

Connections

The EESLPD West Office Newsletter

February 2018

Volume 2 Issue 2



For the February Issue of Connections, we would like to recognize Dr. Bobbie Rowland. Bobbie has been instrumental in not only the development of our program, but our program's continued growth and our unwavering commitment to high quality, on behalf of young children and their families. From providing knowledge and theory to practice support to so many college students, to now reveling in the growth and development of her treasured great grandchildren. It is truly amazing to step back and grasp the sheer spectrum of experiences in Bobbie's life and how they all orbit around her inherent passion and love of children. I remember, a number of years ago, Bobbie introducing herself to a group as "kind of a legend." Bobbie, you are not "kind of" a legend my friend, you are the epitome of a true legend. We proudly stand upon your shoulders and are grateful for your leadership.

Amanda

Dr. JaneDiane Smith, Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education & Child Development at UNC Charlotte has worked closely with Bobbie for many years. Dr. Smith shares, "Bobbie was influential in establishing the Child & Family Development Program (CFDP) more than 40 years ago. As a 'trailblazer' at UNC Charlotte, she created an innovative program focused on understanding how young children develop and learn in the context of their families and communities intended to prepare professionals to work across diverse settings and disciplines. The impact of Bobbie's positive influence on the lives of so many young children, families, and professionals is immeasurable!"

Additionally, in the video below, our very own Rich Lambert talks about the impact Bobbie has had on children and families in North Carolina.



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Mentor Minute

Supporting teachers as they incorporate 21st Century Skills (Part 2 of 2)

For the 2nd part of this two part Mentor Minute series, 21st Century Life Skills will be emphasized.

Learning Skills	Literacy Skills	Life Skills
Critical Thinking	Information Literacy	Flexibility
Creative Thinking	Media Literacy	Initiative
Collaborating	Technology Literacy	Social Skills
Communicating		Productivity
		Leadership

Children need to learn these skills in a safe environment. They need to feel appreciated, valued, and successful as they make efforts to complete things on their own. Teacher should keep in mind that these life skills more easily develop when focus is placed on the process and not the product. Again, exploration of [NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development](#), in particular the Approaches to Play and Learning section, will guide teachers on ways to promote life skills. Additional strategies include:

- Providing long periods of unstructured play both indoors and outdoors
- Encouraging children to do things on their own with scaffolded support from adults based on each child's needs
- Planning authentic learning scenarios (i.e grocery store, doctor's office, clothing store, etc.)
- Encouraging children to take care of their classroom through use of a classroom job chart
- Facilitating children's solutions for a *Problem of the Week* such as determining ways to better care for classroom books, considering how to avoid pushing when in the hallways, etc.
- Sharing with families activities that can promote life skills at home



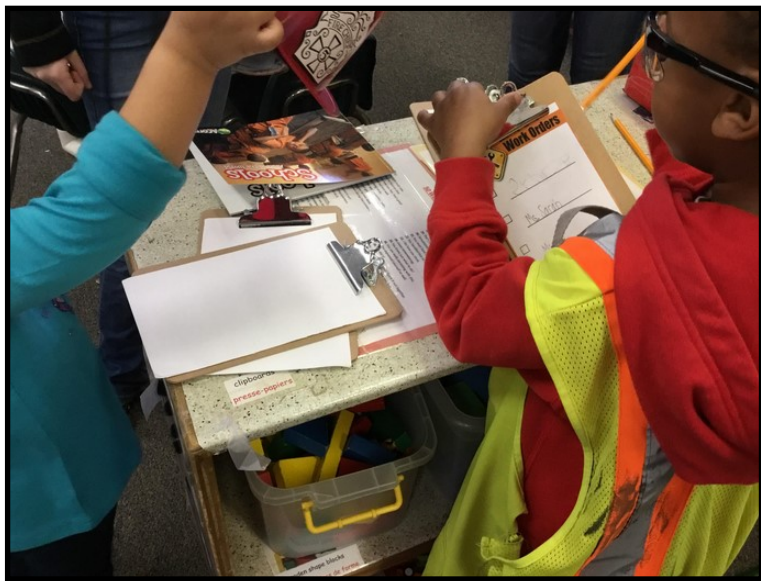
Children talking out a solution to a problem in the "Peace Corner"



Children preparing a class garden

Mentor Minute (cont.)

Promoting 21st Century Life Skills Through Authentic Learning Scenarios



On the construction site



At the grocery store



While engaging in a Department Store study, a teacher asked a child whom often expresses herself through detailed drawings, "What might be found in a toy department and how might the toys be displayed?" Those open-ended questions led to the above picture the child described as her and her mom at the toy department in Walmart.

Additional 21st Century Skills resource links:

- [Mind in the Making-Book by Ellen Galinsky](#)
- [How Planning and Reflecting Develop Young Children's Thinking Skills -Article by Ann S. Epstein](#)
- [Supporting Children's Development -Extract from Putting Children First by NCAC](#)
- [Building Blocks of Learning -Video from Zero to Three Website](#)

Please click on each item listed above for more information

*Special thanks to Lead Mentor, Martha Berry,
for contributions to the Mentor Minute.*



Since 2009, Amanda Vestal has worked with the EESLPD Office serving in several roles. She started out as a Partner Mentor then became a Regional Lead followed by the State EESLPD Supervisor. Currently, she is our inspired leader in her role as the UNC Charlotte EESLPD Coordinator.

When asked about what she likes best about her work, Amanda expresses, "When I am in classrooms with children there is a feeling that I get that touches me in the center of my heart, it's visceral, and I get that same feeling when I think about this team, it's powerful! What also inspires me is that we have endless opportunities ahead of us....the possibilities for our work and our reach is endless."

She says that she cannot choose just one favorite children's book but likes all Sandra Boynton books "because we read them every day when my kids were toddlers, especially Pajama Time!" Additionally, her favorite *teacher* book is Giraffes Can't Dance, and her personal favorite is Where the Wild Things Are.

Outside of work, Amanda enjoys engaging in her artistic side and shares, "I love to paint- I paint on canvas and have actually painted murals on the walls of my children's bedrooms for years. It is truly one of the most relaxing things for me."

COLLABORATOR CORNER

Denise Machuga is the Director of *A Place to Grow* which has partnered with the EESLPD since 2012. Denise shares her collaborative experiences by stating, "For me, the best thing about working with the EESLPD is the support. My first year as a partner was very challenging and even at times now, it can still be challenging. The support has always been there though. Being the director of a Developmental Day Center brought many challenges when it came to the teacher evaluations. I wasn't just observing our NC PreK teacher, I was observing and evaluating all of our 3-5 year old teachers. I was very fortunate however to have a wonderful mentor assigned to our center who always took the time to answer questions during the work day or even in the wee hours of the night when I was still awake working on the teacher evaluations. As the mentor has moved on with her career at the EESLPD, she still is always there for support and to answer any questions I may have. I have learned a lot through her but one of the most valuable lessons I have learned is to remain calm! If she didn't have an answer for me, she took the time to find the answer. I appreciate you Stephanie Bridges! I also appreciate everyone in the EESLPD office who has taken the time to help me with this process."

Denise is originally from Pennsylvania and moved to the Mooresville area 14 years ago. She met her husband on a dating site and discovered that they lived approximately 45 minutes away from each other here in NC. After talking, they discovered that they had also grown up in Pennsylvania approximately 45 minutes away from each other and had attended the same college yet their paths had never crossed.

Her favorite children's book is *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.





DID YOU KNOW?

On February 7th, Dr. Bobbie Rowland was featured on the UNC Charlotte Cato College of Education's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UNCCharlotteEducation/>) to celebrate a recent honor bestowed to her from Gaston County Pre-K Administrative Board for over 20 years of service! Later this month, Bobbie will be also recognized in the upcoming edition of the Cato College of Education monthly newsletter.

Bobbie

You're a rockstar!



What do you think?



The first 5 people to email Jessica Ward (jward@uncc.edu) the answer to the question below will be entered to win a Starbucks gift card. *Your answers may be included in a future issue.

The winner will be announced in March.

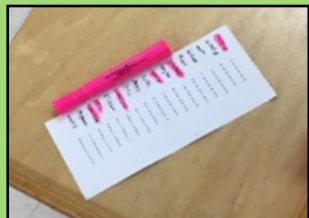
Which of the resources from the two-part Mentor Minute on 21st Century skills did you find most helpful and why?

Introducing a new section of the newsletter entitled

"Highlights from the Field"

In this section, staff members will be selected each month to share positive experiences of their time in the field.

Rhonda Hamby shares, "During a classroom observation I noticed a child with a



clipboard going around from center to center and checking off a list. The child was so focused on what she was doing that I was drawn to find out what was on the clipboard. She then went to the teacher and stated that she had finished her job.

Later I asked the teacher to tell me more about the child's assignment. The teacher explained that the child had chosen to be the "attendance taker." "The clipboard contained a list of the children's names and she was going around from center to center taking the attendance for the day." The teacher went on to explain that she was working to provide leadership roles for the children and had asked the children what jobs they would like to have on the list. Taking the attendance each day was one of the jobs the children listed. Seeing the look on the child's face as she took the leadership role and responsibility in the classroom was uplifting."

Stephanie Bridges contributes, "Last year, this child (with autism) was in a preschool special education class. His parents noticed that his communication skills were not progressing and that his troubling social behaviors were increasing. They wanted an environment that would allow him to learn communication skills from his peers and allow him to develop stronger social connections. He was placed in a NC PreK classroom this year and receives a collaborative consultation model of support. His teacher's commitment to inclusion and collaboration with his support team is proving positive outcomes for this child. A special education consultant and a speech-language pathologist come into the classroom several times a month. They communicate with the teacher and the teacher assistant after each visit and brainstorm suggestions and strategies for his teachers to use. (examples of suggestions and strategies: how to increase child's participation in activities by using his existing preferences, prompts to ease transitions, making home visits one time a month, providing the family with duplicates of books and materials used in the classroom to reinforce concepts at home, etc.). The efforts made by this teacher and this child's support team has produced nothing aside from great progress and positive results. The amount of support he has needed each month is beginning to gradually decrease. He is now able to make transitions appropriately, generally follows the daily routines, and is now tolerating activities without meltdowns. We should all heed the power of strong teacher commitment, inclusion, and collaboration."

Highlights from the Field

(continued)

Susie Connelly shares, "Having worked in preschool classrooms in one form or another for the past 23 years I am still amazed to be able to share with people that these are spaces filled with daily joys and miracles. I returned this year to serve a teacher who I had served in the past when she was a creative builder of spaces, extending children's ideas and engaging in emergent curriculum planning. My work with her last year however had me wondering if she had lost her passion for following the lead of the CHILD. When I entered her room at the beginning of the year I noticed she had rebuilt her area for children to get away from the group and had added a teepee that she and her husband had built over the summer. I was impressed and excited to see her coming back in August with a renewed vigor and professional initiative. I talked with her about her ideas for the area and wondered to myself what had happened over the summer to help rekindle her spark.

As the year has progressed this teacher has been challenged with a child with high needs behaviors. Despite this challenge however, I have been continually impressed with the growth that the teacher and the assistant have made together in their journey to support the needs of this child and the 17 others in the class. They have built systems to support children in developing emotional literacy; built systems to support children to learn how to calm down and manage feelings and they have intentionally worked to support children to build friendships and demonstrate friendship skills- including **negotiation!** In our pre and post conferences we have had the opportunities to talk about their efforts to target social and emotional growth and how these efforts are paying off in the classroom. It is clear that in this classroom at least, the challenging behaviors have not deterred this teacher, but have actually helped her to find a new focus to target her own professional growth. Throughout the year she continues to seek out and try new ideas in response to the needs of the children. In her pursuit of effective strategies, she and her assistant have built a strong partnership and have found some ideas that work and some that DO NOT. However, throughout her quest to become more intentional in her efforts to support social and emotional development she has built systems and so much more. She has created a community in her classroom that has built confidence in herself, the self-confidence of her assistant, and the increasing confidence and independence of the children in the classroom. It is moments like these in this work that remind me of a Grateful Dead song I have always loved, I NEED A MIRACLE! It was an unexpected outcome and a learning moment for me to recognize that sometimes the most challenging classrooms can create the most miraculous outcomes!"

You can find the song I NEED A MIRACLE at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xqiu0ekahw>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 2018

February 20th

Observation 2 completed (Continuing-SPII licensed)

February 20th

Observation 3 completed (Initial-SPI /LE licensed)

February 26th

Mid-Year PDP reviews completed (All teachers)

March 2018

March 7th

Mid-Year PDP reviews locked in NCEES/Home Base (All teachers)

March 12th-2:00pm-3:00pm UNC Charlotte Staff

Full Team Meeting (WebEx link to join below)

-30 minute break

-3:30pm-4:30pm Staff and Partners

<https://uncc.webex.com/uncc/j.php?MTID=m961c7dd775b9582c8d2600dbec87f463>

March 14th

Observation 2 locked in NCEES/Home Base (Continuing-SPII licensed)

March 14th

Observation 3 locked in NCEES/Home Base (Initial-SPI /LE licensed)

For more information about the EESLPD West Office at UNC Charlotte, please follow this link:
<https://ceme.uncc.edu/early-educator-support-lincensure-and-professional-development-eeslpd-office>