



West Virginia AGED NEWS and VIEWS

Published by
West Virginia University's Agricultural and Extension Education Department

March - April 2008

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AGEE Faculty Receive Division of Resource Management Awards

Two Agricultural and Extension Education faculty members, Drs. Deborah and Harry Boone, were selected as the winners of two prestigious



awards in the Division of Resource Management, Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences. Dr. Deborah Boone was selected as the Division's 2007 Outstanding Researcher. Dr. Harry Boone was nominated as the Division's 2007 Outstanding Teacher. The awards were presented at a Division reception on May 2, 2008. The award winners are selected by the Division of Resource Management's Promotion and Tenure Committee which is composed of faculty members in Agricultural and Resource Economics, Landscape Architecture, and Agricultural and Extension Education.

Dr. Deborah Boone

With over ten articles and fourteen national and regional presentations during her tenure at West Virginia University, Dr. Deborah Boone is quickly establishing her reputation as a researcher. In 2007 (the award year), Dr. Deborah Boone authored or co-authored three journal articles, one solicited national publication, two national presentations published in conference proceedings, three regional presentations published in conference proceedings, and one regional poster presentation. She was also a co-investigator on over \$100,000 in grants.

Over the past five years she has advised nine graduate students as they completed their graduate.

Dr. Boone's accomplishments in research complement her teaching and service activities. In 2007, she taught three graduate courses, five undergraduate courses, advised twenty undergraduate students, served as major advisor to seven graduate students, and served on a number of M.S. and Ph.D. committees. In 2006 she was recognized as the Division of Resource Management's Outstanding Teacher.

She is a leader in the use of distance education. In addition to developing and delivering her courses via distance education, she serves as the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences "Point of Contact" for eCampus. In this role she serves as the faculty liaison for eCampus distance education activities.

In addition to her eCampus activities, Dr. Boone's service activities include being a member of the West Virginia University Extension Service Visiting Committee, a member of the Advisory Committee for West Virginia University Extension/Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom, a member of the West Virginia AgrAbility Project Steering Committee, and a consultant to the West Virginia University Extension Service Youth Agriculture Team. She has also served on the Davis College's Technology Committee and graduate Student Paper/Poster Session Committee.

Dr. Harry Boone

In 2007, Dr. Harry Boone, along with two graduate teaching assistants, was responsible for twenty-four sections of twelve courses plus a teaching laboratory. Of the

twelve courses, seven utilized traditional delivery methods, two were delivered with distance education techniques, two required administrative responsibilities, and one involved the supervision of student teachers. The courses generated nearly 1000 student credit hours for the Division of Resource Management and the Davis College. Student evaluations for the courses he personally teaches regularly average above 4.5 on a five points scale.



Dr. Harry Boone is also a leader in the use of distance education techniques. Participation in AGEE 101, Global Food and the Agricultural Industry, was declining to the point the department was considering eliminating the course. Dr. Boone assumed control of the course and developed it into a distance education course. The course averages over one hundred students per semester and has a current enrollment of twenty-three for summer 2008. The course has the potential to expand further if the enrollment cap was removed.

Throughout his career at West Virginia University, Dr. Boone has been recognized for his teaching, research, and service activities. In 2004, he was named the Division of Resource Management and the Davis College's Outstanding Teacher. In 2004, he was named the Division's Outstanding Researcher and in 2005 he was honored with the Division's Outstanding Service Award.

Editorial: Evaluating Your Personal and Professional Goals

by Harry N. Boone, Jr.

At each stage of your life you have established goals for your personal and professional life. As a teenager you set the goal to graduate from high school and get accepted into the college of your choice. Once enrolled in college you set a goal to graduate with your degree in four years and secure employment. Some of you set your goal to complete a graduate degree before entering the job market. Some of you have established the goal to devote your lifetime to teaching while others view a teaching career as a stepping stone to another position.

Goals change for a number of reasons. First, our goals must change as we successfully reach our targets. For example, once you graduated from high school your goal(s) had to change. Because there is no stopping on the highway of life, you had to set new goals. Goals also change as our circumstances change. For example, many of our goals in high school focused solely on the individual. Once you get married and start a family, your goals have to consider what is best for you and your family. The point that I am making is that personal goals change. We must take time on a regular basis to evaluate our situation and our goals and determine if they are realistic or if they should be modified.

Let's reflect on a few questions that you should contemplate. First, **is the goal realistic?** Is it attainable? For example, let's assume you have a goal of becoming a veterinarian. Your undergraduate GPA, however, is not high enough to qualify you for a veterinarian school. Also you are missing a number of the chemistry and biology courses required for admission. Your goal may still be realistic, however, you need to establish some intermediate goals starting with the pursuit of a second undergraduate degree where you can complete the required courses and establish the required GPA. This is where other factors come in play. Will your personal obligations (family, financial, etc.) allow you the opportunity to go back to school full time?

Are you happy in your current position? Our positions are demanding and are often a source of great frustration. If you are not happy in your position the

negative aspects of the position will dominate your attitudes and work ethic. In addition to the mental anguish, these circumstances will take a toll on your personal health. Life is too short to spend over twenty-five percent of your time in a situation you do not enjoy.

Is too much expected of you? The sad part of life is good employees are rewarded for their dedication and hard work with additional workloads. Look around and see who the administrator assigns the difficult assignments. They are given to the individuals who are successful in meeting their goals and deadlines. This is frustrating to the good employees. They see their workloads increasing while the derelicts coast through with few assignments. In many cases these individuals earn the same or better wages than the "hard" workers.

Does your current position offer you an opportunity to grow and develop? The "dead end" aspect of a career is a frustration for many. If you stay with the employer for five years or ten years will you have the opportunity to advance? In the education profession, advancement may not be possible. In that case are there opportunities for you to grow and develop? Does your employer offer opportunities to further develop your skills and improve your knowledge? Are you encouraged to participate in these opportunities?

Are you respected by your colleagues and administrators? Do you have the respect of your peers and administrators? Is there adequate communication between you and your colleagues and/or between you and your administrators? Do they understand what you do? Do they have the opportunity to see the results of your efforts? As you answer these questions, keep in mind that respect is a two way street. Do you have respect for your peers and your administrators? There are always exceptions, however, education can go a long way to earning the respect of others. Take every opportunity to inform them about the activities in which you and your students are involved. Make certain that key stakeholders are informed of the accomplishments of your program. Somewhere I heard the saying, if you don't

toot your own horn, then it will not get tooted.

Are you making a difference? This is a difficult question to answer. Serving as an evaluation specialist for a number of years, you often get the question, did a program make a difference. In many situations I could tell them the results of the program, however, without complicated *ex post facto* research designs you could not tell them what would have occurred without the intervention. This is true for education. You will never know about many of your greatest successes. For example, the student who finished high school because one teacher (you) cared enough to be concerned about his/her success. Many of these individuals will never share with you the impact that you had on their life.

Will your current situation lead to your personal goals in five years? ten years? If your current situation will lead or contribute to your personal goals, you may want to consider making a change.

I am at a stage in my life, both personally and professionally, that I am going to try to practice what I preach. Over the next twelve months I plan to evaluate my situation against my personal, professional, and family goals. I have an advantage over many of you because my long-term goals are not as "long-term" as many of you.

Do I see myself continuing in a faculty teaching position for the remainder of my career? There are a lot of positive and negative aspects of this decision. First, I enjoy teaching and working with students. I enjoyed my time as a high school teacher and my career has brought me back into a teaching environment. My personal satisfaction comes from the accomplishments of my students. On the negative side, the teaching expectations of my current appointment leave little opportunity for my second joy, research. The workload at this level is no different than at the high school. Responsibilities are constantly added to your workload and nothing ever gets taken away. As hard as I try not to let it happen, I am starting to see the workload affect the quality of my teaching. That is something that I cannot allow to continue.

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25 West Virginia Teachers Earn Arch Coal ‘Golden Apples’

Connie Scarbrough, agricultural education teacher at Ripley High School was one of twenty-five outstanding classroom teachers who earned “Golden Apple” certificates from the Arch Coal Foundation, according to John R. Snider, Arch Coal vice president, external affairs, eastern region.

“These 25 teachers received very high appraisals of their applications for the Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award,” said Snider. “They are obviously excellent teachers who deserve this honor. We hope that students, parents and colleagues will nominate these teachers again next year.

“The Arch Coal Foundation’s teacher recognition program is unique because the public is asked to nominate classroom teachers who demonstrate great professionalism and dedication in their classrooms,” Snider said. “The teachers’ applications are evaluated by a panel of expert judges, all who are former recipients of the Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award.

“Arch Coal and the Arch Coal Foundation appreciate that West Virginia has so many high-performing classroom teachers,” Snider said.

The 12 recipients of the Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award, the Arch Coal Foundation’s highest award, were made February 27 at a ceremony at the state Capi-

tol. The Arch Coal Foundation’s is the longest running, privately sponsored teacher recognition program in West Virginia. More than 400 nominations for the awards were received.

The award winners included: Jeanine Grace Allen, Buckhannon; Maxine Mary Arbogast, Morgantown; Diana Benedum, Pennsboro; Jane Ann Conrad, Brandywine; Lee Ann Cumpston, Davisville; Dina deCoffee-Perrone, Gerrardstown; Melanie Ann Donofe, Weirton; Erica Sue Drennan, Red House; Amy Suzanne Fletcher, Delbarton; Sarah Gaughenbaugh, Glen Dale; Brenda Joyce Gibson, Sutton; William Gibson, Morgantown; Kathy Jones, Pennsboro; Melissa Lampinen, Buckhannon; Kendi Ann Morris, Gallipolis Ferry; Ann Davis Palmer, Clendenin; JoAnne Larson Persinger, Lewisburg; Connie Scarbrough, Ripley; Lynn Marie Schwallie, Scott Depot; Sandra Lee Shaw, Beckley; Raymond Singleton, Charleston; Janet Butts Sisler, Moorefield; Jennifer Lynn Sisson, Parkersburg; David Reis Stone, Parkersburg; and Mary Wright, Parkersburg.

The awards program is supported by the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Education Association and its West Virginia Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and the West Virginia Library Commission.



Arch Coal, Inc. is one of the nation’s largest coal producers. The company’s core business is providing U.S. power generators with clean-burning, low-sulfur coal for electric generation. Through its national network of mines, Arch supplies the fuel for approximately 6 percent of the electricity generated in the United States. The company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: ACI) and maintains its corporate headquarters in St. Louis, Mo.

Editorial: Evaluating Your Personal and Professional Goals

Would I be interested in an academic administrative position? Over the past three years I have considered the idea as a number of quality positions have opened. I left an administrative position in Charleston to join the West Virginia University faculty in 2000. One opportunity to reevaluate and possibly shuffle your workload is to move from a teaching assignment to an administrative one.

How can I reduce my workload? First, my overall health has been good since my surgery three years ago. Can I continue this pace for the remainder of my career? I don’t know and I really do not want to find out. One way to be certain health is not an

issue is to reduce my workload by prioritizing my current responsibilities and giving up some of the things that do not directly contribute to my role as a teacher and a researcher. For example, I think that it is time that someone else took over as editor of *WV AGED News and Views*. It is time that at least one other individual be trained on the scoring procedures for each of the fourteen Career Development Events. Although I don’t see it happening, it would be nice to reduce my teaching load to the level of many of my peers at other institutions of higher education.

As you can see we all must regularly evaluate our personal and professional goals. During my professional career I have

changed directions at least three times. I have served as a high school teacher, a research/evaluation specialist, an administrator of a government agency, and now a teacher educator. Where will the next ten to fifteen years take me? Only time will tell. There is one thing for certain; my decisions will be based on careful evaluation of my personal and professional goals. I encourage you to take similar steps as you consider your personal and professional goals.

The opinions expressed are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent official positions and/or opinions of the Agricultural and Extension Education program, the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences, or West Virginia University.

Field Experience Reflections: Blessings in Disguise

by Laura Pfeifer

Where I lacked nervousness about beginning student teaching, I overcompensated with uncertainty. Would I do a good job? How was I going to complete all of the required activities and still keep up with lesson plans? What did my cooperating teacher expect from me? Was there a faster way to get to school so that I would not have to leave at six o'clock in the morning each day? Would I fit in and would anyone like me? Subconsciously, I mused through these questions on a daily basis for weeks leading up to my first day of student teaching, but my mind always found its way back to the simple concept that the experience was one that I should learn from and enjoy, and I knew that I was well prepared to accomplish the task.

It was not long into my student teaching experience that I realized the extent to which I would be required to exert myself: I spent nearly twelve hours at Marion County Technical Center (MCTC) on my first day of student teaching and woke up on day two with a serious sinus infection. I quickly recognize the dedication, passion, and unselfishness that being an agricultural education teacher requires.

Students in agricultural education courses at MCTC have an advantage over students at many other schools because they elect to attend the Tech Center and can ultimately become certified in the programs. I was fortunate that my students wanted to be in class (most of the time) and were seriously planning to go into animal science professions. Those that were not following

such a career path still enjoyed the course work because it typically pertained to a hobby or interest of theirs. I learned from my students; I can only pray my students took as much from my instruction as their teacher as I did from their interaction in the classes.

While teaching courses in small and large animal science, equine science, intermediate veterinary practices, and applied anatomy and physiology, I relied heavily upon my educational background in animal sciences, particularly the courses I took as an undergraduate while earning my Bachelor of Science degree in Animal and Veterinary Sciences, as well as my experiences working for a veterinarian, on a dairy farm, and raising sheep. I used my own experiences to better enable the students to recognize how information from a book is actually used in real life.

I spent many afternoons and evenings helping students prepare for public speaking contests, the Ham, Bacon, and Egg show and sale, and a variety of other FFA activities. I helped chaperone middle and high school students on an FFA trip to Lexington, KY. I was fortunate enough to meet parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, and a variety of other family members of my students while conducting Supervised Agricultural Experience visits, interacting with the FFA Alumni, and other events. With the help of a very wonderful individual, Mr. John Barnes, I held an adult education course on Financial Wellness

to provide information for community members on how to be financially sound.

I was also very fortunate to have worked with a wonderful cooperating teacher, Dr. Larry Watson, and amazing staff at MCTC. I was welcomed into the group as one of their own and learned a great deal from their strong connection as colleagues.

I learned a lot about myself through my student teaching experience. My patience for others, specifically young adults, was tested. Dozens of times each day my ability to manage my time came into play. I recognized how very much I am loved by those people closest to me. More than anything, I found out that when God has a plan in mind for me, I can not stop Him! Every experience I was blessed with, despite my grumbling and complaining, was one that I have learned from and would not trade for anything. They have all made me who I am and I thank God each day for his blessings in my life.

Despite my initial worrying before student teaching, I have a strong passion for agriculture, and it was a privilege to impart some of my knowledge and wisdom on the students I taught. It is easy to be well educated and know many things about specific topics or areas and even life in general, but it takes a truly gifted and blessed individual to successfully share that information with others. I now only hope that I may someday grow to be such an individual.

Laura completed her student teaching at Marion County Technical Center under the supervision of Dr. Larry Watson.

Field Experience Reflections: The Best of Both Worlds

by Julie Roop

This past summer I had the opportunity to work for Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance as a Loss Control Representative. My area of agricultural interest lies in both agriculture education and business and in May, I will be graduating with a degree in both agricultural business and education. It turned out that through my summer internship, I was an educator while conducting agriculture business. It was truly the best of both worlds!

My time with Nationwide Agribusiness was an experience that taught me about the insurance industry, helped me decide on my future career and allowed me to expand my knowledge of the agricultural industry.

I gained many new skills as a result of my internship. I improved both my oral and written communication skills while interacting with agents, policyholders, managers, third parties, other departments and team members. I also learned how to operate several new computer and processing systems related to the insurance industry. The job responsibilities associated with this job encouraged me to improve my ability to prioritize my work schedule. I learned to be a self-disciplined individual as a result of working from a home office and managing my own work schedule.

I was able to work with farmers in both Maryland and West Virginia with very di-

verse operations. As a result, I gained a more concrete understanding of some agricultural industries that I was not previously familiar with, like poultry and equine. Most of the policy holders welcomed my advice and were very pleasant to work with. I learned a great deal while visiting with farmers in these particular industries.

I certainly made an impact on the farm owner policy holders and the company. My main task was to ensure safe practices on the policy holders' operations. By making suggestions to improve safety management practices to the policy holders, I was helping to educate them and at the same time was making the industry safer. Considering that

Field Experience Reflections: The Best of Both Worlds (continued)

agriculture is the second most dangerous occupation, this is not a job to be taken lightly. I also made a difference in the way the company operates. By acting in what could be considered a checks-and-balances position, I made certain that the company was insuring policies that met standards and would not cause a potential loss to the company.

Nationwide Agribusiness has some core values that they strive for in serving their customers. I have adopted these same values as an employee of Nationwide but also to use in whatever agriculture field that I enter.

The value of trust is one of the most important. The customer and the business must develop a working relationship that is built on trusting one another. This job

has taught me the value of accountability. Nationwide Agribusiness as well as myself value feedback and coaching. This internship was my first experience with insurance. The training provided to me was exceptional. This company makes sure that you have the skills to be successful at your job. This does not stop after you begin your job; supervisors provided useful feedback and offer extra training opportunities to make sure that you can progress as a business person.

I also appreciate the value of working as a team. I knew that I could count on the other interns that I worked with as well as my supervisors to live up to promises and goals we set as a team. Valuing people is a core value to live by, especially in a business field where you are service providers. I learned this summer to truly listen to the needs of the customer as well as to look out

for them in terms of safety. Acting with honesty and integrity are also a core value of Nationwide Agribusiness. I believe that a good business person will act with the utmost moral and ethical principles.

Wherever my path happens to lead me, I know that the values that were taught to me by Nationwide Agribusiness were a good foundation in being a successful and honest business woman. My goal is to use values of trust, honesty, accountability, coaching, and teamwork in all that I do. It is these values which make a person respected and admired. I have a genuine interest in and a passion for agriculture and it is my goal to use my areas of interest in both education and business in order to insure a bright future for the industry.

Julie completed her field experience with Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance.

Field Experience Reflections: Student Teaching Experience Summary *by Kellen McNutt*

At 12:42...AM, several tired bodies gather around one gallon of milk and a package of double stuffed Oreos to round out their eventful day. This is what my late evenings/ early mornings looked like as I student taught at Tyler Consolidated High School these past twelve weeks. I moved into an apartment in Tyler County for the three months of student teaching, which saved a lot of time and gas. The selection of Tyler Consolidated was a perfect fit.

What I wanted to accomplish as a student teacher and in life can be summed up in one quote, "*Aspire to inspire before you expire.*" I know it's a tongue twister, but it is a testament to what I have learned as a student teacher. I was not the only one doing the inspiring during my student teaching; I have been inspired with several experiences and people along the way. I have also had the opportunity to learn some new and innovative things as a student teacher. They include, but are definitely not limited to:

- Keeping safety glasses on a student is like trying to keep a hat on a dog.
- Don't tell an introvert that in 5 days they will be doing the public speaking contest. Especially while you are riding a bus; motion sickness combined with anxiety equals a mess for the bus driver.

- Students (girls) can not go to the bathroom by themselves, ever.
- High school students have more money than any other single group of people. The snack machine industry is making a killing off of schools.
- If a student can't seem to take their stuff home, put it on the chalk board, no matter how big, with their name written on the board. It will disappear quickly.
- Keep a bottle of Germ-X on your desk to help prevent the spread of their sicknesses.
- Students are innocent thieves. Always demand collateral for borrowing a writing utensil otherwise you will never see it again.
- Students are very jealous, if you make ice cream with one you have to make it with all.
- High school students are pure entertainment. It is rare to go a day without a funny experience.

I will also be leaving Mr. Ammons with several innovations as well:

- A clean desk is the only way to function.
- Cleaning and organizing can help you be more efficient and help you avoid writing lesson plans.
- Water is much better than Coke, but Oreos are always acceptable.

- Free food is always the best because it has low expectations.
- Neurotic Obsessive Compulsive people can be great to work with; they always know where things are and if you need your M&Ms sorted they can help.
- Don't leave your headlights on because you might end up sleeping at school; it is doable but not recommended.
- Finally, Post- It Notes are the most amazing invention that can prevent any problems that might arise.

Overall, student teaching has been a very positive experience for me and I have learned a lot about myself. This was an environment that I was not looking forward to because I knew that it was going to be a challenge. I had to face my fears of being rejected by the students and not being a perfect teacher. I think the scariest thing for students going into student teaching is the uncertainty of how things will turn out. I have been very blessed with my cooperating teacher, site and students. They have given me many stories to tell in the past three months. I will be missing all the late nights, entertaining students, milk and Oreos.

Kellen completed her student teaching at Tyler Consolidated School under the supervision of Mr. Leon Ammons.

Field Experience Reflections: Energy Express Mentor

by Amanda Bostic

My summer as an Energy Express Mentor was eventful; it was sometimes chaotic and stressful but always enlightening. I was able to assist elementary-age children to overcome the hurdles of reading and learn to enjoy the adventure that is waiting to be explored with the turn of every page. Energy Express is an eight week intensive reading program for school-age children during the summer months and is offered through the coordinated efforts of the WVU Extension Service and AmeriCorps. Each classroom is composed of eight children and a mentor. Each day the group participates in reading, writing, art, and noncompetitive recreation activities all organized around a centralized weekly theme. Through the involvement of AmeriCorps, the children participating in the program and the site team each have to complete a visible community service project. The children in my group ranged in age from those entering first grade to those entering the third grade. Each child brought with them a unique set of skills, interests, and abilities that added to the melting pot that was our group.

I accepted the job as an Energy Express Mentor unaware of the daunting task that was ahead. In my idealistic mindset, Energy Express provided children with an opportunity to enjoy reading through various activities and me a chance to work within a youth Extension outreach program. As a student of Agricultural and Extension Education I had received training on how to teach programs geared toward adult learners. I soon realized that learning is not dependent on age and many of the techniques learned could be adapted for dealing with “younger” adults.

It was not until the second week of the program that I began to realize the realities of Energy Express. Family visits allowed me a chance to see where each child was coming from. Talking with parents, I realized that some of my students had individualized learning challenges. I must admit that I was alarmed by this as I do not have formal training assisting children with learning and behavior disorders.

The children with the learning and or behavior disorders were sometimes difficult to approach and integrate into group activities. For instance, one young man refused to participate on a daily basis and would then engage in physical altercations with other students. One morning during

family week the young man indicated that he did not want to write about his family because no one seemed to have time for him. He was acting out to receive attention! I was glad that this young man was comfortable enough to share his circumstances with me and immediately tried different ways to persuade his engagement in group activities. I gave him special tasks, or allowed him to complete individual activities that he could add to the group project. I even found books relating to his favorite subject and placed them in our classroom library. These measures secured his participation in the program for a while, but eventually he would act out in such a way that he would be suspended from summer programming. After one such incident, his mother contacted the program and said that he would no longer be attending; he would be staying with his grandmother for the remainder of the summer. This taught me that Energy Express is not for everyone. Although the program could benefit his academic needs this young man needed the personal attention that staying at home could provide.

Another young man saw great improvement while working through the program. During his home visit his mother shared that he had been diagnosed with a learning disability but could participate along with other children if care was taken to keep him occupied. This boy had tremendous amounts of energy and would spastically begin to run around the room during activities disrupting the other children. I began to give him special jobs during given assignments; he became the classroom helper. He would help other students finish their projects if he was finished early. He would help organize the room and complete extra projects when he had additional time. He also inspired the other students to take a more active role in the class and we soon established daily duties that would rotate as the week progressed. For example we had a lunch line leader, a mail person, and a recreation leader. It was through this simple example that I learned how the activities within Energy Express can help to establish a classroom community built on the concept of helping one another.

There were activities within the Energy Express day that met with a great deal of resistance. In my group this was writing. Few of the children knew how to or wanted to express their thoughts on paper. The child inside of me empathized with their situ-

ation. In all reality, when I was their age I would have rather been outside playing in the sunshine. After several days of resistance, I realized that like adult programming if participation is expected from a group there must be felt need to know on the part of the learners; they have to want to do it. I then tried to make writing activities more interactive. If the children would rather be playing a game than writing, then perhaps writing could be organized using a game mentality. I learned that when giving instruction to a child the more information provided the better. The Energy Express model is designed to help facilitate writing through various activities such as group story telling, the making of books, the writing of plays and letters. I tried to think of a new and different type of writing to try each day. With that strategy in place, I did see marked improvement.

Regardless of the challenges and victories that I experienced as a mentor I know that the program works. Through daily exposure to reading and writing these skills improve. For instance, one morning my group had some extra time and asked if they could READ! As a group they chose a small book and began taking turns reading a page; the older children helped the younger ones and within two minutes time the class was reading in unison. Despite their personal struggles and triumphs or the group's resistance to certain tasks the program had improved their reading skills while they were busy having fun!

In retrospect my experience as an Energy Express Mentor reminds me of my involvement as 4-H member through the County Extension Office. Four-H provided me with many life skills and opportunities. Looking back as an extension education student I am able to see where that group atmosphere and the activities I performed as a member taught me self-confidence, decision making skills, the value of teamwork, and gave me an opportunity to serve my community. Energy Express, like 4-H taught me many new things about myself and also about the realities of the working world. It is my hope that programs such as Energy Express can continue that legacy and provide future generations with these valuable skills. No matter what path one takes in life lessons taught in the affirmation of character will not be forgotten. They will forever be a resource to be drawn upon and a memory to be cherished.

Field Experience Reflections: Student Teacher Reflections

by Amanda Hawkins

I was very excited to start student teaching at Liberty High School. The program was different from the one that I attended during High School. This program has a classroom with five computers, a greenhouse, and an agriculture mechanics metal-working lab. Liberty High School is on a block schedule, so I was worried about how I would make my lessons last long enough.

The first class that I started teaching was Ag and Natural Resources I. I started out with a lesson on the FFA Creed. My cooperating teacher, Mr. Carr, wanted me to make sure that every student could recite the creed and truly understand what the creed means and why it is important. I started with the creed because I was a freshman creed contestant during high school, so I was very comfortable with this subject matter. Mr. Carr also allowed me to pick the freshman creed contestant for the regional creed contest. The student I picked also happened to be on the baseball team, which meant he did not have time for after school practice. During the contest, he was nervous and paused for a few seconds while he remembered what came next. I did not realize that this would be an excruciating time for an agriculture teacher. I could not make eye contact with him, because all I wanted to do was tell him the next word. This was definitely an aspect of being a teacher that I did not expect.

One of the more enjoyable aspects of student teaching is the SAE visits. The stu-

dents are always very excited to have you visit their SAE. They showed me everything that they did during their entire SAE. These visits are just one way that the students find out that you really care about them. These visits were also a great opportunity to meet the student's parents and have a short parent teacher conference. I also noticed that after I conducted an SAE visit the student's behavior usually changes for the better.

Another fond memory that I have of my student teaching experience, is the after school practices for the West Virginia Envirothon. I never participated in the Envirothon while I was in school. This provided a great learning opportunity for me as well as the students. I really enjoyed working with the students during the after school practices. The students stayed after school because they wanted to learn the material, not because they were being coerced to learn the subject matter. This provided the ideal classroom environment and was different from the classes during the school day. The Envirothon Contest also provided me the opportunity to be a chaperone on an overnight trip. I was very nervous, but overall I had a good time on this trip. The trip also provided me the opportunity to develop a closer bond with a group of students.

During my student teaching, sleep became a fond memory. I never truly realized

how much time you spend working on lesson plans and other necessary tasks when you are a teacher, until I started becoming the teacher. I can truly say that I have a stronger sense of appreciation for my previous teachers after undergoing this experience.

Another unexpected aspect of being a teacher that I discovered is that you really do become close to your students. I honestly did not think that I would come to care about them as much as I did. There were a few students who tested my patience and were very disrespectful at the beginning of my student teaching experience that ended up becoming some of my favorite students by the end of my student teaching experience.

I think that this is an appropriate time to thank Mr. Carr for being my cooperating teacher. I really appreciate the extra time and effort that you put in just to help me in my pursuit of becoming an agriculture teacher. You were always ready to remind me that I can do this, and that everyone has an off day. Thank you for believing in me and allowing me to make my own mistakes and helping me to find ways to remedy them. I hope that one day I will surpass the expectations that you have for me. If I can do that, then I will finally be the kind of agriculture teacher that I always wanted to become.

Amanda completed her student teaching at Liberty High School (Harrison County) under the supervision of Mr. James Carr.

Field Experience Reflections: Student Teaching Reflections

by Veronica Milliken

The best teachers I had in school were understanding, fair, experienced, focused in the classroom and never made me feel stupid for asking a question. The best teachers were my FFA Advisors. Like my experience in high school, the students at Grafton High School are getting a great experience with their advisor; Mr. Tennant. My goal during this semester was to be like the best teachers I have had in class and observed. Being an agricultural education teacher carries with it many responsibilities. Not only is an agricultural teacher supposed to teach in the classroom and in the lab but also serve as an advisor to the students.

During my time student teaching, I believe that the relationships founded with some students were the best part of my

experience. As I got more involved with the classes and started talking to the students more, I remembered how everyday could be so dramatic in high school. Many of the students enrolled in the classes in the agriculture department in the technical center didn't really enjoy their required classes in the high school. "Book work" and taking notes were the last activities they would choose. Teaching this learning style can be difficult when sitting in the classroom, but much more enjoyable when outside the classroom in a hands-on learning environment.

Classroom discipline was a difficult concept for me to grasp. I knew that I needed to put my foot down early and be consistent with my decisions. But I wanted

to believe that just by setting high expectations would make all my students want to meet those expectations and behavior would not be a problem. I was wrong. Some students did not want to be in the class, some didn't care about what was going on, and others never had an unexpressed thought. Learning how to channel the energy of those students takes patience and experience.

It was a gratifying experience to work with the Taylor County program and Mr. Tennant. I hope that my time student teaching has assisted the agriculture classes to meet their educational goals.

Veronica completed her student teaching at Taylor County Technical center under the supervision of Mr. Steve Tennant.

Important Dates

Jun 24-26	WVAEE and NAAE Region VI Conference	Jefferson High School
Jul 9-12	State FFA Convention	Cedar Lakes
Aug 10	State 4-H and FFA Dairy Cattle Contest	Jackson's Mill
Aug 18	WVU - First Day of Classes	
Aug 30	WVU Football - Villanova	Morgantown
Sep 24-26	WV Career Development Events	Morgantown
Sep 27	WVU Football - Marshall	Morgantown
Oct 4	WVU Football - Rutgers	Morgantown
Oct 11	WVU Football - Syracuse	Morgantown
Oct 22-25	National FFA Convention	Indianapolis
Oct 23	WVU Football - Auburn	Morgantown

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Published by:

West Virginia University
 Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry,
 and Consumer Sciences
 Division of Resource Management
 Agricultural & Extension Education
 Morgantown, WV 26506-6108

in cooperation with

West Virginia Department of Education
 Division of Technical & Adult
 Education Services
 Office of Program Services
 Agricultural Education
 Charleston, WV 25305

and

West Virginia Association
 of Agricultural Educators

Volume LVIII No. 2

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 Morgantown, WV
 Permit No. 34

Agricultural & Extension Education
 Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and
 Consumer Sciences
 P.O. Box 6108, Room 2056 Ag. Sciences Bldg.
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