



Newsletter Features

- About our program
- Digital Corner
- Important Dates

Important Dates

- **April 20:** 4-5pm Field Advisory #2
- **April 30, F:** UIC Instruction ends.
- **May 3-7, M-F:** UIC Final examinations.
- **May 20:** Deadline for newsletter submissions
- **June 30:** STEP=UP Mentor paperwork due
- August Summer Institute

STEP=UP Co-Directors
Marie Tejero Hughes
Michelle Parker-Katz

STEP=UP Staff
Maria Earman Stetter
Elizabeth Cambray-Engstrom

Rose Sharon was recently awarded a grant from the Field Foundation for the third year in a row. With the funds Haines, her school, has been able to purchase the "Reading Through Motion" Program and fund her attendance at two of their workshops last summer.

Special Teachers and Exceptional Pupils = Urban Promise

About Our Program

STEP=UP students follow the masters program in special education, with certification option, at UIC. Some are new to teaching, while others hold a teaching certificate in a different area. Courses are organized into three blocks. Within each block, and connected with courses, all students engage in working with K – 12 students to complete language samples, reading inventories, mathematics problems, and similar activities at the core of developing good teaching practice.

Two major internships are integral to the program: one 90- hour assessment internship in which UIC students complete a battery of assessments and a final report for children who come to the UIC Assessment Clinic (a community service). The Field Internship is a 90-hour experience in a classroom to study classroom dy-

namics, learn to prepare for teaching, and practice teaching in small and large groups. For those without certification, student teaching for 14 weeks caps the program. Three course "blocks" comprise the program. Block One focuses on broad questions pertaining to the nature of learning: What is the nature of learning? What does typical and typical development and learning look like? What must special educators know about the social, political, legal and historical aspects of special education and their impact on the role of the special educator? Block Two coursework helps students connect learning and socio-cultural considerations with teaching, e.g., What is the nature of teaching? What is the relationship between teaching and children's learning? How can the special educator promote students' learning?" Block Two contains

more course work. Block Three continues to address the questions listed above, while adding the focus on advocating for student and working collaboratively with families and other professionals. Coursework projects and content include these questions: How can the special educator create meaningful educational settings? How can the special educator foster critical and constructive thinking? What is the role of the family and others in students' learning? How can the special educator act as an effective advocate for students with disabilities and their families? For uncertified students, the program ends with student teaching. For those with certification, the program ends with a major action research project in the Field Internship. For more information, please see the special education website at:

<http://www.uic.edu/educ/college/admissions/2ndlevel/3rdlevel/med-sped.htm>

Your Paperwork

Your paperwork is due on June 30, 2004. You can mail it to:

Dr. Marie Tejero Hughes
College of Education (MC 147),
1040 W. Harrison Street,
Chicago IL 60607-7133.

Or you can drop it off at the College of Education, in her mailbox in the graduate lounge on the third floor. Parking in the large parking lot on Morgan (across from the side of the ECSW building) is free for the first 30 minutes.

Learning to Mentor

Mentors met together to discuss what it means to support students at the beginning part of their teaching program. We did so by considering the qualities we want student teachers to have as they finish: to become flexible teachers who can see connections among goals, standards and assessment; access content knowledge and configure it so that a range of students can understand it; make modifications; pick battles, think on their feet, and have a relaxed attitude. Student teachers seem to be most concerned about how to learn subject matter while teaching, manage behaviors, handle paperwork, and work with general education teachers (not be intimidated.) Additionally, they are concerned about making a mistake; the notion of being "perfect" is so much a part of our way of thinking. Given these strengths and fears, might we be able to help support students at the beginning of the program in a different way that could help them? Here are some ideas. 1) Describe your pupils, their IEP goals, and their strengths shortly after you meet your UIC students. 2) Talk about general aspects of teaching, e.g., standards and how you handle them, IEP goals, testing. 3) Be as specific as possible when you describe happenings in your classroom; give details! 4) Talk about the routines you establish, and why. 5) Ask UIC students what courses they are taking, and connect your conversation, e.g., "You are taking cognitive development, right, and so let me tell you about what ___ said the other day." We decided that ultimately the knowledge we have as teachers is housed in our stories. As mentors who help others learn to teach, we need to tell our stories.

Digital Corner

There are many great mentor references on the web. One such site is:
<http://www.mentors.net>

It is the website of The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network, started in 1991 by six educators. This organization is a grassroots initiative of teacher leaders who feel that a mentoring component is crucial for the induction year and beyond for new educators. That this is the key to improving the quality and professionalism of all educators. On this website you can find many helpful articles about mentoring and can email your own questions to the group for discussion.

Have you used your email to contact your mentee? Sometimes this can be just as good a way of mentoring as a phone call. Often people feel they can put their thoughts together better on paper. And an ongoing email chat can be a good way of keeping in touch and providing support even when you are across town.

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Have you used your email to contact your mentee? Sometimes this can be just as good a way of mentoring as a phone call. Often people feel they can put their thoughts together better in writing. It's also convenient in that everyone can go to email whenever the schedule is best for them. And an ongoing email chat can be a good way of keeping in touch and providing support even when you are across town.