C. that left a strong impression or inspired you in a way that you want apply in your career?**

Jane West and Sharon Robinson were two women from AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) who inspired me deeply because of their extensive knowledge in education, and their dedication to ensuring all students are receiving the best education possible. After I spend an extensive amount of time in the classroom, I hope to someday hold a position like these remarkable women to further my dream of making a positive impact on our education system.

**Please share with us a memorable experience during your time in Washington**

We had the opportunity to have an informal, roundtable discussion with two white house executives about the preparation of general education teachers to teach students with disabilities. At the end of the meeting Steve Robinson, who is a special assistant to the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education for the White House Domestic Policy Council, quoted two points I had shared (which is apparently very, very rare according to Jane).

One being we need to be prepared to teach all students (mission from the U) and the second being the emphasis on finding out how students are intelligent, not if they are intelligent, a reference I gained from the book *The Element* by Ken Robinson. After the meeting, he then gave me his card and told me to keep him posted on where I end up. I couldn't believe it, it was so surreal because not only did I already admire him for having taught for 12 years prior to holding the strong position he does now, but to have such a compliment from someone who holds so much weight in education, it truly was amazing!
What is unique about the UITE Introduction to Teaching class?

I am looking forward to facilitating the learning in the UITE’s Intro to Teaching course. This course is unique and exciting in its design, location and day it is offered. By design I mean the students in the course may come from three separate parts of the educational community: 1) traditional matriculating students exploring entering the profession, 2) educational professionals seeking to upgrade their skills and knowledge and perhaps receive a change in work status, and 3) members of the community.

The location of this course will be in a community facility where other community events are concurrently occurring. Finally, this course will be offered on a Saturday morning. The combination of these factors can lead to a dynamic, robust learning opportunity for all. I am excited and honored to be part of this experience.

What is unique about the UITE Introduction to Teaching class?

I find that what is really unique and exciting is that the class is not just a generic class about education, instead it really focuses on the unique needs of urban schools. This class sets the standards higher about what students will need to know and be able to do in order to begin the journey of becoming a quality teacher for ALL students.

I also find that since we teach Introduction to Teaching in a variety of ways, traditional, hybrid, out in the public schools and on unique days and times, the UITE is also trying to meet the varied needs of learners so that we are modeling exactly what we want teachers to think about in their own future classrooms. This is an exciting first class for our university students to see a positive future in urban schools.

What is unique about the UITE Introduction to Teaching class?

Introduction to Teaching allows students the opportunity to be exposed to the teaching profession and get a glimpse of what it would be like to be a teacher and to work in urban schools. The service learning portion of the course also allows students to put a concentrated effort into their visits to schools.

This component allows students to see schools from the inside out, learn about the over-all education picture, and understand how a teacher must be continually learning to be effective. Unlike other professional paths at the university, I think our education student are fortunate to get a snapshot of the profession so that they can make an educated and informed decision about working in education or not.

What is unique about the UITE Introduction to Teaching class?

It is the opportunity for students to explore the diversity of the teaching profession and to start on their journey to becoming critically engaged educators. This course supports students in thinking about how they develop relationships with youth and families while taking into consideration the multitude of cultures, systems and histories that influence educational success. Through this, students get a change to creatively and actively explore equitable educational practices in communities in west Salt Lake City and are supported in building long term relationships with partners and students in the community.
Abstract
By Ann Richardsen

This paper explores the issue of choice and engagement, and if choice can help students learn. The objective of this project was to discover whether choice made my class and curriculum more engaging to students.

No specific choice assignments were given during the first five weeks of the quarter. Then, three specific choice assignments were given to students during the last half of the 3rd quarter, or the last five weeks: a vocabulary test where students were given a choice in format, a utopian government presentation where students were given a choice in presentation, and an essay project where students were given a choice in topic.

To assess the effectiveness of the choice assignments in engagement, I compared assignments completed during the first 5 weeks of the term with the last 5 weeks of the term postulating that students who were more engaged would complete more assignments. Some of the research confirmed that choice is not essential to engagement and my study confirmed this theory.

Keywords: engagement, choice, assignments, curriculum, effective teaching, effective practices, feedback, teacher preparation, teacher development, professional practice.

Gaming in the Classroom:
Gaming as a means to improve group collaboration
By David Page

Modern students are routinely utilizing virtual spaces to meet a number of different needs. For example, virtual space can service the need for socialization (e.g., Facebook), entertainment (gaming, multimedia), and many others. I use this latent familiarity in virtual space to address the following question. Can student interaction within a collaborative virtual gaming environment improve the effectiveness of cooperative learning groups? Students in four eighth grade integrated science classes were divided into small cooperative learning groups.

Each class was able to invent a country that then participated in through a colonization type strategy game (e.g., Settlers of Catan). The study found that collaboration within a virtual environment does carry over to the classroom environment so long as the two are clearly connected. Furthermore, it was found that virtual environments may be used to extend the boundaries of the classroom in ways that are useful in engaging students with content.

Teaching Respect to Foster an Environment of Caring in the Dance Classroom
By Chelsea-McCall Lujan

This action research project began with the question: How do I, as a dance teacher, teach the principles of respect to students to help foster an environment of caring within the classroom? Respect is highly valued in a dance classroom, because respect helps build a safe environment where dancers are comfortable moving their bodies and sharing parts of themselves. The intended purpose of this action research was to help calm student anxieties about a required solo/duet assignment, by creating an environment of respect and caring in the dance classroom.

Following the idea that students might not understand my goals for respect, students were given direct instruction on the principles of respect, and asked to incorporate them into the dance classroom. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and my own self-reflections over the course of seven periods. While anxiety levels were not reduced due to the timing of the project, my findings showed that direct instruction of the principles of respect in a dance classroom did help to foster an environment of respect and caring by the students.
Motivating the "At-Risk" Student.
By Shaun Sparks

Having embarked upon my student teaching inside an arena where students have been partitioned and categorized as "at-risk," I encountered a variety of perplexing issues that inhibited student growth in the learning environment. Drawing upon my interaction with the students who comprise the program, a trending, if not chronic issue remains the challenge of having students remain attentive to the task of learning. However, this “task of learning” is in itself only an aggregate term meant to signify the variety of skills many students are lacking upon admission to the program. Here, a wide continuum exists, whereas some students lack the prerequisite skills to arrive in class with a writing utensil, others seem unable to properly navigate the sequential chapters of the textbook, still others, despite their intellectual ability, continue to present substandard and casual work.

The precept of my Action Research was to identify and implement strategies that would motivate low-achieving students to perform better in the classroom. In the process of seeking scholarly input for improving upon student motivation I uncovered a litany of qualifying research that would aid in my study. Among the research consulted are diverse group of strategies that include the successful solidify of instructionist and constructivist pedagogies, the importance of identifying future goals for students, the modification of grading policies, and lastly, the development of a caring classroom environment. Further studies that would compliment my research expose the use of verbally aggressive messages in the instructor-student relationship.

Throughout the design and execution of this project I have realized the role that action research can play in personal and professional development. Although at times my methods of data collection seemed vague and immeasurable, the processes of identifying a problem, consulting research on that problem and moving to introduce strategies informed by that research provides a framework for thinking productively about the issue in question. There should be an emphasis on this sort of research as a learning process rather than a concise empirical data collection and summary. In lieu of being involved in doctoral work, this project should be valued at the graduate level for its capacity to allow the student teacher to encounter the scientific process in the effort to improve their own facility as educators.

If our intent as educators is to impress upon students the skills needed for inquiry and critical thinking we must then facilitate a learning environment where students may encounter, engage, and manipulate content in a manner that promotes relevance and value, and in turn, retention and recall. I feel this tenet can be applied to the processes of action research. Despite the ability of being able to narrow down proof positive outcomes to our initial research question(s), we have at the very least, engaged and interacted with a developed problem statement, and the research supporting that statement to an extent that warrants positive effect on our philosophies inside the arena of teaching and learning.

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Action Research Abstract: Increasing students’ motivation to read
By Jason Fila

Did you know that since NCLB primary students’ reading skills have increased significantly, yet secondary students’ reading scores have stagnated for about thirty years? I believe we are producing too many students who can read just fine, but who are not motivated to read. Whether you don’t read because you can’t or you don’t read because you aren’t motivated the result is the same: No reading. Consequently I developed an action research project to see whether I could isolate key factors in high school health students’ motivation to read.

The main question I addressed is “How will allowing student to choose what they read, providing in-class reading time, providing interesting health-related texts, and organically discussing texts affect reading motivation?”

How did I collect and analyze data? I triangulated my data using three data collection methods: ongoing surveys, teacher observations and a pre/post assessment questionnaire. Each data collection method granted me, the teacher-researcher, incidental and insightful learning’s.

What did I learn that you should know? First “resistant readers” will read authentic texts outside of school if there is a legitimate reason for doing so. Our job is to create a genuine reason. Contextualizing the reading within a “personal major goal project” motivated one student with dyslexia to read three books on alcoholism within three weeks since his purpose was to overcome his alcohol abuse.

He used that reading, in addition to a powerful presentation on alcohol abuse which he delivered to the class. The students and I were moved beyond compare. Second, what you think is interesting is not necessarily what they think is interesting. Third if you want your students to become interested in reading you must do more than give them opportunities to read interesting books. You must read out loud to them from books that engage the majority of students (such as Monster: The autobiography of an L.A. gang member). Fourth, to motivate students to read you should collaborate with other teachers.

I learned so much from working with others! You will too. I have so many other important findings that I could not share in a brief abstract. Feel free to email me for further information or to discuss my results: Jason.Fila@utah.edu. Fifth, you can do it! I was surprised to find out that my project actually...
“The Role Choice Plays in Positively Influencing Student Engagement”
By Kristen Hodges

This action research project investigated how an educator can positively influence student engagement through offering choice, specifically in assessment methods. In two high school English as a Second Language writing classes, a combined number of approximately 30 students participated in a unit on Natural Disasters. After one month of having covered the content of the unit, students were told that instead of having a traditional unit test, they would instead display what they learned during the month by completing a project. Students were asked to choose a project that would be interesting and engaging for each of them personally. Each student chose both the topic for their project as well as the medium for presentation of the information. They were given guiding questions to answer in their project which were the essential questions students had been answering throughout the whole unit. For those who students who needed more support in choosing their own project, the suggestion was made to research a natural disaster that had occurred in their home countries, and several potential presentations were suggested based on preferences indicated in a questionnaire at the beginning of the term.

Both classes spent several weeks researching and completing their projects in a computer lab before presenting them to their peers. Students were asked for feedback about the experience in various ways during and after the process. While some students were initially quite engaged when the project phase began, some became less engaged after a week or two. Some got into a research “rut” and wished to change their project topic or medium half-way through despite all the work they had already completed. Some simply lost interest, and some fell very far behind due to absences. Student comments at the end of the research process indicated that most of them truly did, to some extent, enjoy having choice in their projects and that it did make them more excited to continue with their work. The offer of choice in order to positively influence engagement did not, however, have any effect on students about whom the action research project was most concerned. Those who were less likely to be engaged in learning before the project began were those who did not participate in completing a project either due to excessive absences or due to refusal to utilize the weeks allotted in class to work.

Having completed the project, some weaknesses of the methods and some modifications for a more successful action research project in the future are clear. First, although the literature regarding urban education and motivation all points to choice as a catalyst for positively influencing motivation and engagement, for students whose English proficiency was limited the abundance of choice offered in this project was most likely overwhelming. In future attempts at such research, if students participating are English language learners, choice should be narrowed down to three options. This would continue to provide preference and choice while containing the options within a limit that is not so overwhelming. Second, although it initially seemed that students were provided with enough scaffolding to successfully complete their projects, it became apparent that the students needed still more structure. Similar projects in the future should definitely chunk the students’ research and projects into day-by-day, smaller and more manageable assignments. In the future, it would also be beneficial and worthwhile for educators to explore other facets of motivation and engagement, such as student/teacher relationships and supportive social relationships.

Reflective Transition from a Student Teacher to be an Effective Foreign Language Teacher in Contemporary Classrooms
By Dori Huang

To minimize the potential negative impacts from “reality shock” for many first-year teachers, I conducted an action research project exploring the viewpoints from the main actors in the school community on several issue areas, analyzing their opinions and comments, and then framing my adjustment strategies accordingly. The main inquiry of the project is this question: How do the knowledge and understanding of administrators, colleagues, and students’ perceptions and expectations of the Chinese teacher in classrooms and school communities help reflective transition from a student teacher to be an effective and integrated member of the educational community?

The data from 113 survey (81 students from four classes and 32 teacher from two schools) and 6 interviews suggested that most participants supported the four-skill based, language-culture fused Chinese curriculum, agreed with multiple instructional assessment methods, and endorsed the Chinese teacher’s active involvement in interdisciplinary collaboration and school activities. However, students and teachers varied somewhat in their views regarding the merits of homework assignments and group work. They also disagreed with the USOE’s stipulation of 80% Chinense-20% English instructional guidelines. Mulling over the results, my reflection notes and journal entries documented my adjustments in pedagogical decisions and community engagements for the last weeks of my student teaching. Based on these deliberations, this paper also identified the potential challenges and the proposed plan for further actions, as well as discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the project and the overall action research experience.

Keywords: first-year teachers, curriculum, instruction, professional development.
Every year the College of Education honors faculty in the areas of teaching, research or service. One of the recipients for this year’s award is Michelle Bachman. Michelle Bachman has been pursuing her education dream for over 30 years. She began as a teacher in Special Education just when the country decided that students with disabilities had a right to be taught in the public schools and now she works with high school students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds in supporting them to realize their dreams and pursue a career in education. She is the Teacher Support Coordinator in Salt Lake City School District and teaches several classes in the College of Education at the University of Utah. She believes in being a voice and an advocate for educational justice for all students and has been moving towards that goal for all of her career.

John Funk, Clinical Instructor in the Urban Institute for Teacher Education, was awarded a 2011 Distinguished Teaching Award during the 2011 commencement ceremonies at the University of Utah. The Distinguished teaching award is given annually to university faculty who exhibit demonstrated excellence in teaching.

In keeping with its commitment to teacher professional development, the UITE partnered with Salt Lake City School District in a ½ day workshop for beginning teachers and their mentors. August presentation themes included effective mentoring and supervision, collaboration, and a review of the new Utah Teaching Standards.

Barbara Kuehl, Dessie Olson, Michelle Bachman, and Mary D. Burbank look forward to continued contacts with this cohort of teachers during the coming year and the opportunities to provide teachers with innovative and thoughtful professional development experiences.
During the summer of 2011, the Urban Institute for Teachers Education (UITE) offered the first ever bridge program for members of the Teacher Recruitment Scholars (TRS) project. The TRS project is a collaborative effort between the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College and 5 local school districts. As Just for U! project coordinator, Ms. Christine Vega, a graduate student in the College of Education at the University of Utah, worked to implement her vision of providing a transfer bridge program for the students she currently teaches as Co-Instructor at Salt Lake Community College TR Scholars. As part of their efforts, Ms. Vega believes it is critical to provide several days of information regarding the transfer process, mentorship, and academic rigor. Andrea Garavito-Martinez, Cinthia Sarahi Cervantes-Castaneda (all graduate students in the College of Education, Culture, and Society) and Melissa Gutierrez, TR Scholar and U of U graduate worked to create curriculum, activities, and campus visits with programs such as CESAs and the Admissions Office.

In their roles as mentors and current students at the University of Utah, the group leaders work to demystify what it means to attend the University of Utah. Just for U! is designed to address these perceptions, empower, and prepare TR Scholars in their transition from community college to the University. Students will learn about the required courses according to their selected majors, Financial Aid, Scholarship and logistics of admissions to better navigate their academic careers as future teacher at the University of Utah. The first year Just for U! scholars included Maria Adame - 2nd year scholar in Early Childhood Education, Erika Lopez - 2nd year scholar in Elementary Education, Margarita Ruiz - 2nd year scholar in Secondary Education, and Aura Gutierrez, 1st year scholar in Early Childhood Education.

In addition, students were engaged in critical writing sessions and dialogue circles centered in educational equity, diversity, and social justice. Just for U! mission as students and mentors is to provide the inspiration and motivation to create strong teachers who will be working with our youth by providing them the tools to achieve!

On Thursday, Sept. 8th, BTS (Beverly Taylor Sorensen) art specialists along with several elementary teacher candidates from the UITE were inspired while attending a workshop presented by Olivia Gude. The UITE teacher candidates acquired ideas about how to integrate art into other content areas. They specifically learned about incorporating spaces and places into their curriculum which can encourage them to relate to the lives of diverse children they are currently working with in the public schools. Kelby McIntyre-Martinez, Director of the newly formed College of Education’s Arts Integration into Academic Learning Center, sponsored Chicago resident Olivia Gude’s visit to Utah.

Olivia Gude is an artist and educator. She has worked in the field of community public art for 20 years and has created over 30 large-scale mural and mosaic projects, working with inter-generational groups, teens, elders, and children. She has created major works in Los Angeles; Madison, Wisconsin; DeKalb, Illinois as well as in the Chicago area. Olivia Gude has published many articles and book chapters on community art and art education. Her writing has appeared in Public Art Review, Art Journal; Art Education: the Journal of the National Art Education Association, Feminist Studies Journal, and in the Suny Press book Cultural Activisms: Poetic Voices, Political Voices. Her new work, Urban Art Chicago: a Guide to Community Murals, Mosaics, and Sculptures, (2000) written with Jeff Huebner, is the first book devoted to Chicago community public art. For more information on the work of Olivia Gude:
http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/sites/Olivia/OG_01.html
Maggie Cummings joined the UITE and the CSME full time this fall. Prior to coming to the U, Dr. Cumming oversaw mathematics and science education for Jordan School District. She has an MS in Mathematics and a PhD Educational Leadership and Policy both from the University of Utah. Her primary interests are in mathematics teacher preparation and content based pedagogy. Currently she is involved in several projects: SMART—a Noyce funded teacher preparation project; MSSST—a masters of science for secondary school teachers in both mathematics and science; a project to create and provide a secondary mathematics endorsement for special education teachers; development of a hybrid concurrent enrollment Math 1030 course; and several other projects pending.

For more information about the Urban Institute for Teacher Education, visit our website at www.ed.utah.edu/UITE