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One value of Gateways to Opportunity is accessibility, affordability, and diversity in professional development. The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) is working hard to eliminate many barriers to professional development. As practitioners in the field of early care and education, we are all too familiar with these barriers: availability of appropriate coursework and training, location and time issues, transferability of training and coursework to degree programs, accessibility to an array of resources and of course affordability and appropriate compensation.

This issue of INSIDE GATEWAYS focuses on practices within our higher education system that address some of these barriers. Faculty and administrators across Illinois have become very involved with PDAC's efforts, including the writing of our core competencies and benchmarks and designing our core credentials. One resource we are very proud to deliver is our Higher Education Directory. We are striving to bring additional information and search categories to make this resource meet all of your needs. This quarter, we hope you enjoy our articles and find resources that assist you in meeting your professional development goals.

Please visit our website soon to see additional higher education resources and links.

Enjoy!

Karen Bruning
Professional Development Director
Gateways to Opportunity

Innovative Practices in Higher Education

Research tells us that children who attend high-quality early childhood programs have better outcomes than children who attend poor- or mediocre-quality programs. Staff qualifications are a key ingredient of program quality. Researchers have found that teachers and caregivers with higher levels of formal education and specialized training in early childhood education have more positive interactions and provide richer experiences for young children than teachers without such training. Yet, wide disparities exist in the qualifications required of staff—and compensation paid to staff—in early childhood settings throughout Illinois. These disparities are partly a result of obstacles in our system of teacher education and professional development for early care and education professionals. Many institutions of higher education in Illinois are developing innovative programming and partnerships to address these obstacles.

Some of the innovative practices involve alternative approaches to meeting student teaching requirements. Legislation passed on May 3, 2006, will lower barriers to student teaching. SB 2202, sponsored by Senator Miguel del Valle, will allow early childhood practitioners who are already working to continue to be paid while they receive credit for student teaching at their place of employment, provided that their student teaching experience meets the requirements of their teacher preparation program. SB 2202 will also allow students to complete the student teaching

portion of their practical experience in any of the preschool (ages 3-5) or K-3 grades covered by the Type 04 early childhood education certificate.

This issue of *Inside Gateways* highlights two of the innovative approaches taken by colleges and universities around the state to help early care and education practitioners further their education. Readers who would like more information about either of the stories shared below are encouraged to contact the faculty member whose contact information is provided after each story. More stories will be shared in a new feature on innovative practices in higher education coming to the Gateways Web site later this summer. If you have stories to share about your college or university, please send them to Peggy Patten at mpatten@uiuc.edu.

Innovative Practices in Higher Education Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois

Greenville College has created articulation agreements with Kaskaskia Community College and Lewis & Clark Community College, two community colleges in its region, to assist students who are pursuing a degree in early childhood education. The agreements specify that Greenville College will accept the two community colleges' A.A. or A.S. degrees and that Greenville will offer a two-year B.S. degree completion program in early childhood education with a Type 04 teaching certificate. The courses for the two-year B.S. degree program at Greenville College are offered on the community college campuses in the evening. This arrangement allows working students to continue their employment at least until the student teaching semester. The first group of students to benefit from this new partnership will be student teaching in the fall of 2006.

The collaboration between Greenville College and the two nearby community colleges grew out of discussions about the colleges' adult degree completion programs in organizational leadership. That work led to the discussions needed to bring the second two years of early childhood and elementary education programs to the community college campuses. The elementary education and early childhood education programs are in place and working at Greenville College, Kaskaskia Community College, and Lewis & Clark Community College. All three of these institutions have now added special education to the list of shared academic offerings for students in their area.

For more information:

Debra Noyes
Assistant Professor Early Childhood Education
Coordinator of the Early Childhood Program
and the Director of Clinical Practice
Greenville College - Education Department - Early Childhood Education Major
Email: Debra.Noyes@greenville.edu

Innovative Practices in Higher Education Kendall College, Chicago, Illinois

Kendall College has been a pioneer in providing alternative professional development pathways for its students. Kendall has also made a commitment to creating new pathways and streamlining existing educational pathways for Head Start staff who wish to get their B.A. degrees. Two practices in particular help Head Start staff—and others working in early childhood settings—to continue their education at Kendall College.

Kendall's online coursework provides flexibility in scheduling and location. This quarter, for example, Kendall offered part of its student teaching course online, combining face-to-face experience with online communication and instruction. "Clinical supervisors" from settings around the state participate in online seminars with the student teachers and faculty from Kendall. One of the many advantages of connecting student teachers from around the state in an online course is found in the richness of the experiences shared. For example, a student in Springfield and a student at Kendall's Riverworks campus in downtown Chicago collaborated to establish a student chapter of the Illinois Education Association. Kendall's online student teaching and face-to-face student teaching courses share the same standards, requirements, and faculty to ensure that they are recognized as comparable by students and employers.

Kendall has also streamlined its early childhood program so that the B.A. degree without teaching certification in early childhood education also provides the needed preparation to allow a student to continue on to receive a Type 04 credential. Students who choose later to get a Type 04 credential will need to complete a clinical practice course and

take three state-standardized tests to demonstrate (1) basic skills, (2) content knowledge, and (3) aptitude for teaching. By structuring the degree program in this way, Kendall builds into its B.A. degree career flexibility and options for its early childhood students.

For more information:

Dr. Marti Garlett, Dean
School of Education
[Kendall College - School of Early Childhood Education](#)
Email: MGarlett@Kendall.edu

Lilian Katz: Reflections

Respecting the Learner

[Editor's Note: In recent weeks, members of the Gateways ECE Faculty Listserv [<http://www.ilgateways.com/subscriptions/subscriptions.aspx>] have discussed how to instill and assess dispositions in new teachers. In this article, updated for Inside Gateways, Lilian Katz reflects on an essential disposition for teachers—"respecting the learner." A version of this article will appear as a chapter in *Teaching with Care: Cultivating Personal Qualities That Make a Difference* edited by Lenore Sandel (International Reading Association, 2006).]

One of the essential attributes of a good teacher, at every level of education—from preschool to graduate school—is the disposition to respect learners. The concept of respect is an elusive one and is very difficult to define. But it is one of those elements of human relationships that we seem to know when we see it.

Respecting the learner means, among other things, attributing to the learner positive qualities, intentions, and expectations, even when the available evidence casts doubts on the learner possessing these attributes. A respectful relationship between the teacher and the learner is marked by treating learners with dignity, listening closely and attentively to what the learners say, and also looking for what they seem reluctant to say. Respect also includes treating the learner as a sensible person, even though that assumption sometimes requires a stretch of the teacher's imagination. This element of respect implies that as teachers we should resist the temptation to talk to young children in silly sweet voices, heaping empty praise on them, and giving them certificates indicating that a smiling bear believes they are special. This disrespectful strategy makes a mockery of teaching. After all, teaching is about helping students to make better, deeper, and fuller sense of their experience and derive deep satisfaction from that experience. Education is not about amusement, excitement, and entertainment.

Respectful teaching conveys through the relationship between the teacher and the learner a confidence in the child's potential ability to overcome difficulties and to persist in the face of some inevitable obstacles. A respectful teacher is one who helps children who have persisted in the face of setbacks to accept their limitations gracefully and to be satisfied and gratified that they have done their very best.

A respectful teacher is also one who helps students, even the young ones, to evaluate their own accomplishments as they progress, not in terms of whether their work is good or bad, or right or wrong, but in terms of other criteria they can gradually develop the habit of using. For example, you can ask in a serious and respectful way, "Is the drawing as complete as you want it to be?" or "Does the story you wrote (or told) include as much detail as you think it should or could?" Even preschoolers have been observed to respond to such queries thoughtfully and to indicate the beginning of a lifelong disposition to evaluate their own efforts thoughtfully.

Along similar lines, another important aspect of respectfulness in teacher–learner relationships is honesty. Teachers are often so eager to encourage children by praising them that after a while they develop the habit of issuing streams of empty and false praise that many children begin to dismiss as the inevitable, useless, and boring response of a kind and well-meaning teacher. Being honest when evaluating a student's work does not imply any kind of insulting or humiliating response to a child's efforts. Rather it implies conveying in dignified and serious tones how some piece of work might have been better or could be improved, or even redone. A teacher can often reassure a child by suggesting that he or she give the story or poem or picture another try, perhaps emphasizing or explaining that others will be more able to enjoy the story or poem with the suggested revisions.

Another major element of respectfulness in professional behavior is the disposition to treat all of those we serve with dignity, even when we disagree with them, or even perhaps dislike them. To respect, accept, and treat with dignity a child we like, enjoy, and agree with is easy. We all can do that easily. But it takes a true professional to be respectful and accepting of a child you might wish were absent from the class. To be a professional also means treating with dignity and acceptance parents and other adults we might dislike or with whom we disagree.

Respect cannot be enacted or conveyed by gestures, trick phrases, or any other phony technique. It can only be communicated when the teacher's feelings toward learners are based on the deeply and profoundly held assumption that all humans are created equal—not equally tall; or equally mathematical; or equally athletic, musical, poetic, or analytical; or numerous other attributes. But we are all equally human in that we all have dreams, hopes, wishes, fears, and fantasies, and we all want and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Learn more about Dr. Lilian Katz

<http://ilgateways.com/newsletter/lkatz/lkatzbio.aspx>

Your Ideas

What would you like to see included in Inside Gateways? Do you have a story about how Gateways to Opportunity helped you pursue professional development or explore alternative career paths? [Contact us](#) with your ideas and your experiences.

References and Resources

From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development

<http://darwin.nap.edu/execsumm/0309069882.html>

Preschool: Its Benefits and Who Should Teach

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~NCEDL/pdfs/NCEDLPreschoolStatement.pdf>

Teacher Preparation and Teacher-Child Interaction in Preschools

<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eearchive/digests/2002/kontos02.html>

Can a College Degree Help Preschoolers Learn?

<http://nieer.org/resources/factsheets/5.pdf>

Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments—A Review of the Literature

<http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/teacher.pdf>

Who's Caring for the Kids? The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois

http://cecl.nl.edu/research/reports/whos_caring_report.pdf

Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to Be Improved?

<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/sr/pdfs/sr78.pdf>

Impact of Training and Education for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers

<http://www.childcareresearch.org/discover/pdf/RTPC3.pdf>