

Aspiring Teachers Learn From Stockton Faculty at NJ Future Educators Association Conference

About 175 High School Students Take Workshops in Origami, Social Studies, High-Stakes Testing and Visual Literacy

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Galloway Township, NJ – “Teaching is not a job, it’s a calling,” said Larry Fieber, executive director of the Center for Future Educators (CFE) at The College of New Jersey and director of the New Jersey Future Educators Association. He spoke to 175 high school students from 15 area high schools and their teachers who spent today at Stockton University for the 2015 New Jersey Future Educators Association Conference.

Dr. Claudine Keenan, dean of the Stockton University School of Education, welcomed the students saying, “Today I have a chance to look at the future.”

“Please look around this room. You are the future of teaching,” she said, adding that teaching makes all other professions possible.

“You’ll be looking at the future every day in your classrooms,” she told them.

Dr. Meg White, assistant professor of Education at Stockton University, co-coordinated the event with Dr. Lois Spitzer, associate professor of Teacher Education.

“Bringing this program to Stockton allows us to build collaborative relationships with local high school teachers, as well as offer an opportunity for students interested in a career in teaching to network with each other,” said White.

Jeanne DelColle, instructional development and strategic partnerships specialist at Stockton University and also the 2012 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, presented a session “Putting the ‘Social’ Back in Social Studies: Getting Out of the Textbook and Keeping it Real.”

“Why teach social studies?” she asked a group of participants.

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Because you will cover history, literature, art, entertainment, technology, sports, music, psychology and so much more, she explained. "Social studies is life. You live it. You breathe it," she said.

Coming into the conference, Howard Johnson, a Bridgeton High School student, was unsure of what he wanted to major in as a college student.

After taking DelColle's social studies presentation he said, "She had me kind of wanting to be a social studies teacher, so I can learn how people think. And I didn't really realize that social studies covers so much. I thought it was basically a history class talking about past events, but it can be contemporary issues and stuff happening now and things that might happen in the future."

That workshop was the "most inspirational," he said. DelColle also "went over perspective and it's the most important thing in teaching because you have to value everyone's perspective to be the most effective teacher possible. Valuing other peoples' perspectives stops conflict and allows students to get the most out of a class."

Johnson also attended Assistant Dean of the School of Education Dr. Pamela Vaughan's workshop, "Learning and the Brain." He said the session was "interactive" and covered the different ways students can learn, such as visual and auditory learning styles.

Dr. Norma Boakes, associate professor of Education, uses origami as a teaching tool to make mathematics education hands-on and fun.

Have you ever looked at a math textbook and thought it wasn't in English, she asked? Origami has its own language and symbols just like math, she went on to say. It makes math concepts tangible and can help improve spatial reasoning skills.

Boakes shared stories of her days as a high school geometry teacher when she began to infuse origami into her classroom instead of relying solely on traditional teaching methods. Her students begged her to continue incorporating origami into the lessons.

The table, covered in multicolored paper squares and newspapers, quickly became a workstation as the students began folding sailboat models with Boakes' direction.

Southern Regional High School freshman Victoria Sheeran, of Manahawkin, already knows that she enjoys working with young learners and that she wants to teach all subjects as an elementary school teacher. She said she enjoys children and babysits for her neighbor.

"I had a good experience today because both teachers showed me hands-on activities," Sheeran said.

Other workshops included "How to Flip the Classroom," "A Walk in the PARCC: Teaching in an Era of New Standards and High-Stakes Testing," "Today's Millennials," and "Making a Difference in the Lives of Students with Disabilities."

The following high schools participated: Atlantic City High School, Middle Township High School, Southern Regional High School, Bridgeton High School, Camden County Technical High School, Lincoln High School, Newark Leadership Academy, Nottingham High School, Palmyra High School, Pennsville High School, People's Preparatory Charter, Plainfield Academy, Sterling High School, Washington Township High School and Woodbury High School.

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