

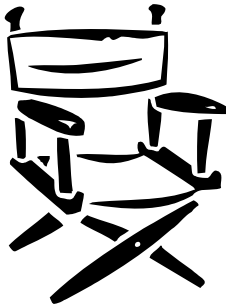
MATTERS



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Spring is one of my favorite times of the year. It brings newness to life: new leaves on old trees, new flowers from old bulbs, new hatchlings to native birds, and new chapters in the lives of our graduates. This year, MAT expects to graduate the largest number of graduates in the program's history. At the time of this writing, we have 54 students on the graduate list for the May 2008 Commencement ceremony. All students completing the MAT program at any time during the academic year 2007-2008, are eligible and encouraged to participate in graduation on Sunday, May 18th. You will be getting more detailed information from Lori in the next couple of weeks.

MAT is in its 16th year and like the new leaves on existing trees, the MAT Educational Policy Committee has approved a more accessible curriculum option for today's busy students. Beginning in the 2008 Summer Session, MAT courses will be offered in a variety of delivery models. The traditional format of face-to-face meetings, generally about 3 hours a week in the fall and spring semesters, will remain as always, but to extend the program to students who come from greater distances, faculty are now being encouraged to offer blended courses, supplementing less time in class with time on Blackboard and other technological resources. There will be a limited number of courses offered completely online as we enter into this new era for MAT. It is safe to say, that there is no intention now or ever to offer a fully online degree from Mary Baldwin College. However, after much thought and consideration, we believe this new option will make the proven MAT program even more accessible to our busy students without compromising the academic integrity. Be sure to watch for a new format to the course schedule posted online. You will be able to identify the class format for each course, in addition to viewing summer only options for teachers, that this year will also be available for MAT students. These summer programs will be offered for three graduate credits at the regular MAT tuition.

I hope you find this new growth in MAT as exciting as the other newness spring will bring to us again this year.

- Carole C. Grove

“THE TEST OF A GOOD TEACHER IS NOT HOW MANY QUESTIONS HE CAN ASK HIS PUPILS THAT THEY WILL ANSWER READILY, BUT HOW MANY QUESTIONS HE INSPIRES THEM TO ASK HIM WHICH HE FINDS IT HARD TO ANSWER.”

-ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS



FEATURES

NOTES ON RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION BY CHRISTY BLACK

In December of 2004 when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was re-ratified, one of the key changes was the recognition and inclusion of Response to Intervention (RTI) as an alternative means of identifying students with Specific Learning Disabilities. The inclusion of RTI by the Federal Government supports increased effectiveness and appropriateness of universal instruction, and encourages schools to provide intervention services for “at risk” students prior to the determination of eligibility for Special Education services under IDEA. Congress removed the requirement that a school demonstrate a “severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability.” RTI is described as an alternative to the “wait-to-fail” model of the discrepancy requirements of the past. The act authorizes up to 15% of IDEA funds to be used to provide interventions for students prior to being determined eligible for Special Education services.

There is no model of RTI that has been specified or even endorsed by IDEA, but there are key components to what can be accurately identified as RTI. Although there are some states that claim to use Response to Intervention in their schools, there are certain hallmarks to look for in a true RTI model.

The typical model is multi-tiered. It begins with effective, research-based teaching strategies for all students in the general education setting, which constitutes the “primary prevention,” or baseline, school-wide level instruction. Students who fail to respond to the ecumenical level of instruction then enter the RTI process at the secondary level. The tiers of intervention increase in intensity, and if a student fails to respond to research-based interventions implemented with integrity, the student is then referred for special education services.

In Virginia, Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., Superintendent of Public Instruction, sent a memo on November 9, 2007 to division superintendents regarding a Response to Intervention Initiative. A document explaining the “Responsive Instruction” initiative is available on the Virginia Department of Education website at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/studentsrvcs/rti_guidance_document.pdf. Education professionals in Virginia will find this document to be an invaluable resource as the practice of RTI becomes more and more prevalent in the Commonwealth.

RTI is emerging as an approach that is capable of addressing many different types of special needs. It requires quality education of students at all levels and demands changes in the way we approach education. These changes might make the system seem somewhat nebulous or intimidating to some educators. However, its implications are so far reaching that RTI cannot be ignored or passed off as some new trend in education that will soon fade away. Administrators, teachers and teacher education programs are heeding the call to learn more about RTI and make it a central element to their effective schools.

TEACHER TESTS: NOTES TO DISPEL ANXIETY

Many of us in the program are either dreading or looking forward to taking the VRA and the VCLA tests. If you find yourself in this category, this article is for you. If you have taken these tests, this article is thanks to you.

The VRA (Virginia Reading Assessment) and the VCLA (Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment) are designed to measure the skills necessary to teach and communicate effectively, enforce NCLB mandates, and totally stress-out people who have to take these exams. Keeping this in mind, here is what our peers who have taken these exams suggest.

Several students have recommended taking the Language Arts course before taking the VRA. Some have even suggested this course be a prerequisite for taking the VRA. The cut score for this VRA is 235, and subjects covered includes phonics, phonemic awareness, whole language, and reading levels, areas covered in the Language Arts course.

For the VCLA, students recommend brushing up on basic grammar and punctuation. Generally, our group of peer-advisors felt that the VCLA was easier than the VRA. Good news for those of use who don't plan on teaching elementary school! The VCLA was generally described as PRAXIS I without the math component, and with better, or more straight-forward questions. David Berry, one of many who responded to my query for advice, says, "I think if you did well on PRAXIS I, you'll do okay on the VCLA." This is still a test to be taken seriously, despite reports of its relative ease. The cut score for the VCLA is 235 in both the reading and writing sub-test, or a combined score of 470. Finally, our peers strongly suggest that you do not take the VCLA and the VRA on the same day.

Recommended study aids include, Self-Paced Phonics: A text for Educators, 3rd Edition, by G. Thomas Baer, although a new 4th edition is now available. Additionally our peers used the Department of Educations SOL curriculum framework's essential knowledge webpage, the ETS test-at-a-glance web page, and the Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation. Finally, it is important to remember and brush up on your test taking skills: time management, elimination, and re-checking work, will all propel you toward success when preparing for and taking the tests.

In preparation for the test you should register as soon as possible in order to give yourself a target to shoot for, without this it is easy to procrastinate and then have to take the test under emergency and ill-prepared circumstances. Keep your study habits regular, do not skip a study session, shorten the length, or reschedule it, this helps to put you under testing conditions, and reduces overall anxiety. Some students have even recommended studying for the test each week at the same time the actual test will be given. Get plenty of rest the days preceding your test, and find the testing center before you have to show up for the test. If you have a long commute to the testing center, consider renting a room closer to the testing center to maximize your nights sleep the night before the test. These tests also have a lot of security to eliminate cheating. This security makes little things like going to the bathroom, a long ordeal, so do not drink tons of coffee before going into the examination. You should wear a lot of layered clothes to maximize your comfort, make certain you have the appropriate paperwork and identification, and finally, relax, it's only a test. If you don't succeed, try, try again. Just get back on that horse, study up some more, and take the exam again soon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & KUDOS

The MAT program will have a Graduate Luncheon on Sunday, May 18th, immediately following the graduation ceremonies until – 2:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, Frazier Building. The church is located on Frederick Street across the street from Mary Baldwin College.

The Dawbarn Education Awards are prestigious cash awards that honor exceptional public educators and other youth advocates in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County. You may remember that MAT teacher in residence Betty Gatewood was a recipient of this award last autumn. She joins a several other recipients who represent the MAT department including Linda S. Petzke, Dorothy B. Walk, Sandy Kaktins, and Linda Mahler. Congratulations to all winners who have represented our program so well.

Mary Baldwin College was able to nominate 10 students for the Teachers of Promise Institute. In addition to the 4 Master of Arts in Teaching students, there was 4 Adult Degree Program students, and 2 Residential College for Women nominees. Congratulations to Melissa Baldwin, Jason Baska, Janet Page, and Melanie Whitaker, the nominees from the Master of Arts in Teaching students.

Congratulations to all Winter 2007 Graduates: Lisa Black, Alice Harrell, Nan Lawson, Jennifer Legaz, Amy Lessley, Jill Wilson, Gwendolyn Moffett, John Murden Jr., Pearl Sabastian, Jaime Saunders, Allison Sprouse, and Jessica Walker.

Congratulations MAT student John Calvin Murden who was named Teacher of The Month at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in the Richmond City School District.

Congratulations to Jennifer Legas, who has begun a new teaching position in Henrico County.

Congratulations to Joy Lynn Rottkamp who is expecting a baby in April.

Dwayne Cabanishas applied for the Meritorious New Teacher Candidate (MNTC) which is an honor symbolizing excellence and acknowledging highly qualified teachers when they graduate from their teacher preparation institutions. Get more information about this award at www.aacte.org. Good luck Dwayne!

Renaë Berry Marcom Szad, an alumna of the B.A. (theatre) and MAT programs, was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi honor society at UNC Charlotte, having Maintained a 4.0 throughout.

“THE MEDIOCRE TEACHER TELLS.
THE GOOD TEACHER EXPLAINS.
THE SUPERIOR TEACHER
DEMONSTRATES. THE GREAT
TEACHER INSPIRES.”
- WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD



INTEREST

IMPORTANT DATES:

March 1 st -March 9 th : March 8 th :	Spring Break! Faculty may not be in their offices. Transitional Planning Professional Development Institute
March 10 th : March 15 th :	Classes resume Classroom Management Professional Development Institute
March 17 th :	St. Patricks Day, Deadline to submit summer course syllabi to the MAT office. Registration begins for summer session
March 21 st : April 5 th :	Good Friday Differentiated Instruction Professional Development Institute
April 18 th : April 26 th : April 29 th : May 5 th : May 16 th : May 18 th :	MAT Spring classes end Technology Professional Development Institute Spring Grades are due to the MAT office by noon Tentative Summer Orientation for MAT Registration Ends for Summer MAT classes Commencement Ceremonies, Staunton Main Campus
May 19 th : May 26 th : June 14 th :	Summer I MAT courses begin Memorial Day, college closed Dealing with a Crisis Professional Development Institute
June 16 th :	Instructors' deadline to submit fall course syllabi to the MAT office
June 28 th :	Summer I MAT courses end, Teachers DO Make a Difference Professional Development Institute
July 7 th :	Summer II MAT courses begin, Summer I grades are due by noon
July 31 st : August 17 th : August 18 th : August 22 nd : August 25 th :	TAG application deadline for 2008-2009 aid Registration ends for Fall MAT courses Summer II courses end, Fall Orientation for MAT Registration Ends for Fall MAT courses Summer grades are due in the MAT office by noon, Fall MAT classes begin

BIBLIOPHILES:

*Megan Brown is currently reading the Harry Potter series, which she describes as a seven way tie for her favorite books.

*Roderic Owen is currently reading Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny, by Amartya Sen.

*Susan Britton is currently reading Heaven, by Randy Alcorn.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

Dwayne Young Cabaniss recommends The First Days of School by Harry Wong and The Essential 55, by Ron Clark.

Anna Christiansen recommends the Twilight series by Stephanie Mayer, or Lamb, by Christopher Moore, for those days when you need a brain-break and a fun story.

Barbie Cassada recommends Knowing and Teaching Elementary Mathematics by Liping Ma.

CARS FOR GRADUATES

If you are graduating soon and are considering buying a car, be sure to enquire at the dealership or on line about special financing offers for recent graduates. Honda has a program designed to help facilitate the transition between college and a career, provided you have a diploma. In recent years, Volkswagen, Toyota and other companies have offered similar deals for students who have accrued loans during their education who not only face low-paying, entry level positions but who also must pay off their student loans. Even individual dealerships occasionally have promotional sales around Graduation that cater to the needs of recent graduates. Spend some time researching your options by looking into educator discounts, graduate discounts, financing, and the works.

“I HAVE COME TO THE FRIGHTENING CONCLUSION THAT I AM THE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM. IT IS MY DAILY MOOD THAT MAKES THE WEATHER. AS A TEACHER, I POSSESS A TREMENDOUS POWER TO MAKE A CHILD’S LIFE MISERABLE OR JOYOUS. I CAN BE A TOOL OF TORTURE OR AN INSTRUMENT OF INSPIRATION. I CAN HUMILIATE OR HUMOR, HURT OR HEAL. IN ALL SITUATIONS, IT IS MY RESPONSE THAT DECIDES WEATHER A CRISIS WILL BE ESCALATED OR DE-ESCALATED AND A CHILD HUMANIZED OR DEHUMANIZED.”

-DR. HAIM GINOTT

SUMMER STORIES

DONALD DAVIS RETURNS THIS SUMMER

After last summers' successful course, Writing as a Second Language, Mary Baldwin College's MAT program plans to bring Mr. Donald Davis back to lead another course. The internationally-known storyteller came to MBC through funding from a State Council of Higher Education in Virginia, No Child Left Behind grant. The grant covered the costs of the course for participants over a five day period. Participants in the course were teachers from five area school divisions: Augusta County, Rockingham County, Harrisonburg City, Staunton City, and Waynesboro City.

The course was held at the Frontier Culture Museum, an ideal local for a course heavily reliant upon personal memories. Everything from the architecture to the craftsmanship of individual pieces in the museum helped provoke memories and conversations, which became the seeds for some of the stories developed over the span of that week.

Mr. Davis proposes that all too often students are told to write about things they do not know about, or to write on a subject with which they have no attachment. He believes that if students know how to tell a good story, that skill can then be turned into good story writing skills. Thus, storytelling can become a powerful teaching and writing tool.

The participants were asked to recall and eventually write about people they knew, places from their past, problems they had solved, the progress made, and trouble faced. By the end of the course students had combined certain of the afore mentioned elements in order to create their own masterpiece stories.

After the teachers completed their coursework, and returned to the classroom, they were asked to employ the new teaching tactic on their own students. The class members met one last time in November to review and share results.

Fortunately, this summer more educators will have the opportunity to participate in this enlightening class. Look for information about his unique opportunity on the MAT website.

"STORYTELLING IS THE MOST POWERFUL WAY TO PUT IDEAS INTO THE WORLD TODAY. "

-ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN

TEENS TRAVEL FOR LIFE SKILLS

Brian Lux, an MAT Graduate now works with Summit Travel, an American Camping Association accredited organization that works with young campers. Summit Travel uses inquiry methods and modeling to teach socially appropriate behaviors and life skills to special needs teens. Many of these teens have been diagnosed with ADHD, Aspergers, Tourette's, etc. Clients of Summit Travel have the opportunity to travel and experience the best of American geography and culture. The non-threatening environments are ideal locations to teach budgeting money, how to do laundry, personal medication management, how to order meals, and friendship building skills.

This summer Summit is offering three trips are being offered, each lasting just over three weeks in length for special needs youth. Destinations for 2008 include Virginia, Alaska, and Hawaii. Brian has been working with Summit programs for 12 years now, during which time the summer program has expanded from one trip accommodating a couple of dozen teens, to three trips serving over 120 youth over the course of the summer.

Staff positions are filled per trip, so this could be a fun and educational to spend your own summer in fantastic locations while being paid. For more information you can email Brian at BrianL@summitcamp.com. Bon Voyage!

SUMMER WEEK 2008

This year for the very first time, MAT will be participating in Summer Week on the historic Staunton campus. Formerly known as ADP Week and limited to ADP students only, we have now moved to opening this exciting on-campus opportunity to MAT students and changed the name to MBC Summer Week.. For those of you who attend classes in Richmond, Charlottesville, Roanoke, South Boston, or even in outlying areas in the Valley, here is an opportunity for you to spend a week on campus, take a three-credit graduate class, and enjoy fellowship with faculty and fellow students in class as well as in the evening activities. Most of you probably know by now how much there is to do in the "Queen City," in addition to planned Summer Week evening social events. Lodging and meals will be available on campus at a price much less than the local establishments, but if you and a friend or family member prefer, there are many local inns in walking distance from the college. Watch for additional and more detailed information to be sent out to your MBC email address in the coming weeks. The two MAT courses that will be offered this year are ED 622 An Integrated Approach to Characteristics of Exceptionality, and IN 629 Leadership in Education. Hope you can spend part of your summer with us here on campus amidst the rich history and culture of the surrounding community, while at the same time completing one of your degree requirements.

Mary Baldwin College Environment-Based Learning Courses Summer, 2008



June 23 – 27 Math in the Garden

Learn to use the garden and local environment to teach math skills to students in grades K-8. This course will cover math concepts from basic operations to geometry and data analysis. Course will include field trips to gardens and natural areas for implementation practice.

July 7 – 11 Writing as a Second Language: From Natural Experience to Story to Prose

Donald Davis, nationally known and award winning storyteller, will return this summer as the facilitator for this course. The primary goal of the course is to help teachers use storytelling to enhance the writing abilities and interests of K-12 students. Stories of experiences in the environment will be a focus of the course. The Frontier Museum will provide a backdrop for participants as they practice the process.



July 7 – 11 Trout in the Classroom

With a *Trout in the Classroom* (TIC) project, students in grades K-12 raise trout from eggs, monitor tank water quality, engage in stream habitat study, learn to appreciate water resources, begin to foster a conservation ethic and grow to understand ecosystems. Teachers will learn *TIC* methods and techniques to assist them in tailoring the program to their specific curricular and interdisciplinary needs. The course will include field trips to local rivers to study issues related to fisheries and ecosystem health.

July 14 – 18 Natural Research: Using the Environment for Student-Driven Investigations

The natural environment presents an excellent setting for student development of scientific investigations. This course will provide middle and high school educators with the skills needed to work with students in grades 6-12 as they design and perform their own experiments, collect and analyze data, and present results. Educators will participate in watershed-based activities as part of the course, including a trip to the Chesapeake Bay. The course will address learning standards in all fields of science: chemistry, biology/life science, earth science, and physics/physical science.



August 4 – 8 Environment-Based Learning



In this course, educators will learn to integrate problem-based themes of the local community into the K-12 curriculum. Using the complex interconnections of the natural and built environments, educators from rural to urban areas will learn to facilitate investigations of real-world issues from a variety of perspectives: historical, scientific, socio-cultural, economic, and personal. Using Environment-Based Learning (EBL) to teach state and national standards will be an emphasis of the course.

Graduate Credit: Each course provides 3 hours of graduate credit from MBC. Tuition is discounted by grants for some of the courses. A \$50 registration fee is due by 15 May, 2008.* Courses will be held in Staunton and at various field-experience locations.

- Registration Fee waved for current MAT students.

**For more information or to register, please contact
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