



Research UpDATE

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Utah State University • COLLEGE OF EDUCATION and Human Services • Office of Research Services

Congratulations!

Utah State University's Board of Trustees named Carol Strong as the new dean of the College of Education and Human Services Thursday, April 14. Strong had been serving as interim dean of the college since July 2004. Prior to that she had served as the Associate Dean for Research for the College.

Utah State President Stan Albrecht said Strong has impressive credentials at all levels of her professional career, with a proven record of teaching and research excellence. She also has proven herself as a skilled administrator during her tenure as interim dean.

"Utah State is extremely fortunate that Dr. Strong will continue to be a part of our university team," Albrecht said. "She has demonstrated exceptional leadership abilities throughout her career, and she has formed many strong relationships with all the communities she has served. We are honored and pleased she has accepted our offer."

Special Announcement

Dean Carol Strong and Utah State Associate VP Joyce Albrecht have asked colleagues and friends of the College of Education and Human Services to save the date of May 5, 2005, 2-3 P.M., for an important announcement in the Sunburst Lounge about a special gift to the College.

The Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education

Already ranked consistently in the top 50 graduate schools of education in the nation, the College of Education and Human Services has experienced increased visibility from the growing reputation of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education. The EEJ Center was established in 1998 through an initial grant provided by the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation and is housed in a brand new facility which also houses the Edith Bowen Laboratory School. This \$12.5 million dollar facility, described as the "crowning jewel of the College of Education and Human Services" was made possible through the extraordinary support of the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation.

As part of the original grant from the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation, a distinguished professorship/endowed chair was established. In 2001, Dr. Ray Reutzel, who has an extensive, nationally recognized career in reading education and early literacy instruction, accepted the endowed chair appointment. Dr. Reutzel added another honor to a long list—this spring he was elected vice-president of the College Reading Association, an international association of literacy professionals.

Under Dr. Reutzel's direction



the EEJ Center strives to provide educational experiences and resources for teachers and parents that reflect the most current understanding of the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children from birth through age eight. The Center fosters collaborative interaction between the Elementary Education Department of the College of Education and Human Services, the Edith Bowen Laboratory School, other departments at Utah State University, and most importantly, school districts throughout the state.

One project at the Center is the *Family Literacy Bag*, a program developed by Martha Dever (Elementary Education) to enhance home-school connections and to encourage parents to read with their children.

TOP: Tips on Parenting quarterly, a peer reviewed journal that educates parents about current

parenting topics and issues, is another EEJ Center project. *Science Corner*, written by Drs. Rebecca and Leigh Monhardt, elementary education faculty at Utah State, is a popular column that provides ways to effectively involve young children in science activities.

Another notable, editorship of *The Reading Teacher*, the most widely-read and prestigious journal in early literacy education, is published under the direction of the Center's Director.

The EEJ Center has been engaged in several research studies. Three of these studies are described below.

Words to Go. This study explored a parent training program for helping children extend and practice their emerging phonics knowledge. Researchers administered pre- and post-test phonics reading/spelling exams to students at two matched low-income schools. Faculty at one school used the *Words to Go* program; faculty at the other school did not. Surveys were sent to parents, children, and teachers. Also focus groups were held to explore the value and means by which to improve the program for low-income children's families.

Primary Grade Comprehension Strategy Instruction. This randomized, experimental study explored the impact of two forms of early comprehension instruction using

science texts on young children's comprehension of information in four second-grade classrooms.

Developing Fluency in Early Literacy. In this study of nine third-grade classrooms, children were randomly assigned to practice their reading-for-fluency under differing circumstances. The control group did not practice fluency, but rather experienced only fluency instruction. The two experimental groups practiced their fluency readings using (a) silent, wide, and teacher-monitored reading conditions, and (b) oral, repeated, and teacher- or student-monitored conditions. Teachers rotated through teaching all three conditions for 25 minutes each day to control for teacher effects. Results will be reported at the 2005 International Reading Association national convention.

Partnerships and Collaborations: The EEJ Center is engaged in partnerships and collaborative research projects with various units at Utah State University. The Center staff maintains a presence in the Edith Bowen Laboratory School that serves as a site to field-test research and curriculum projects. Another partnership is the collaboration of the Center with the USOE for the *Annual Emma Eccles Jones Early Childhood Symposium* and Utah's *Reading First Summer Literacy Academies, Reading Endorsement*



Program, and site-based *Technical Assistance*.

A research partnership with Washington County Schools and funding from a grant from the Newbridge/Sundance Foundation continues into the 2005 academic year. A literacy partnership with the Weber County School District continued for a third year in 2004 and was so successful that Drs. Ray Reutzel, Parker Fawson, and John Smith were given special recognition by the Weber County School District Board and administration.

These partnerships, research projects, and outreach projects of the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education are surely an asset to the College. The College is fortunate to have a nationally renowned leader at the helm of the Center and is indebted to the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation for their generous support.

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