

★ **Directors Message** ★

Thank you to the more than 500 educators who participated in Fall 2007 Center of Excellence events! If you missed an activity or if you are planning your staff development for the future, this newsletter will provide reports of recent events, as well as announcements of those scheduled for Spring 08. Please be sure to have your calendar nearby so that you can save the dates.

It is fitting that the Center has invited Dr. Lorin Anderson to share his retrospective-prospective view of the Center in this newsletter. Internationally-recognized educational researcher, co-author of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (used to guide alignment of SC standards with classroom instruction), and lead author of the original grant that funded the Center of Excellence, Dr. Anderson has been an active and committed partner. Thank you, Dr. Anderson, for your vision and commitment to the Center and to children of poverty in South Carolina.

(In addition to serving as the primary consultant to the Center, Dr. Anderson is currently facilitating the Consortium of Curriculum Leaders book study and the Math Bridge Document project. He will deliver the mini-keynote at the Spring 2008 Workshop on February 9th. Don't miss these opportunities to learn more from Dr. Anderson.)



Guest Editor: Dr. Lorin Anderson



The idea for a Center of Excellence to Prepare Children of Poverty came to me as I was driving from Manning, SC, back to my home in Columbia. I was tired and frustrated after a second day of testimony in *Abbeville v. South Carolina*. I was tired because two days on the witness stand is a very long time. I was frustrated because it was so evident to me that teaching children of poverty requires just as much knowledge and skill as teaching special education children. And yet, although teachers of special education children were required to have specialized training, apparently anyone can (and does) teach poor children. As I drove, I remember muttering to myself, "Where could a teacher go to get the specialized training to teach children of poverty and teach them well?" I could not think of a place.

In three short (but very busy) years, the FMU Center of Excellence has become that place. The number of participating districts has increased from three to eleven. The number of projects and programs offered has increased dramatically. The inaugural Fall '07 Workshop held on Saturday, September 29th, was a rousing success. Few can deny the progress that has been made, but there is still a long way to go if the Center is to reach its fifth and final goal: Become the premier resource in South Carolina for helping teachers learn how to provide a high quality education to all children of poverty. To achieve this goal, the Center needs your participation, your ideas, your suggestions, and your energy. Although the Center is affiliated with Francis Marion University and housed at the Pee Dee Education Center, it belongs to the teachers and administrators of the 19 school districts in the Pee Dee region. To paraphrase Jerry McGuire, the fictional sports agent played by Tom Cruise a decade ago, "Help us help you!"

Coming Soon!

- **January 24**
COE Spring Colloquium
Practical Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap, Dr. Vera Blake
- **February 1**
Online Journal Submissions
- **February 9**
COE Spring Workshop
How2: Classroom Strategies that Work!
- **June 10 & 11**
COE Summer Institute
Relationship-Driven Classroom Management, Dr. John Vitto

CALL FOR PRESENTERS AND WRITERS



Do you want to share your ideas, experiences, and best practices with others in the field? Would you like to present a session at our upcoming workshop or get your writing published? The COE has two opportunities available for you to get involved!

➤ **HOW 2: SPRING WORKSHOP**
If you are interested in presenting at the upcoming **How2: Spring workshop**, visit www.fmucenterofexcellence.org, click on "Fall/Spring Workshop Series", "Upcoming Workshops", and finally "Call for Presenters."

➤ **ONLINE JOURNAL ENTRIES**
To submit online journal entries, visit www.fmucenterofexcellence.org and click on "Online Journal" where you will find the Call for Papers and Guidelines for Authors.



CONGRATULATIONS! Essay Contest Winners



The Center of Excellence is pleased to announce the winners of the Student Essay Contest.



Undergraduate Winners
\$200 1st place, Janet Allen
\$150 2nd place, Leslie T. Mann

Graduate Winners
\$200 1st place, Gina Thornton
\$150 2nd place, Brenda L. Schmotzer



COE Activities

Teachers of Children of Poverty Professional

Organization: FMU education students are invited to a Holiday Recruitment Party on November 29th.

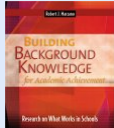
P-12 and Higher Education Professional Development Grants:

Winners will be announced on November 28th.

Faculty Seminar: Thank you Dr. Sharon Askins for your presentation on "Growing Background Knowledge With Your Students" at the November 7th Faculty Seminar.



Read All About It!



In his book, *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*, Marzano begins by focusing on the importance of background knowledge. He states that it is critical that educators spend more time with focused instruction to build background knowledge. Academic background knowledge most affects students' academic success. The most direct approach to building academic content knowledge is through a variety of experiences. There are also indirect approaches to building background knowledge that will also lead to remarkable results.

Marzano devotes an entire chapter to six principals for indirect approaches to build background knowledge. He provides explanations and examples of all six principles that teachers can incorporate into their classroom. The next key concept for building background knowledge is to provide sustained, uninterrupted silent reading time where students are required to write about what they read. The connection between what is read and what is written helps establish and support the acquisition of Background Knowledge.

The book also includes a list of 7,923 vocabulary terms that are organized into eleven subject areas and four grade-level categories.

Marzano focuses this book on recommendations and approaches for teachers to use to help close the achievement gap so all students can succeed.

** For information on this book and other great resources go to the COE website and click on Resources. All books on the website can be checked out from the COE Resource Library.*

**Book Review by Mary Montague
FMU Graduate Student**

CALENDAR – SPRING 2008

January 2008

09	Winter COE Newsletter release		
16	COE Faculty Seminar	2:00 – 3:00	Ed. Conf. Rm
17	Student Kick-Off	3:45 – 5:00	CEMC 114
22	Consortium of Curriculum Leaders Book Study	8:30 – 10:00	PDEC
24	Teacher Candidate Pre-Colloquium	9:30 – 11:00	CEMC 225
24	Faculty Lunch w/Dr. Vera Blake	11:15 – 1:00	The Cottage
24	Partner District Pre-Colloquium		
	Conversations w/ Dr. Vera Blake	2:00 – 3:30	PDEC
24	Spring Colloquium w/ Dr. Vera Blake	4:00 – 5:30	Chapman

February 2008

01	Deadline for submission of papers for Online Journal		
09	How 2: Spring Workshop	8:00 – 3:00	Chapman
14	Superintendent Work Session	1:00 – 3:30	PDEC
19	Consortium of Curriculum Leaders Book Study	8:30 – 10:00	PDEC

March 2008

05	COE Faculty Seminar	2:00 – 3:00	CEMC 225
25	Advisory Meeting	8:30 – 10:00	PDEC

April 2008

02	Spring COE Newsletter release		
29	NNPS End-of-Year Luncheon Celebration	12:00 – 3:30	Palmetto Rm

May 2008

06	Leadership Recognition Breakfast	8:30 – 10:00	Palmetto Rm
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June 2008

10	COE Summer Institute	8:00 – 3:30	Chapman
11	COE Summer Institute	8:00 – 3:30	Chapman
16-20	Math Bridge Training	8:30 – 4:00	PDEC

Congratulations To:

Wallace Gregg Elementary, Delmae Elementary, & Rains-Centenary Elementary!



National Network of
Partnership Schools

Promising Partnership Practices 2007

Since 1998 the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) has published a collection of best practices implemented by NNPS member schools, districts, and organizations. One hundred activities that are designed to involve families and the community in children's education are included each year. We are pleased to announce that the newest edition, **Promising Partnerships Practices 2007**, features activities from three Center of Excellence NNPS member schools: **Wallace Gregg Elementary School** (Drive Through Breakfast), **Delmae Elementary School** (SMART Night), and **Rains-Centenary Elementary School** (Celebrity Reading Night).

Complete details and information about these activities will soon be posted on www.partnershipschools.org and the COE website. It is a great honor for these schools to be recognized for working creatively and effectively toward involving diverse families in ways that support student success in school.