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What's Up in Greensboro Basic Skills?



Program Highlights

Director's Corner



Have you ever entered a room full of people and immediately felt the excitement all around you? That's what I felt upon walking into the "Teacher-Made Materials" workshop conducted by our CED faculty. Participants were busy working feverishly to design mini bulletin boards. This flourish of activity had followed one workshop lesson that illustrated how attention-grabbing bulletin boards can be used as a teaching tool. When everyone finished, each design had captured the author's unique creativity and interpretation of the theme: "The Learning Tree." (See story on pg. 2.)

Teachers from all program areas of the High Point and Greensboro campuses came out on a Saturday to participate in the training. This workshop brought out the child and the talent in everyone. It also modeled what students should experience in a learning environment. Once we're able to get students excited about learning, like the workshop attendees were, I'm convinced persistence and completion rates will skyrocket!

CED faculty, thanks for reminding us of ways to make teaching and learning a joy.

- Pat Freeman

Time to Smell the Roses

Burma Wilkins was honored at a retirement party in December to celebrate her many years of service as an instructor.

Wilkins began her career in 1962 as a world history teacher at Dudley High School. Between 1966 and 1985, she taught geography, world history, and earth science at Bennett College and served as the placement coordinator for the student teachers majoring in education. Later, Wilkins taught at Gillespie Alternative School and at Aycock where she specialized in teaching reading and ESOL classes. Along the way, she found time to

achieve an ESOL teaching certification and two Masters degrees, one in reading and another in world history.

After retiring from the Guilford County School System in 2000, Wilkins wanted to continue helping students learn. She joined the Greensboro Basic Skills program as an ESOL instructor and later taught ABE reading and language classes.

Our program is blessed to have had Mrs. Wilkins share her skills and wealth of knowledge with our students for so many years. Even in retirement, she does not know the meaning of "slow

down." Her future plans include tutoring at Gillespie Elementary School, water aerobics, being with family, and traveling. We wish Mrs. Wilkins all the best in this new chapter of her busy life!



Burma Wilkins

It's Never Too Late!

Tomas Chavez took the oath to become an American citizen on January 12th. The ceremony was one of a long series of new beginnings for Chavez. As a young boy growing up in Cuba, he learned how to start a garden and went on to become an agent for the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture. Another new beginning was when he and his family immigrated to Miami in 2004, and later moved to North Carolina. Chavez says

that he moved to Greensboro to better learn to speak English because, "everyone in Miami speaks Spanish," he explained. Chavez first enrolled in an ESOL class in 2007. He later received help to prepare for the Citizenship



Tomas Chavez

test from ESOL instructor, Susan Perez.

Chavez and his family love GTCC. His daughter, Miriell, worked for several years in Greensboro's Basic Skills office and later received an associate degree from GTCC. Even at nearly 70 years of age, Chavez is finding new opportunities to learn at GTCC. He looks forward to helping with our Basic Skills Community Garden project and has already signed up for another English class.

It's never too late to learn.



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Fall Enrollment: 2,083

Create Your Own!

On-site CED instructors kicked off the new year by presenting a workshop entitled, "Teacher-Made Materials." The objective was to give instructors ideas on creating their own materials to be used as tools to individualize lesson plans and activities.

Workshop facilitator, Tracey Thompson, presented "How to Create an Attractive Bulletin Board Display." Attention-getting displays are a great way to encourage students to do their best and celebrate their accomplishments. After discussing guidelines for creating bulletin boards, participants were given materials to use in creating their own miniature boards.

Finding ways to motivate your students can sometimes be a challenge. Okay, maybe it can often be a challenge! Angela Tripp acquainted attendees with "Motivational Techniques". Remaining positive, providing opportunities for success, and providing a variety of student experiences were among the methods discussed.

In her presentation, Wilma Murphy



February is Black History Month

In honor and celebration of Black History Month, Basic Skills classes will incorporate lesson plans that explore the rich heritage of black Americans. An essay writing and poetry contest is also planned.

Part of that heritage are the numerous black Americans responsible for inventing many of the things we use today, such as the traffic light, laser probe, gas mask, blood bank, the potato chip and over 300 ways to use the peanut. Details on two of these important inventors include:

Dr. Charles Drew's system for storing blood plasma (blood bank) revolutionized the medical profession. He also established, and was the first director of, the American Red Cross Blood Bank. For the first modernized version of a traffic-stopping device, we have Garrett Augustus-Morgan to thank. Morgan's numerous other inventions include a zigzag device for sewing machines and the gas mask, which he used to rescue several men trapped in a tunnel after an explosion.

shared examples of teacher-made materials she had created to reinforce specific lessons. Materials demonstrated ranged from interactive bulletin boards to file folder games and activities.

The final presentation was, "Using Worksheets and Transparencies," Sometimes it can be difficult to find a source for appropriate printable worksheets and workbooks that meet the students' needs. Reanna Coleman offered ideas on how to create your own.

Instructors from all areas of Basic Skills attended. Each shared that the workshop was both fun and rewarding and they were anxious to take what they learned back to their classrooms.

Our Mission

- To empower students to set goals and overcome barriers that could interrupt their learning and desire to succeed.
- To create an atmosphere (a culture) that promotes a "mind-set" for success in every student.
- To unlock the brilliance in each student.

Testing Center Highlights 2011



<u>Assessment</u>	<u># of Students</u>
TABE Placement	3,200
GED	1,004
ESOL	1,051
NC Competency	0
GED Graduates	<u>107</u>
Total:	5,362

Did You Know?

Peggy Rierson, ever-patient Basic Skills Receptionist, welcomed her second grandson on January 8th. Payton Cole Rierson weighed 7-1/2 lbs. and was 18-1/2" long upon his grand entrance into the world.

Confirmed bachelorette, Titania Nix, married long-time beau Chris Thompson on December 18th. She may have felt pushed just a little after co-workers threatened to get her on the next season of "The Bachelorette!" Titania is our Senior Records Technician.

CONGRATULATIONS!