

Education First

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ♦ COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ♦ NEWSLETTER



Baker tests power of perception at the GTW.

Education Firsts

Great Teachers Workshop First of Its Kind

This October marks the 22nd annual Iowa Great Teachers

Workshop. The workshop,

which was one of the first of

its kind in the country,

pioneered the idea that the

collective expertise of a

group of practicing

professionals will far surpass that of any outside expert.

"Participants are valuable resources," explained **John Baker** (PhD '01), who has directed the workshops since 1995. "They deal with issues such as motivating students, managing faculty stress, and designing innovative instructional strategies." Participants, consequently, create the workshop's agenda themselves. It evolves throughout the weeklong event, allowing teachers to share their ideas, concerns, and successes.

One of the unique features of the Iowa Great Teachers Workshop is that the participants interact solely on a first name basis, leaving their discipline and educational background at the door. "Everyone is simply a great teacher," Baker said.

The late Professor **Duane "Andy" Anderson** founded the Iowa Great Teachers Workshop in 1977. Baker, the workshop's permanent facilitator, took over when Anderson passed away in 1991. Though it took three years to get the program up and running again, Baker believed in the model. In fact, he ran a qualitative investigation of the workshop as part of his dissertation. "It was great to see the success of the program actually validated by participants," he said.

Participants generally include 25-35 community college teachers from Iowa and adjacent states. Recently, however, Iowa's workshop has taken on an international aspect. Last year, there were two students from Namibia, who have now started a Great Teachers Workshop in their own country.

In the United States, Great Teachers Workshops have spread to some 30 states. Participants often say the experience re-affirms their career choices. "It certainly changed the way I thought about community college," Baker said. "My first workshop was the most significant learning experience I have ever had." *—by Elyse Fields*



October 7-14 is Mental Illness Awareness Week

In an effort to inform educators, counselors, and the community about the issues surrounding mental illness, Stigma Busters bounced into action at the College Oct. 5. The Quad-Cities group, composed of people with and without mental illness, played out stereo-types by performing skits about employers and crisis centers to lively audience participation, such as in a version of the "Mental Illness Jeopardy Game."

"We try to convince our audiences that people with a mental illness are a person first, not their disability," said Connie Williams, recreational therapist.

According to NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill), the U.S. Surgeon General says that stigma remains the single most significant barrier to people getting the help they need.

Christine Malaski, Counselor Education doctoral student, said that interactive educational programs like this, help stamp out stigma. "It offers them an opportunity to be independent, clarify misrepresentations, and engage in something fun," Malaski said.

Associate Professor **Vilia Tarvydas** believes it is helpful for students to see where people with mental illness are coming from before they begin working with them. "I hope this program gives the students an appreciation for the issues these people deal with, many of which we've created for them," she said.

For more information, visit the nation's voice on mental illness at www.nami.org/.



Stigma Busters perform skits that inform and entertain.

PHOTOS BY DOUG ALLAIRE

Helping Children Cope with Sept. 11 Tragedy

The College of Education has prepared a web site containing links to topics and information about helping children cope with the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The site is designed to serve as a resource for educators, school counselors and psychologists, school administrators, mental health providers, and parents.

Please visit the site at www.education.uiowa.edu/help/.

October 2001

Providing Leadership in Diversity

There were so many outstanding nominations for the **Phyllis M. Yager** (MA '57/PhD '83) Commitment to Diversity Award, it was impossible to select just one recipient. So, two remarkable Iowa teachers were selected – **Ruth Ann Gaines**, a teacher at Des Moines' East High School who initiated an all-school dialogue on diversity through drama, and **Ruth White** (PhD '92), a teacher at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids who helps minority students prepare for AP classes and consequently, college careers.

The award recipients and the extraordinary teacher finalists participated in a

panel discussion of why diversity is important in Iowa's classrooms.

"I believe diversity enriches our world," Kathy Wikert, a language arts teacher at Willowbrook Elementary in Altoona, said. "As educators, we broaden the horizons of our students when we acquaint them with the varying cultural and ethnic traditions that contribute to our humanity. By knowing more about each other and by fostering respect for individual and societal differences, we can contribute meaningfully to a more peaceful world."

Dr. James Anderson from the University of Illinois, outlined what he saw as

the "imperatives" of diversity education in his keynote address. He said it is essential that educators accept the changing nature of ethnic demographics and facilitate a shift in thinking. "It is imperative that educators make an academic – not just a social – commitment to diversity," Anderson said.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world," said Susan Johnson, guidance counselor at Cedar Falls High School, "indeed, it is the only thing that ever does."



Finalists (standing) Kathy Wikert, Susan Johnson, Darlene O'Neill, Judy Schmidt. Award recipients (seated) Ruth Ann Gaines and Dr. Ruth White.



Champion of affirmative action and noted education historian, Dr. James Anderson, delivered the keynote address, "Diversity in the Classroom and Society."

Excellence and Distinction

Associate Professor **Micheline Chalhoub-Deville** received \$31,000 from the Iowa Measurement Research Foundation to work on a two-year project entitled "Investigating English Language Learners' Capability to Take Standardized Achievement Tests: The Development of an Academic Language Based Assessment." The test development project will include educators and professionals from the Iowa public schools, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Testing Programs, and the University. "The first year will focus on test design. The second year will address item writing, test construction, and development of ancillary test materials," she said.

In August, Chalhoub-Deville was one of eight international researchers invited to present at a computer-adaptive testing

conference sponsored by the National Security Agency and the Defense Language Institute. The conference was part of a project to develop computer-based proficiency tests in various foreign languages taught at the government language schools.

Associate Professor **A Cynthia Lewis** was elected to the Nominating Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Associate Professor **A Debora Liddell** was elected president-elect of the Iowa Student Personnel Association. Also elected to the ISPA executive board this year was **Elizabeth Fitzgerald**, master's student. Earlier this month, **Katie Streeter**, master's student, was honored as being an ISPA scholar.

Professor **Jo Hendrickson** will receive over \$70,000 in additional tuition funding for Earn as You Learn students for the next two school years. "This will be most helpful for our students, as our roster is full," she said. The innovative Master's Level Teacher Preparation Program in Behavior Disorders project has received support totaling nearly \$670,000.

Professor **Harold Schoen** has been awarded a four-year \$1.4 million grant from the National Science Founda-

tion for professional development of high school math teachers. The goal of the project is to help high school math teachers from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota to improve their teaching and leadership skills so they may become mentors for younger mathematics teachers.

"The LEADERs in Mathematics program follows work we've done in the past with Iowa teachers," Schoen said. "This time we will expand it into adjacent states as well."

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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