

**Arkansas Tech University
Professional Development Grant**

The Arkansas Tech University Professional Development Grant committee granted funding for a professional conference in year, 2006. The conference hosted by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) began 2/19/96 and ended 2/23/06. Presenters from early childhood education were Byra Ramsey, David Bell, Timothy Leggett, Kevin Costley, and Sammie Stephenson.

The title of the presentation/research paper was **“Stress in Teaching: Myths and Methods for Reducing Stress.”** Using data from a study conducted with 25 teacher education candidates who took the Haberman STAR Teacher Evaluation, Arkansas Tech University (ATU) faculty examined the ATU Early Childhood program of study. Quantitative analyses of the Haberman evaluation led to the discovery that ATU candidates needed additional understanding in the area of surviving in a school environment. Further analysis of the Haberman study, teacher attrition rates, and new teacher induction programs revealed a need for candidates and new teachers to understand and recognize stress factors in the workplace. The findings of the quantitative analyses suggested an emphasis should be placed on stress management in both higher education programs and new teacher induction models.

Prior to the ATE presentation by ATU faculty, a differing study was conducted on undergraduate pre-service teachers. The purpose of the study was to examine stress management of three different groups of undergraduate early childhood education students at ATU. Students were asked questions pertaining to stress at three different points in the program being semester one, semester two, and semester three. The study consisted of investigating how students perceived the (a) ways in that they managed stress-related types of class assignments/projects/assessments causing high stress, (b) physical symptoms during stress, (c) prescribed medication for stress, (d) stress-relieving methods, and (3) recognizing the need for assistance in dealing with stress. Another component of the study examined students' perceptions of ways faculty could relieve students' stress.

The findings indicate that fifty percent of the students believe they did not manage stress well and needed outside help. In addition, the same group did not know where to seek help. Less than ten percent of all three groups take prescribed medication. The most common symptoms experienced by all three groups were anxiety, crying easily, and irritability. The four most common methods students use to relieve stress are exercise, relaxation, organizing assignments and activities, and going to a quiet place. A reoccurring suggestion for the faculty was to coordinate assignments so that all assignments are not due at the end of the semester.