



April 4, 2008

Dear Teachers,

We hope you are having a warm, sun-filled spring and are having so much fun you are not counting down the days too eagerly. Our Spring Saturday workshops are almost over. "Measurement" is on April 5 and "Schoolyard Ecology" is on April 12. We hope you have enjoyed the record-setting eight workshops this spring, and if you missed out this time, check out what is coming up!

Recent Events

We recently presented at the Lynchburg Best Practices workshop. Hank Yochum did two hands-on engineering design activities. Jill Granger and Arlene Vinion-Dubiel presented a study demonstrating that inquiry works (discussed in "Final Thoughts" below) and information on our NCLB project including workshops, courses, and the role of the Instructional Support Specialist. Our presentations were well-received by the attendees.

Upcoming Classes and Workshops

Registration for our summer courses is ongoing, although most courses are already filled and have a waiting list! We are offering six three-day courses this summer:

June 23-25 Art and Science	June 23-25 Organisms (two sections!)
June 26-28 Force, Motion, and Energy	June 26-28 Water
June 30-July 2 Light and Energy	June 30-July 2 Measurement

We have some instructors that are new to our program and will bring their expertise in these subject areas to you. We are excited about this year's courses and hope they will enhance your teaching tools.

We have already scheduled our first Saturday workshop for this fall! "Simple Machines" will be offered on August 23.* Come and get some ideas just before school starts so you will be ready to hit the ground running! And look for our fall workshop line-up which will be available when school begins again at the end of August.* Check the website for the most up-to-date information.

We are taking registration for EDUC 656 "Inquiry Methods in Math and Science" graduate course.* We just wrapped up this year's course with rave reviews from the 14 teachers who completed the class. It is a 3-credit, year-long course beginning with a two-day introduction to

inquiry on August 7-8. Teachers then prepare, implement, assess, and write papers on inquiry-based lessons in their own classroom. This course is a great way to ease you into using inquiry on a regular basis in your classroom.

New this year is a proposed inquiry class part 2! For those of you that have already completed "Inquiry Methods in Math and Science", we encourage you to take "Inquiry Design and Methodology". This course will extend the lessons that were learned in the first course to further inquiry in your classroom and encourage your colleagues to do more inquiry in theirs.

*We have applied for funding with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Simple Machines, fall workshops, and Inquiry Methods in Math and Science will be offered if we do receive funding.

Personnel

We are sadly saying "Farewell" to Jane Haxby, our Co-Instructional Support Specialist who was with us this fall and into the spring. Jane was indispensable in writing newsletters, updating our website making it more user-friendly, and writing our grant. We will miss Jane, but she is off to bigger and better things - including graduate school at the University of Virginia. We wish her the best of luck in all her endeavors.

And now, we happily welcome Jessica Mesman Griffith to fill Jane's role. Jessica is an excellent writer with experience in publishing. She will be writing newsletters, updating the website, and helping teachers with grant writing. We welcome Jessica and are excited to have her as part of the team!

We encourage workshop participants to use the activities you learn in the Saturday workshops in your classrooms. Arlene Vinion-Dubiel, your Instructional Support Specialist, can help with this. She is available to discuss new activity ideas, figure out how to adapt activities to fit your students, and to be hands-on help in your class. If you do call on Arlene, please fill out a survey by clicking on the ISS Survey link on our website <www.sxi.sbc.edu>.

Final Thoughts:

There is an excellent study from the University of Montana using high school chemistry classes that explains why we should use inquiry in the classroom. Did you know that when a data-to-concepts approach to teaching chemistry was used, students not only scored higher on a chemistry content test, they also scored better on math and English tests than their peers that were not taught using a traditional approach to instruction! Information on the study is found via the following website <<http://www.inquirychemistry.com>>.

"Of one thing I am convinced. I have never seen anybody improve in the art and techniques of inquiry by any means other than engaging in inquiry." Jerome Bruner, 1961

Check Out These Resources:

National Environmental Education Week is April 13-19.

Its purpose is to "increase the educational impact of Earth Day by creating a full week of educational preparation, learning, and activities in K-12 classrooms, nature centers, zoos, museums, and aquariums."

<<http://www.eeweek.org/>>

Earth Day is April 22

Arbor Day is April 25



While you are thinking about Earth Day and the environment, consider this grant opportunity:

[Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Foundation](#)

K-12 educators can apply for a grant of up to \$1,500 to be used for innovative environmental education. Projects should support curricula that empower and encourage students to become involved in solving environmental and social problems as informed decision makers through an emphasis on the application of basic ecological principles. *Deadline: September 27, 2008*

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

4th grade teachers in Virginia can apply to have compact fluorescent light bulbs provided to their classrooms. Sponsored by American Electric Power.

E-mail Mary Spruill at The NEED (National Energy Education Development) Project <mspruill@need.org> for more information.



Submit a proposal for funding for supplies or equipment for a class project at www.donorschoose.org, and donors can choose which projects to support. Check out other proposals on the site to get an idea of what to ask for and how to ask. There is **no deadline**.

And remember, we're here to help you! Let us know what you're up to. Email your Instructional Support Specialist, Arlene Vinion-Dubiel, at dubiel@sbc.edu, with questions about ideas, resources, and grant and paper writing.

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