

TEACHERS EXPERIMENT WITH SCIENCE LESSONS AT SUMMER INSTITUTE

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Katie Sherwood (*left*) and Erin Tomasko (*right*) experiment with clay and aluminum to see which of them can make a boat that will hold the greatest number of washers. Eric Crivac looks on.

In August, 30 teachers from the Nashua, Hudson, Milford, Bedford and Hollis-Brookline public school districts participated in a three-day Summer Physical Science Institute. Part of the Teacher Inquiry and Student Learning in Science program, the Institute is designed to support quality learning and teaching in science for grades K-12 and increase the pool and diversity of students interested in pursuing science.

Teachers conducted inquiries in physical science phenomena and used their own investigations to develop inquiry-based science experiences around concepts identified in the New Hampshire Science Frameworks for students in grades 3 through 8. This year, for the first time, students in those grades will be tested in science as part of the annual New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) state tests.

Rivier College Professor of Chemistry Dr. David Burgess and Associate Professor of Education Dr. Fiona McDonnell facilitated the Institute. The multi-district project will continue throughout the 2007-2008 school year. "Teachers will meet monthly to look at the work their students have done in science," says McDonnell. Meetings will be held at Rivier College; they are open to all teachers in participating districts, not just those who attended the Summer Institute.

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“We’re forming a science teacher network for southern New Hampshire,” McDonnell says. In addition to monthly meetings offering collaborative assessment of student understanding and learning in science, teachers will also have access to online content support and discussion boards.

The Institute is funded by a New Hampshire Department of Education Mathematics and Science Partnership Program grant, written together by science and education faculty at the Nashua School District and Rivier College. Future projects will involve three additional school districts and develop a cadre of teacher leaders in elementary and middle school science.

McDonnell says that the State Department of Education has asked her and Burgess to run the program again next year. For additional information, contact Fiona McDonnell at fmcdonnell@rivier.edu or visit www.studentworldteacher.net. ■

* **JENNIFER LISKOW** works as a Public Relations and Web Writer in the Office of Marketing and Communications and teaches in Rivier’s Professional Communications program. Jenn earned her bachelor’s in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master’s in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features, and essays published. In her free time, Jenn enjoys practicing yoga, ten-pin bowling, and listening to live music with her husband, Tim.