



# Project GATE Gazette

## Greetings from:

**Denise and Magda...**

**W**e are pleased to support this project through the collaboration between Florida International University and Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Office of Professional Development and the Division of Special Education.

Thank you for sharing your successes with us. From National Board Certified Mentors to CEC Teachers of the Year, we want to congratulate each of you for your accomplishments. And let us not forget, the true accomplishment that each and every one of you can embrace right this very minute, is the moment one of our students "get it" and we see the results of our dedicated hard work... that is when we all feel like winners.

*We must be ever mindful, in our noble quest,  
to strive each day and collaborate to help children do their best.  
We're not in private practice. Personal gain is not our concern.  
Our ultimate goal, as we all know, is to help all children learn.  
On our glorious mission, let us not forget, it's not about you and it's not about me. It's all about the kids.*

*Garre LaGrone*

Keep teaching your heart out—just because FCAT is completed does not mean we slow down our teaching. After March 9th, we still have approximately 50 more days to teach... Let's not waste a single minute! And... most of all... Thank you for striving to be the best teacher you can possibly be.

*Denise and Magda*

**"What the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches."**

**~Karl Menninger**

**Project GATE : Getting Assistance for Teaching Effectively is a joint venture between Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Florida International University's Professional Development Partnership.**

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

Project GATE Gazette

February 2007

## Special points of Interest:

☺ PD Update

☺ Websites of Interests

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**Teaching is a Master Piece**

**Congratulations to  
Project GATE Participants:**

**CEC Special Education School-site Teacher of the Year:**

**Kim Ferreira**

**Dr. Michale Krop Senior**

**CEC Special Education Teacher of the Year:**

**Maria Mesa**

**Miami Palmetto Senior**

**CEC Special Education Rookie School-site  
Teachers of the Year:**

**Leslie Bienvenu,  
Greynolds Park Elementary**

**Maria Estevan  
Gulfstream Elementary**

**Natalie Flores,  
Kendale Elementary**

**Cristina Ugalde,  
Miami Springs Senior**

**CEC Special Education Rookie Teacher of the Year:**

**Rafael Mendiola,  
Fienberg-Fisher Elementary**

**Congratulations to  
Project GATE Participants:**

**2005 and 2006**

**National Board Certified Teachers were honored  
on Saturday, February 17, 2007:**

**Aida Arocha, Kendale Lakes Elementary**

**Andriana Chaine, John Ferguson Senior**

**Raul Escarpio, Ben Sheppard Elementary**

**Kim B. Ferreira, Dr. Michael Krop Senior**

**Clidia K. Gonzalez, Eneida Hartner Elementary**

**Yesenia Marichal, Fienberg-Fisher Elementary**

**Maria Mesa, Miami Palmetto Senior**

**Jennifer L. Pepper, Killian Senior High**

*Education is the movement from darkness to light.*

**Alan Bloom**

## Upcoming Project GATE PD Sessions

Saturday, April 14, 2007

ABCs of Literacy for  
Teachers of Mild Disabilities  
(EH, LD/VE, EMH)  
Kendale Elementary  
10693 SW 93 Street

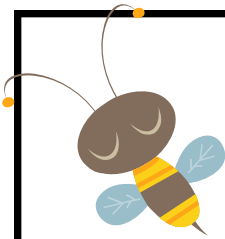
Tuesday April 17, 2007

ABCs of Literacy for  
Teachers of Mild Disabilities  
(EH, LD/VE, EMH)  
Kendale Elementary  
10693 SW 93 Street

Thursday, April 18, 2007

Literacy Strategies to Increase  
Student Achievement for  
Teachers of Moderate  
Disabilities (TMH, Autism)  
Kendale Elementary  
10693 SW 93 Street

\*Remember to register through the PD Menu & Registration System  
<http://calendar.dadeschools.net/cal/calendar.nsf>



# What's the Buzz around the State

**The Reading Endorsement and ESOL Certification:** The Department of Education recently released its "Approved Options for Obtaining ESOL Certification." A notable change is the addition of a "reverse crosswalk" which awards those who already possess the reading endorsement with 120 hours towards the ESOL endorsement.

It is important to note that only those reading teachers assigned to teach Intensive Reading or Developmental Language Arts to students classified as English language learners are required to obtain the ESOL endorsement. For more information on options for ESOL certification for all educators, please visit: [www.fldoe.org/justforteachers](http://www.fldoe.org/justforteachers)

**STAR Program:** In January, the State Board of Education approved the performance pay plans of Dixie, Hamilton, Jackson, Lee, Union, and Wakulla Counties. In February, the State Board approved the plans of Nassau, Putnam, DeSoto, Suwannee, St. Lucie, and Gilchrist Counties in addition to the P.K. Yonge Developmental School and numerous charter schools. In his recent release of budget recommendations, Governor Crist indicated a desire to ask the Florida Legislature to reward the top 25 percent of a district's teachers with a 10 percent salary bonus, rather than the 5 percent currently in law. The Governor's funding request for the school district performance pay plans that recognize and reward outstanding teachers is \$295 million, a 100 percent increase over last year. To view the new STAR information page on the "Just for Teachers" web site, visit: [www.fldoe.org/justforteachers](http://www.fldoe.org/justforteachers)

## **Money Saving Specials for Teachers: Free 12 Month Educator Passes to Sea World**

The "Florida Teacher Study Pass" provides unlimited admission to SeaWorld for full-time, classroom (K-12) teachers from August to August of each school year. In order to receive your pass, simply present a copy of your Florida Teacher Certificate, a photo ID, and a recent paycheck stub to the Annual Pass Center at SeaWorld Orlando. Call 407-370-1386 for the most up-to-date information.

## **Free 12 Month Educator Passes to Kennedy Space Center**

Discover first hand how a field trip can enrich every student's education with the "Educator Study Pass." Full-time Florida and Georgia educators receive a free Annual Pass to explore the Kennedy Space Center themselves. Educators can enjoy all the benefits of admission, visit the NASA Educator Resource Center to learn about educational programs and receive new classroom materials. Teachers can also tour NASA's launch headquarters, meet a real astronaut and watch exhilarating IMAX movies. To be eligible for an Educator's Study Pass, educators must possess a valid Florida or Georgia teacher certificate and be currently employed at an accredited school as a full-time K-12 classroom educator. To receive an Educator Study Pass, educators must present these items to the ticket agents located at the ticket plaza. Professional educators can visit the NASA Educator Resource Center (ERC) to receive information, copy NASA videotapes, reproduce software, slides and videotapes, and review lesson plans and other teaching materials. For details on available materials or to make an appointment, call the ERC at 321-867-4090

**Be Featured on "Teacher Talk: An Inside Look at Florida Education!":** Are you an innovative educator who would like to share your creative way of teaching or other education-related accomplishments with colleagues and parents around the state? Does your district offer amazing programs for students and/or teachers? Do you have a colleague who should be featured for his/her innovations in education? If so, please visit: <http://www.fldoe.org/justforteachers> for the online "Teacher Talk" television show contact form!

**Source:** Just for Teachers Newsletter, Florida Department of Education (February 2007).

## John Woodward Named Special Olympics Miami-Dade County Coach of the Year

On Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007, John Woodward was selected from over 250 coaches to receive the third annual Carole McArthur Coach of the Year Award by Special Olympics Miami-Dade County Executive Director Mark E. Thompson. "Besides being a wonderful teacher, John is an exceptionally caring individual who continually encourages his students to participate in the athletic competitions and events Special Olympics Miami-Dade County sponsors throughout the year," said Thompson.



The Carole McArthur Coach of the Year Award was named after Carole McArthur, a Special Olympics Coach since the 1970's who was instrumental in participant growth during the inception of the Miami-Dade program in 1991 and throughout her years as a coach at Cutler Ridge Middle School. Mark Thompson said "Carole died from complications due to cancer in 2004; this award is a tribute to her and the wonderful work she did with the athletes and coaches in our community who were involved in Special Olympics Miami-Dade County's program during her years of service." "This is an incredible feeling to win an award like this, said Woodward, especially from Special Olympics. These kids have been my life since I was a teenager myself. Because of my personal connection with Carole it is doubly meaningful to me. I know other people have won this award and others after me will too, but because of my personal connection I will deeply treasure this award and am truly honored."

For the past ten years, John Woodward has been a coach for Special Olympics Miami-Dade County while working as a teacher at Southwest High School in Westchester. He currently teaches 8 trainable mentally handicapped (TMH) high school aged students who have IQ's that range from 26 – 50. He teaches them all day and works with them to learn functional academics, communications skills, career prep/pre-vocational skills, leisure and recreational skills along with adaptive physical education. Many of his former students have jobs, especially at Publix, a big supporter of the intellectually disabled, and achieve a certain level of independence which gives John a tremendous amount of pride in the work he does with his students.

To learn more about the Special Olympics, sponsorship opportunities, making donations, or attending events, please contact Mark Thompson, Executive Director, at 305-406-9467 or visit [www.somdc.org](http://www.somdc.org).

Special Olympics is the world's largest year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons 8 years of age and older with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The resources and programs of Special Olympics Miami-Dade County providing over 3000 athletes with continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and develop stronger relationships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## *Growing at Skyway Elementary with Ms. Dennie, Special Education Teacher*

Students in Ms. Dennie's Learning Disabilities/Varying Exceptionalities classroom at Skyway Elementary are truly in for a TREAT—in every sense of the word. Ms. Dennie delighted them with a read aloud, *Jennifer and Granddad's Garden*, from the second grade Houghton Mifflin Anthology. The students enjoyed the retelling of the story, as well as diving into the SEQUENTIAL skill for the week. Each of her second grade students planted tomatoes seedlings in their green pots and they will now watch them grow. Each of her students will be responsible for watering the seeds on a weekly basis! I, along with her students, cannot wait to watch them grow and enjoy the cherry tomatoes from Ms. Dennie's Garden.



# What Beginning Teachers Need to Know About Co-Teaching

**By: Dr. Ann Nevin, Dr. Richard Villa, and Dr. Jacqueline Thousand**

## ***Co-Teaching Defined***

We wonder if you have, like we have discovered, invented, and used several collaborative teaching approaches? We know these approaches are successful guides for educators who work together in partnerships to differentiate instruction (Villa, 2002; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004). The “many faces of collaborative teaching” approaches include:

1. consultation, where support personnel such as the special educator provide advice and coaching to another educator;
2. supportive co-teaching, where the educator takes the lead role and support personnel rotate among students to provide support;
3. parallel co-teaching approach, where support personnel and the educator instruct different heterogeneous groups of students;
4. complementary co-teaching, where support personnel do something to supplement or complement the instruction provided by the educator (e.g., models note taking on a transparency, paraphrases the teacher’s statements); and
5. team teaching, where support personnel and general educators co-teach along side one another and share responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing the progress of all students in the class.

How many of these have you experienced? As you have no doubt discovered, some co-teaching approaches (e.g., complementary and team teaching) require greater commitment to, comfort with, and skill in collaborative planning and role release where one person transfers specialized instructional responsibilities over to someone else. You may already know that no one approach is better than another. In all of the approaches to co-teaching, you are bringing together the masters of curriculum and the masters of access with the goal of differentiating instruction for all the children and youth.

When deciding which approach to use in a given lesson, the goal always is to improve the educational outcomes of students through the selected co-teaching approach. Many beginning co-teachers start with *supportive co-teaching and parallel co-teaching* because they involve less structured coordination among the co-teaching team members. As co-teaching skills and relationships strengthen, co-teachers then venture into the complementary teaching and team teaching approaches that require more time, coordination, and knowledge of and trust in one another’s skills.

When collaborative team members select among the co-teaching approaches, as needed, they are basing their decisions on two major factors: a) the curriculum demands of a unit or lesson and b) student learning characteristics, needs, and interests. In our book, *A Guide to Co-Teaching: Practical Tips for Facilitating Student Learning (2004)*, we provide a detailed description of each of the four approaches as well as cautions about how to use and not abuse each of the approaches. Then, in 2007, we finished another book, *Differentiated instruction: Collaborative planning and teaching for universally designed learning*, where we extend the co-teaching lesson plan format to enfold principles of universal design for learning so as to expand your capacity to differentiate instruction.

We ask the same questions that many people such as, “*Why do we collaborate? What’s in it for me?*” But we rephrasing the questions: “*Why do we collaborate? What is needed for the learners we teach?*” This helps us focus on a ‘bigger why’ because we know that, with a big enough *why*, people will always step up to the plate! Do you agree that it makes good sense to collaborate in both the planning and the teaching of differentiated instruction lessons? As educators, we are faced with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, AND the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) – both laws mandate students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum. This means that school systems and teachers are obliged to learn and use educational practices that differentiate content, instruction, and assessment. Differentiation provides needed supports and services to enable all students to be successful in general education classrooms. Co-teaching provides a greater opportunity to capitalize on the unique, diverse and specialized knowledge of each instructor so as to promote effective differentiated instruction.

Second, co-teaching allows students to experience and imitate the cooperative and collaborative skills that teachers show when they co-teach. With multiple instructors, there is increased flexibility in grouping and scheduling, thus making it possible for students to experience less wait time for teacher attention and increased time on task, an important factor documented to increase academic productivity (Kneedler, & Hallan, 1981; Lloyd, 1982; Wheldall & Panagopoulou-Stamatelatoa, 1991).

Third, teachers who co-teach can structure their classes to use more effectively the research-proven strategies required of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Miller, Valasky, & Malloy, 1998). Fourth, co-teaching is a vehicle for bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and interests to share knowledge and skills to generate novel methods to individualize learning.

And fifth, there is a strong research base for co-teaching!

### **Research Base for Co-Teaching**

You can be assured that when you co-teach to differentiate instruction, you can increase your effectiveness in teaching students with a variety of instructional needs, including students with *hearing impairment* (Compton, Stratton, Maier, Meyers, & Tomlinson, 1998; Luckner, 1999); *learning disabilities* (Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998; Rice & Zigmond, 1999; Trent, 1998; Welch, 2000); *students with emotional disturbance* and other at-risk characteristics (Dieker, 1998); *language delays* (Miller, Valasky, & Molloy, 1998) and students with and without disabilities in *secondary classrooms* (Mahony, 1997; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).

Other researchers have documented the *actions taken by general and special educators as they implement co-teaching* (e.g., Garrigan & Thousand, 2005; Magiera, Smith, Zigmond, & Gabauer, 2005; Nevin, Cramer, Voigt, & Salazar, 2007). Recently, impact on student achievement indicates that students with disabilities and students who are learning English as a Second Language in co-taught classrooms can improve their scores on standardized assessments (Cramer, Nevin, Salazar, & Landa, 2004; Garrigan & Thousand, 2005; Nevin et al., 2007; Salazar & Nevin, 2005). For example, *The Memphis Commercial Appeal* (Noeth, 2004) reported co-teaching being used in all Shelby County, Tennessee high schools, resulting in 70% of the county's special education students being included in general education classrooms through support of a special educator and a general education teacher certified in either English or mathematics. After one year of co-teaching, teachers were better able to meet the unique learning needs of their students. The percentage of participating special education students who passed the Gateway English test increased from 20 to 40 percent. Because of the test score gains, several high schools were removed from the troubled schools list.

To date, the most comprehensive documentation on co-teaching comes from a study conducted by Schwab Learning (2003) where the impact of collaborative partnerships and co-teaching was studied at 16 *California elementary, middle, and secondary schools*. The teachers, administrators, and support staff creatively arranged for every student to receive blended services from Title 1 teachers, reading specialists, special educators, paraprofessionals, and so on. Results included decreased referrals to intensive special education services, increased overall student achievement, fewer disruptive problems, less paperwork, increased number of students qualified for gifted and talented education services, and decreased referrals for behavioral problems. In addition, teachers reported being happier and not feeling so isolated.

### **What Can YOU Add to Co-teaching Knowledge, Research, & Practice?**

In a comprehensive review of the literature recently published in an international handbook of special education research, Thousand, Villa, and Nevin (2007b) found that there really is only a nascent research base for co-teaching. This means that you can contribute by sharing what you are doing in your classrooms. Writing about your lessons, and what happens to students, can help other beginning teachers have the courage to step out of their comfort zones and experience the joys (and challenges) of co-teaching.

Second, so far, policy studies and reports of teacher experiences are the primary sources for the research on the benefits of collaborative teaching. The research and teacher education community need to hear from more practitioners than ever—especially beginning teachers! In fact, we argue that collaborative teaching is an example of policy leading practice and the practice community (YOU, teachers!) then stepping up to put that policy into action. We are proud to work with our school district partners to help document their practices (and that has been our primary role since leaving our own classrooms to join in the teacher or administrator preparation end of the spectrum). We are well aware that everyone requires more research. Both the IDEIA and NCLB mandates are examples of policy that requires practitioner collaboration, which then drives practitioner action-research. Thus, collaborative teaching may be an example where practitioners like you **are** the leading researchers. The literature on co-teaching is at a point in its development where practice can inform theory and research.

**Catch these authors at FCEC Conference—<http://www.ffcec.org>**

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# About the Authors

Dr. Ann Nevin, author of books, research articles, and numerous chapters, is a scholar and teacher educator who graduated magna cum laude from the University of Minnesota with a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Her doctoral research focused on how teachers and administrators can integrate students with special learning needs. She also earned advanced degrees in special education and educational administration and has participated in the development of innovative teacher education programs since the 1970s. Her advocacy, research, and teaching includes more than 30 years of working with a diverse array of people to help students with disabilities succeed. As Dr. Nevin explains, "My presentations, workshops, and classes are designed to meet the individual needs of participants by encouraging introspection, relaxation and personal discovery for optimal learning. I believe that the purpose of education is to empower others."



Dr. Richard A. Villa is President of Bayridge Consortium, Inc., in San Marcos, California. His primary field of expertise is the development of administrative and instructional support systems for educating all students within general education settings. Dr. Villa is recognized as an educational leader with the commitment and the conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills to inspire and work collaboratively with others in order to implement current and emerging exemplary educational practices. This has resulted in the inclusion of children with intensive cognitive, physical, and emotional challenges as full members of the general education community in the school districts where he has worked and with which he has consulted.

Dr. Villa has been a classroom teacher, special education administrator, pupil personnel services director, and director of instructional services. Dr. Villa has presented at international, national and state educational conferences and has provided technical assistance to the United States, Canadian, Vietnamese and Honduran Departments of education, and to University personnel, public school systems, and parent and advocacy organizations. He has authored 4 books and over 70 articles and chapters. Dr. Villa is known for his enthusiastic, humorous style of presenting.



[Dr. Jacqueline Thousand](#) is Professor in the College of Education at California State University San Marcos and coordinates the special education professional preparation and Masters programs. Prior to coming to California, she taught at the University of Vermont, where she directed Inclusion Facilitator and Early Childhood/Special Education graduate and post-graduate professional preparation programs and coordinated federal grants, all concerned with inclusion of students with disabilities in local schools. Dr. Thousand is a nationally-known teacher, author, systems change consultant, and disability rights and inclusive education advocate. She has authored numerous books, research articles, and chapters on issues related to inclusive schooling, organizational change strategies, differentiated instruction and universal design, cooperative group learning, collaborative teaming and teaching, creative problem solving, and positive behavioral supports. She is actively involved in international teacher education and inclusive education endeavors and serves on the editorial boards of several national and international journals.

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## **CEC Camp Scholarship Awards Reception**

In the past, CEC has awarded a camp scholarship (not to exceed \$250.00) to students with disabilities who were nominated by their teachers as being exceptional this school year. Please take the time to nominate a student in your classroom!

**When:** Saturday, May 5 2007

**Time:** 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

**Where:** Dave and Busters, Dolphin Mall

Looking forward to seeing you there!

For more information visit:

<http://www.cecchapter121.com/>

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## **Teacher Tools on the Internet**

### **Poetry:**

#### **Ken Nesbitt:**

<http://www.poetry4kids.com>

#### **Giggle Poetry (100s of poetry to Read and Rate):**

<http://www.gigglepoetry.com/>

#### **Fizzy Funny Fuzzy Poems:**

<http://www.fizzyfunnyfuzzy.com/>

### **E-Books/E-Stories Online:**

#### **Page by Page**

<http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/>

#### **Story Book Online**

<http://www.storybookonline.net/>

#### **The Moon Lit Road (scary stories)**

<http://www.themoonlitroad.com/>

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