

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS



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M.A.T.E. is dedicated to promoting knowledge and understanding of the teaching profession, to working to improve teacher education, and to promoting needed changes in teacher education for the ultimate benefit of all students.

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A Message From Our President

“The foundation of every state is the
education of its youth.”
— Diogenes Laertius —

It is with great pleasure that I sit amongst a group of people on the Michigan Association of Teacher Educators Executive Board, who are dedicated to investing their talents and knowledge into education. As President, I have enjoyed coming along side my colleagues this year to promote equity in education, and develop collaborative partnerships with other educational services and institutions to advocate for Michigan education. We bring voices from all levels of education in order to make sure we are serving all populations of teacher educators as well as serving as mentors to our pre-service teachers who will one day be teacher educators.

We may be in our final months of the school year, but we, here at M.A.T.E. are already planning for the new school year. Let me highlight some of the things we have accomplished this year in order to illuminate and celebrate education. As a team, we have:

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A Message From Our President (continued)

- *Increased registrations /recruitment for both Fall and Spring Conferences
- *Had an envisioning/strategic planning session to focus on goal setting and budget alignment for 2010/2011
- *We are moving our journal from paper copy to electronic
- *Expanding our inclusivity of P-12 teachers and administrators (Public and Private)
- *Collaborating with EMU and other outside agencies and grants to support our conferences to better serve the many populations in Michigan. (TCATTE)
- *Continued commitment to communication and shared vision.
- *Continued commitment to ATE and their Leadership Academies, committees and task force representation.
- *Recruitment of pre-service teachers at the Spring Conference
- *Increased Board focus on policy and teacher accreditation
- *Outreach to Upper Peninsula for EBoard and Regular members.. Derek Anderson
- *MATE visibility at other conferences

We have only just begun! The next conference is our Fall Professional Conference to be held October 22-23, 2010. Mark your calendars now! Keep an eye on our website for more information. www.MichiganATE.com

We encourage our members to take part in all we do. If you are a member who would like to share your gifts on the many committees we have, share your knowledge by publishing in our journal or newsletter, feel free to email me at mwalsh2@emich.edu and I will get you connected to the appropriate people that match your interest. Or if you prefer, simply contact anyone on the board by going to our website for contact information. We encourage you to be a part of of M.A.T.E. and share your ideas and gifts.

Thank you for all your constant support as we all move forward to make Michigan education #1.

Warmest Regards,

Mary Kathleen Walsh, President
Michigan Association of Teacher Educators
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Throughout my student teaching experience, I have learned a tremendous amount. I have learned many lifelong lessons for both inside the classroom and out. The most powerful thing I have learned about being a teacher is that before anything else, you must have effective classroom management skills. For learning to take place, I have seen firsthand that students must know that they are in a trusting and safe environment. I learned that it does not matter how well written your lesson plans may be, they will be totally worthless unless you have first mastered effective classroom management. I have learned that being stern and holding students accountable to meet your expectations does not make you cold or uncompassionate. In fact, I feel now that this is absolutely the opposite of that. It has been my experience that students felt I cared more for them when I communicated these expectations, because I was also communicating to them that I had the great faith in them that they would successfully achieve that expectation. After gaining successful classroom management, it felt to me that the whole learning environment was able to change. We were able to take time out for small learning opportunities that would come up and then we were able to transition right back to the topic we were covering before that. I saw an incredible decline in behavioral issues once I was able to see that students needed to know that I was the leader in the classroom and then achieved this status.

I have always felt that one of my strengths has been being able to be a strong advocate for students. Through my student teaching experience I was able to start learning how to become an advocate for myself as well, on both a professional and personal level. I have gained a clearer understanding of what it takes to be a professional on the educational world. A truly profound lesson, that I have been blessed with help of others to discover, is my crippling fear of failure. Through this experience, it was brought to my attention how greatly this fear was holding me back. I learned that by letting this fear control me, it was leading me right to into my greatest concern. Through this eye-opening discovery, I was able to begin to see how my attitude and behaviors. This has helped me immensely as an educator and about what it means to be an educator. I have learned that being a teacher does not mean one needs to have every skill and in every situation. I have learned that to be a successful teacher, you must be willing to make mistake and constantly critique yourself, that upon self-reflection you should be actively looking for flaws, because this is the most powerful way to learn how to improve. When I first started, I read all the books and watched all the tapes and DVD's because I was determined that I would be the best student teacher there was, and that I was going to master every aspect of the classroom before I would begin taking over anything.

As the weeks went by, I was horrified with myself because I wasn't as good as the teachers, and I didn't know the correct way(s) to handle every situation. I felt that maybe I was missing

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something in the readings, or that maybe I just didn't have that special teacher magic that suddenly makes you great. I let my fear paralyze me. What I was finally able to realize is that without any experience or application of knowledge, I would never actually learn a thing. By letting go of my fears of being an imperfect teacher, I was able to grow in ways that I could have never expected. I now embrace any mistake I do make or might make. I look forward to criticism and I welcome any ideas that anyone is willing to offer me. Through this student teaching experience I was able to gain a brand new passion for learning and for teaching, and I know this passion will only continue to grow as I move forward in my career of becoming a future educator.

* Ms. L. Nicole Mc Gannon is a student at Eastern Michigan University.

Notes from A Board Member

Crossroads and Bridges in Early Childhood Education By Wanda Spalteholz

I often find myself at a series of crossroads as I come to work each day. Every day there are many opportunities to support new and experienced teachers. Every day there are many opportunities for me to learn from them as well. It is the exchange of experiences, thoughts, and questions that I find so meaningful. Together we create a dynamic educational community; with each student and each teacher bringing their own individual contributions. Together we can celebrate our successes. Together we can look at the challenges and plan our next steps. A next step for me has included serving on the M.A.T.E. Executive Board. This has provided me with the opportunity to continue my personal professional development, as well as become a link between early childhood education practitioners and the broader education spectrum.

Being an Executive Board member is a new experience for me. I have a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and a bit of nervousness. I want to make meaningful contributions; to M.A.T.E. and early childhood education. I want to continue to nurture my own professional development. I want to contribute to bridge already under construction between early childhood education practitioners and the need for continued professional development. In the many years of being an early childhood practitioner I have seen the result of this "disconnect." One way in which I contribute to the bridge-building between practice and professional development is to model it. There is always something more to learn. There is always a skill that can be developed further. I am reminded of the saying, "The more I know, the more I don't know." I want to know.

Those of us in early childhood education (ages 3-5 years) encounter many situations that we could use as reasons for limiting our professional development. How we see ourselves

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and the work we do is crucial to whether or not we'll pursue higher education ourselves. We need to develop a resounding conviction that early childhood education is wholly significant warranting highly qualified practitioners. This means we obtain our initial degrees and continue to engage in ongoing education to keep our knowledge and skill base finely tuned. It is a continual process of development.

I work with teachers and students who need support as they complete their teaching degrees and certifications. I see those who need acknowledgement for their successes, no matter how "small." When support is provided, and they complete their degrees and certifications, an inward sense of purpose, credibility, and professionalism begin to unfold. They see themselves as having a significant role in the educational experience of children. Lesson plans and activities are based on key developmental stages rather than "what can be thrown together at the last minute" or "whatever is fun." The experiences in the classroom are carefully thought out and implemented based on research supported curricula. These teachers have a working knowledge of child development which enables them to be intentional in their teaching. Intentional teaching is key to providing quality educational experiences to the very young. Accountability in early childhood education leads to credibility.

Early childhood education is often viewed as a separate from other levels of education (K and beyond). For many years there was a void between what takes place in preschool classrooms and the next step to Kindergarten. There was not much, if any, dialog, conversation, collaboration, or networking between early childhood practitioners and those receiving these transitioning children. While we may debate the benefits of higher educational standards and the implementation of them (what comes first, the curriculum or the child, for example), we have seen more communication between early childhood programs and schools. This has resulted in greater understanding regarding the work done in preschool programs and what children and families need to be prepared for when they enter kindergarten. It facilitates more effective delivery of educational services and support to the children, their families, and to those in educational roles. We are becoming an integrated whole, rather than continuing to function in our respective vacuums.

Serving on the M.A.T.E. Executive Board has been a process. As the opportunity was extended to me to represent early childhood in this capacity I wondered how I could make it successful. Success was defined simply as being able to attend meetings and events. I could only "dream" of being able to do a presentation or workshop at a conference. I needed to use my personal leave time to make meetings and events. I felt a twinge of discouragement. The need to see early childhood education as a part of the whole was

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evident. I continued to mention the vision and work of M.A.T.E. I felt I had an ally. I felt the support of individuals who understood some of the challenges unique to what I was trying to accomplish. The vision and work of M.A.T.E. resonated with me, especially "...promoting needed changes in teacher education for the benefit of all students." There is definitely a continuing need for ensuring qualified practitioners are in the classroom with our youngest of students. More recently I received additional support in the form of not needing to use my personal leave time to attend meetings and events! I am hopeful this will lead to continued professional development opportunities for myself, as well as continuing to tend to the "disconnect" that is evident in early childhood education.

The opportunity to serve on M.A.T.E.'s Executive Board promotes brings the crossroads I encounter together. It is a way in which to continue the bridge-building that fosters educational integration for teachers, children, and education as a whole.

* Ms. Wanda Spalteholz is Assistant Education Coordinator of T.O.F. M. Head Start Program.

UPCOMING EVENTS

M.A.T.E. Fall Conference: October 22-23, 2010

The MATE Fall Conference is designed to provide a forum where teacher educators from preschool through graduate school and community members can discuss issues around the conference theme, **Meeting Education Challenges in Difficult Times**, by sharing presentations about research, pedagogy, strategies, policies and collaborations. The conference will provide multiple avenues for exploring the conference theme. Several presentation models will be used. They are:

Thematic sessions include presentations on research, strategies, position papers, descriptions of programs/projects or needed innovations in PK-20 educational improvements, reports, & student papers

Roundtables are designed to present an arena for the discussion of research, theory, history, classroom practice, collaborations and policy.

Panel presentations are designed for multiple presenters to present current issues, research, policy and/or classroom practices.

Poster sessions are designed to allow multiple presentations in one location. Attendees can visit many sessions and have informal conversations with the presenters.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sandy Alber at alber@oakland.edu or Dr. Tim Larrabee at larrabee@oakland.edu.

Issues in Education: Preschool through Graduate School, the organ for the Michigan Association of Teacher Educators, serves as a vehicle for the exchange of vibrant information and innovative ideas for teacher educators, educators in preschool through graduate school institutions, governmental and professional educational organizations, parents and families. The journal does not prescribe nor is driven within the context of a “thematic” impetus; rather seeks to be inclusive of diverse scholarly work and discourse. All submitted work must be the original work of the author(s) and must adhere to the guidelines set within the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the style manual of choice for writers, editors, students, and educators in the social and behavioral sciences. It provides invaluable guidance on all aspects of the writing process, from the ethics of authorship to the word choice that best reduces bias in language. Well-known for its authoritative and easy-to-use reference and citation system, the *Publication Manual* also offers guidance on choosing the headings, tables, figures, and tone that will result in strong, simple, and elegant scientific communication.

Issues in Education is moving to an on-line journal format and this engenders both a larger distribution and more diverse state, national and global audience and will be published biannually in May and December respectively. All manuscripts will move through a blind review process by the members of the editorial board. Only manuscripts that have not been previously published and are not under review for publication in other journals are eligible. Please submit all work to Dr. Elizabeth Johnson, Editor at: ejohnson@emich.edu

M.A.T.E Newsletter editorial board is seeking contributions to its new features of *Guest Editorial* and *Notes from the Classroom*.

Guest Editorial: Teacher educators are invited to contribute an essay discussing their visions, alternative views, ideas, critiques, and concerns for teaching and teacher education.

Notes from the Classroom: *Notes from the Classroom* is intended to convey voices and insights of those who are working on the frontlines of educational institutions. Teachers, students, administrators, teacher educators, and teacher candidates are invited to share their experiences in the classroom or provide their views on specific education policies and practices.

Manuscripts for Guest Editorial and Notes from the Classroom should be 500 words or less. Please submit your manuscript to M.A.T.E Newsletter Editor, Youngjoo Kim, at kim23@oakland.edu.

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