

# Professional Development Schools (PDS) Retreat

September 25, 2009  
Erie 1 BOCES

---

## Keynote



### **Globalization: Bringing the World Into Your Classroom, and Your Classroom Into the World**

*Deepa Govindaraj, co-founder of Minerva*

Deepa Govindaraj is a co-founder of Minerva, a company which helps organizations to realize their professional development objectives. Minerva services multinationals and small to medium enterprises in areas including communication, service training, technical writing, sales training, teamwork, change management, diversity, leadership and executive coaching. Minerva also services educational institutions in areas including Global Literacy and diversity training, interdisciplinary development, multimedia integration, special needs students, leadership development and literacy. Deepa graduated from the University at Buffalo in 2006 as an Honors Liberal Arts major and received

her Master's in General Education from the University at Buffalo's Sociology of Education program. Among her many accomplishments, she has been honored as the Kaplan Teacher of the Month and Second and Third Cycles 2006, and First Cycle 2007. In 2006 she received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence, and also the University at Buffalo Pillar of Leader Award.

## Honoree



### **Week of the Classroom Teacher Honoree**

Ms. Pamela Weinrieb is a librarian at Westminster Community Charter School. She was honored during the Week of the Classroom Teacher for incorporating globalization and preparing her students for the global world.

John McGowan presenting Ms. Weinrieb with the award.

## Action Research Presentations

### **Developing Integrated Social Studies Units using Differentiated Instructional Strategies:**

**Westminster Community Charter School, Buffalo**

*Pixita Del Prado Hill (Buffalo State) with Pamela Weinrieb (WCCS Media Specialist) and BSC teacher candidates.*

With the guidance of experienced teachers, teacher candidates developed integrated social studies units that incorporated differentiated instructional strategies. These units, with all supporting materials, were presented to the school as resources for the WCCS teachers. The project was framed within a service learning context as a means by which to provide requested materials for teachers to improve social studies instruction and meet the needs of all students in their classrooms.



### **Understanding Geometry Through Technology and Hands On Centers : Kalfas Magnet School, Niagara Falls**

*Melinda Cuddy (Buffalo State) with Angela Martin, Danielle Dionne (Kindergarten), and Maria Ehde, Lynn Pasek (Second Grade)*

The project was to develop knowledge/value of local workers and professions. The students jointly created interviews, invited professionals into school for interviews and presentations. They (the students) filmed the interviews; Kinders constructed buildings that represented the buildings in which the firemen, judge, etc worked. They collaborated with the high school communications dept/students to edit the DVD (students learned tons of technology skills to film, edit make decisions on content, etc.).



**From Letterboxing to Bookboxing: Developing Children as Explorers with Multiple Literacies:  
Hyde Park Elementary, Niagara Falls**

*Christine Tredo and Maria Ceprano (Buffalo State) with schools Enterprise and Hyde Park*

Teacher candidates will create a bookboxing activity which is an adaptation of letterboxing. According to Hall (2004) this is an intriguing treasure hunting experiences that allows participants to read and follow directions, interpret and apply map reading skills, problem solve and use critical thinking skills which will lead at hem to a final destination that rewards them with their hidden finding. Trade books to supplement their classroom library will be their "treasure."



**Polygons, Puzzlers, and Pizza : Discovery School #67, Buffalo**  
*Nancy Kenny, Maureen Myers (School #67) and Hibajene Shandomo (Buffalo State)*

Based on an analysis of the NYS math tests by the school's math action team, an area of weakness was identified. One strategy to refresh students' learning was to create a family event to build polygons from food items and write riddles and poems about polygons. Teacher candidates' preparedness to interact with parents was enhanced. The school's philosophy of "hands on, minds on" encouraging inquiry, creativity and critical thinking were supported by this Service Learning project.

**Pre-service Teachers Collaborating with Families to Foster Global Literacy Connections : Enterprise Charter, Buffalo**  
*Maria Ceprano and Nancy Chicola (Buffalo State) with Enterprise students and their parents*

A Global Literacy Fair was held at the Enterprise Charter School for the purpose of promoting parental involvement in their children's literacy development and socio-cultural responsiveness. The planning of the fair involved teacher candidates enrolled in EDU 310W and EDU 311W who created learning stations for engaging parental and child participation in global cultures and literary opportunities.

**Building Fluency and Expression with Book Buddies : West Street Elementary School, Sanborn**  
*Robert Polino, Jenn Golias, Aliscia Krecisz, and Marissa DeBacco with their students*

Reading with fluency and expression is a skill that is critical to readers of all ages. In this project, fifth grade students mentored first and second grade students on how to read with fluency and expression. The fifth graders interviewed their younger reading buddies to find what kind of

books they would like to read. They found the books, practiced reading, and then podcasted their reading of the books. Then the podcasts were uploaded onto iPods and given to the younger buddies.

### **Create, Publish, and Share: Integrating Mathematics, Science, and ELA, Phase 2 : West Hertel Academy, Buffalo**

*Coralee Smith (Buffalo State) with her teacher candidates and their students*

This project was designed so that teacher candidates, mentoring teachers, and the college professor could create, publish, and share original mathematical and science content based books that integrated English Language Arts. Each Junior Participant wrote and illustrated an original book based on the field-based placement in an urban PDS. The contents of the books reflected diversity of the elementary students, their developmental levels and the National learning standards.



### **Evaluating Teacher Candidates**

*David Henry (Buffalo State)*

How do we evaluate our teacher candidate's work in the field? The Elementary Education and Reading Department are revising the written field experience evaluation of our teacher candidates. Dr. Henry is leading this process. He will discuss the revised student teacher field evaluation form and elicit input for the new ELA (EDU 311) and Math/Science (312) forms. We will also have an open discussion about how mentor teachers use the field experience evaluation in their work with teacher candidates.



**Rethinking the ‘Achievement Gap’: Global and Sociopolitical Views**  
*Myrtle Welch and Hibajene Shandomo (Buffalo State)*

This conversation will unravel the least considered dimensions of the “achievement gap.” These views place challenged students as recipients of an education debt that is owed to them by our nation (Ladson-Billings, 2007). Conversations about “paying off the debt” and recommendations for “staying out of debt” stem from a global and sociopolitical framework (PIRLS, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

**Themes from Student Reflective Journals : Schools #82 and #90, Buffalo**  
*Kathleen Falconer and Wendy McLeish (Buffalo State)*

Reflective journals from several different semesters of EDU 312: “The Teaching of Mathematics & Science in the Elementary School” were analyzed. A preliminary grounded theory analysis uncovered several different themes within the students’ journals. The preliminary themes are Fears and Concerns, Junior Participants’ Identity, Junior Participants’ Learning and Thinking, and Instructor Modeling Techniques. These themes are renamed and instructor modeling techniques added as a theme after a revised analysis.”



**Conversations on Teaching Math in Nontraditional Ways : School #43, Buffalo**  
*Dianne McCarthy (Buffalo State) with teacher candidates, Emily Marvin and Nicole Berg*

How can the anxiety be taken out of Math for discouraged students? By pairing Math with intriguing stories and elaborate pictures that draw their attention, children will experience Math through an alternative perspective. Our approach comes from the philosophy that students learn more effectively through real world applications and connections they make with literature. Through integrating Math with multiple subject areas, our online collection of stories will appeal to students with an array of interests. Come witness the showcase of our website that motivates students to change their outlook on Math.

