



Center for Teaching Excellence Hampton University Teaching Matters

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An Interview with an Edward L. Hamm, Sr. Distinguished Teaching Award Recipient

by **Zina T. McGee**

Each year, Hampton University honors and recognizes outstanding faculty who serve as models of excellence for their profession and exemplary mentors for their students. This month, I had the pleasure of interviewing one of the recent recipients of the Edward L. Hamm, Sr. Distinguished Teaching Award: **Dr. Gertrude Henry, Division of Professional Education, College of Education and Continuing Studies**

Briefly describe your teaching philosophy. What strategies do you use to create a student-focused learning environment?

My teaching philosophy is centered on humanism, cognitivism and pragmatism. Humanism: Respect and kindness towards students is a must. Cognitivism: Students actively construct their knowledge through experiences. Pragmatism: Teaching behaviors such as inductive and deductive reasoning, scientific method, and observation to practice are demonstrated and taught. Needs assessments, interest inventories, case studies, and service learning are some of the strategies I use to create a student-focused learning environment.

How do you recognize creativity and innovation both within and outside of the classroom setting?

Inside the classroom, students select their own research topic, present assignments in different formats or media, and arrange for guest speakers. Reports are presented orally, written or both. Outside the classroom, students arrange field trips for the class, tutoring sessions, and conduct case studies. One student videotaped the case study (child) from birth until the final presentation date. Connections to course content are made with the Black Family Conference, "E-G-G-stravaganza," the Founder's Day speaker, HU plays and other campus events.

In what ways do you stimulate self-growth and professional development among your students?

We use peer evaluation and continuous self-reflection. Students are asked to demonstrate their assignments/lesson plans with the class before they teach

the lesson in the community. Both large and small assignments are included

in each course.

What strategies do you use to facilitate reflection, professional learning and enhanced student accomplishment?

Reflection journals are an important part of their service learning experiences which are discussed in class. Professional learning is done through research analysis and attending conferences. I accompanied students to the “Teachers of Promise” conference, where they met and interacted with National Teachers of the Year both past and present along with State and regional award winning teachers. In some of my courses, students enter national competitions which are related to course content (e.g., FBI National Curriculum Development Challenge - we placed 1st). As a team effort, we host an Annual Career Fair which brings 50 different school systems to our campus to recruit our majors. Education majors present their resumes, are interviewed, and sign teaching contracts.

“To lead and to serve by example” best describes my personal teaching philosophy. Teacher expertise, competence and outcomes are important to this educator and to the mission of Hampton University - an “Education for life.”

Announcements

The Faculty Resource Network at New York University is pleased to announce the 2008 National Symposium, devoted to the topic, *Defining and Promoting Student Success*. The symposium will examine the current thinking on this critical topic in an era when students are dealing with greater pressures and colleges and universities are facing substantially increased levels of accountability.

During the two-day symposium, through keynote presentations, plenary panels, and breakout sessions, attendees will have the opportunity to consider a range of issues related to student success, including learning styles and theories of intelligence, student preparation, access to higher education, and teaching effectiveness. The Symposium will be held on November 21-22, 2008 at the University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA. Abstracts can be sent as an e-mail attachment to frn@nyu.edu, or mailed to the Faculty Resource Network:

**Faculty Resource Network
Attn: 2008 National Symposium
194 Mercer Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10012**

The Grant Institute: Certificate in Professional Program Development and Grant Communication will be held in Washington, DC, May 19 - 23, 2008. Interested development professionals, researchers, faculty, and graduate students should register as soon as possible, as demand means that seats will fill up quickly. All participants will receive certification in professional grant writing from the Institute, as well as 3.5 CEU units. **For more information call (888) 824 - 4424 or visit The Grant Institute at www.thegrantinstitute.com.**