

# Education First

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ♦ COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ♦ NEWSLETTER

## Education Firsts

### MAT Program Serves as Model for the Nation

Long recognized as a national leader in teaching a variety of languages, the College's initiative to train Japanese teachers received special recognition in February. Faculty from the College's Master of Arts in Teaching program were invited by the Japan Foundation to present information about the program in Japanese with educators from around the country at a meeting in Santa Monica, California.

"Our program is considered a national leader in the field," said **Michael Everson**, associate professor of foreign language education. "I would stack up an Iowa MAT graduate with any graduate of any program in the country. They have very strong language skills but also strong pedagogical skills."

Everson made a presentation at the meeting, along with Associate Professor **Leslie Schrier** and Yukiko Hatatsa, associate professor of Japanese.

"Here at Iowa we have made a name for ourselves in the less commonly taught languages thanks to the Iowa Critical Languages Program (ICLP), which was sponsored by the Ford Foundation," Everson explained. "That was the initiative that really provided impetus for these programs in Japanese, Chinese, and Russian to grow."

The program takes students and not only makes linguists out of them, but also educators. "Now those ICLP people are young leaders in the field of K-12 education," he said.

Everson says a recent nationwide survey indicates only 48 colleges and universities in 26 states certify students to teach Japanese. "We are fortunate here at Iowa to have the two programs—Asian Languages and Education—that work so well together."

—by Natalie Pearson



## Educational Psychology Students Volunteer

### Local Community Students, Teachers, and Children Benefit

Helping students, both in the College and in the community, is important to Educational Psychology Lecturer **Mitchell Kelly**. Using volunteer work in the Iowa City Community Schools as a way to earn extra credit in his course, many undergraduate students decide to take advantage of the opportunity to help others too. "It has been a great experience for the students and the teachers they help in the classroom," Kelly said.

Volunteers in **Kayleen Miller's** (MA '00) kindergarten class at Kate Wickham Elementary work with all types of children in a variety of activities and settings, including special needs, one-on-one, small groups, and with the group as a whole. "I can't begin to tell you what a wonderful experience this is for both the UI students, teachers and children in the Iowa City Community Schools," Miller said. "Their help has ranged from clerical work to helping a struggling student dress for recess or write his/her name."

Senior **Chenelle Merriman** recommends volunteering in a school to anyone who is thinking of becoming a teacher. "Volunteering in Mrs. Miller's kindergarten class was an unforgettable experience," she said. "It has opened my eyes and also reassured me that becoming an elementary school teacher is the correct career path for me."

Miller has worked with Dr. Kelly and his students for two years. She believes helping college students have an opportunity to enter classrooms early is beneficial because it allows them to see what teaching is like on a daily basis.

"I would encourage every college student who is considering majoring in education to take advantage of this opportunity," Miller said, "and I will continue to tell my colleagues the benefits this can bring their students and classrooms."

Sophomore **Lindsay Stach** volunteered about 30 hours in a kindergarten class at Mark Twain Elementary. "It was so different to have a hands-on experience and relate it back to what we are learning in our text books," Stach said. "After working with them, I knew for sure that a profession in education would be perfect for me."

City High At-Risk Coordinator and Guidance Counselor **Amy Kanellis** (BA '76/MA/80/EDS '89) uses the volunteers in a Skills Strategies class for at-risk students. The class is geared toward homework completion and attainment of strategies that will help them meet with success.

"The college students who have volunteered have done a magnificent job of helping my students believe in their abilities and successfully complete assignments," Kanellis said. "They have been optimistic and have truly given the students hope."



*Lindsay Stach assists student with letter-of-the-week writing page.*

PHOTO BY LORI FOWLER

**"After working with them, I knew for sure that a profession in education would be perfect for me." Lindsay Stach**

March 2001



Jane Nicholson discusses conflict resolution and diversity—living, learning, and working responsibly.

## Only YOU Can Practice Conflict Resolution

“Give me 15 minutes or 15 days,” said Jane Nicholson (PhD ’85), “and I will share with you the great gift I have been given.” But Nicholson’s gift came to her the hard way.

In an effort to deal with the grief following the murder of her husband, Dr.

Dwight Nicholson, chair of the UI Department of Physics and Astronomy,

Jane Nicholson trained to become a conflict resolution/violence-prevention instructor. Through

her own healing, she has become an activist for others.

Nicholson’s presentation was part of a five-year tradition in the division of Counseling, Rehabilitation, and Student Development (CRSD) where the division participates in a daylong workshop exploring and discussing issues of diversity together. It’s part of

the division’s strategic plan, guided by its mission statement to generate and disseminate knowledge, develop skills, and promote attitudes about effective professional practices that foster human development across the life span.

“The Living, Learning, and Working Responsively workshop places a high value on respect for diversity of persons, perspectives, and programs,” Professor Dennis R. Maki, division

director said. “Therefore, each year we dedicate a day to come together as a community of faculty, staff and students to enhance our cultural competence.”

“Conflict can be productive when thought of as an opportunity to increase respect, compassion, and trust.” Jane Nicholson

In her presentation, Nicholson said it is not possible to eliminate conflict. “Conflict is a natural and unavoidable part of life,” she said. “But violence is something we can try to do something about.”

She encouraged the group to use conflict resolution skills such as active listening and expressive stating and pass them along. “Stretch imagination and human nature,” she said. “Conflict can be productive when thought of as an opportunity to increase compassion, respect, and trust.”

## Reaching Out Through Technology

As reported last fall, the explosion of technology has everyone learning new techniques and the WebCam sessions with the Harding Middle School in Des Moines are in full-swing again this spring. Under the direction of John Achrazoglou, coordinator of technology for the College, the number of “Technology in the Classroom” sections interacting with the school has increased and it has been a huge success for both groups of students. Some things that happened last month as reported by Achrazoglou are as follows...

The 12:30 p.m. section was serenaded by the school’s chorus. It was very, very touching.

During a visit with a Harding ESL class, it just so happened that a couple of our ESL graduate students were in the classroom section on this end. They spoke Spanish back and forth. You couldn’t believe the look on their faces. The Harding ESL teacher was very excited about the technology.

An official of the Area Education Agency came online and talked to our students about technical resources provided by their organization. It was

very informative and he really reinforced the things we are doing in technology.

Some students figured out how to send us their Power Point presentations over the Internet. They wanted our students to look at them give them feedback. We are impressed!

A reading teacher (31-year veteran) emphasized the importance of our students learning how to use technology to advance classroom learning and gave us tips on things she is doing on the Internet with her students.

In addition to technology, the Harding students are really interested in campus life. For an inner-city and vastly diverse school, the teachers want their students to at least start thinking about higher

education. One eighth grader asked how many students are there at The University of Iowa and he was told about 25,000. He replied, “that must be one big school building!”

## In the Legislature

Professor Robert Brennan, director of the Iowa Testing Programs made a presentation last month to the Iowa Senate Education Committee on the topic of “Iowa Testing Programs and Educational Testing in Iowa and the Nation.”

## Grants and Awards

Ellie Herman (PhD ’90), coordinator of field experiences, received an Iowa Regents Fellowship Award of \$1,500 for the project, “Inter-University Collaboration: A Student Teacher Seminar Model Piloted by Institutions Located within the Same State.” The project encourages cooperative programming between the Regent universities. This is the third year she has received support for this project.

Education First is produced monthly by The University of Iowa College of Education Office of External Relations, Jill Fishbaugh, director. Send items of interest to her at The University of Iowa/ College of Education/452 Lindquist Center N/Iowa City, IA 52242-1529 or by e-mail to educationatiowa@uiowa.edu.

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