

Summer 2014

PERSPECTIVES

on Learning Sciences



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 **TENNESSEE
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Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences
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Building Capacities to Strengthen Communities Through Education



Valerie Williams
Interim Director

Leadership in Academics, Research and Service

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential (TECPAC)
Tennessee State University – TN CAREs Early Head Start
Tennessee Childcare Online Training System (TCCOTS)
Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)
Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT)

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

STEM Education
Teaching and Learning
Early Intervention Models
Student Learning Measurement
Early Childhood Educator Professional Development
P-12 Instructor and Administrator Professional Development
Birth to Three Curriculum, Program and Professional Development

What is the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences?

By Dr. Celeste Brown

The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences is a group of programs housed within a shared facility that engage in service, training and research and provide proven results that influence policy and best practices. Our motto is, “Building capacities to strengthen communities through education.” The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences is a department within Research and Sponsored Programs in the Division of Academic Affairs.

According to Jon Strickler, a leading consultant on business strategy, centers of excellence are a team of people that promote collaboration and use best practices around a specific focus area to drive business results. They serve five basic needs: support, guidance, shared learning, measurements, and governance. The Center of Excellence fulfills these needs in several ways:

- The Center provides **support** to the university, other universities in the TBR system, and many state partner organizations.
- Our programs provide **guidance** on best practices in Early Childhood and program management
- **Shared learning** occurs through online and in-person courses, which offer certificates and credentials.

- The Center continually **measures** our funding streams and provide valued results with positive returns on public investment
- The Center believes in proper **governance**, even in instances of limited resources and provides investments in valuable projects and economies of scale

The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences serves as a capability center as well by promoting families through the TNCARES EHS, providing access and tuition support for those pursuing higher education and other methods of professional development through the TECTA and SSCBT programs. We foster a network of institutions to promote professional development of child care providers, directors and administrators. We are a competency center with developed training programs for the social service workers and child care program administrators, issuing credentials to those with demonstrated competencies in these fields. We also administer computer assisted collaborative



According to the Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences (2006), the sciences of learning include cognitive science, educational psychology, computer science, anthropology, sociology, neuroscience, and other fields.

learning through instructional designers and online instructors who manage online courses for TCCOTS training system, the TECPAC credential program, and TECTA Orientations.

Overall, the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences strives to provide quality learning experiences for adults and young children. Through the Academics-Research-Service model, the Center works together with academic institutions through collaborative research, community-based service organizations, and government agencies to promote learning at all ages.

Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Celebrates NAEYC Week of the Young Child



The staff at the Martin Center dressed up for Favorite Super Hero Day on April 8, 2014.

By Dr. Celeste Brown

The Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start program celebrated NAEYC's Week of the Young Child this year from April 7th to April 11th along with countless other child care programs across the nation. The children and their families were able to participate in hosted events and fun activities at each center.

On April 7th at the Paris Housing Center the Paris, Tennessee, Henry County mayor Brent Greer joined the celebration and issued a proclamation in recognition of Week of the Young Child.

Child care providers participated as well. On April 8th

the staff at the Martin Center dressed up as their favorite super heroes for the day. The week is also a way to honor early childhood teachers who are at the heart of quality early learning.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) sponsors the Week of the Young Child every spring. It is a national celebration that focuses on the needs of young children and their families. Early childhood programs across the nation participate by inviting guest speakers from the community to conduct activities with children and provide fun learning opportunities.

The 2015 Week of the Young Child will take place April 12-18, 2015.

SSCBT Program Welcomes 24 New Graduates



The 2014 SSCBT graduates received their credentials at the TCSW 101st Anniversary Conference on March 25, 2014.

By Dr. Celeste Brown

Twenty-four SSCBT participants received their credentials at the 101st Annual TCSW Conference. The Credentials are earned following the Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT) program. Participants are family service workers that come from various Head Start and Early Head Start agencies around the nation.

The SSCBT program is a national training program developed by the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences at Tennessee State University and offered jointly by Tennessee State University and Portland State University in

Oregon. This program is designed for people involved in providing family support services, including case managers, home visitors, teachers, health services staff, and community workers. It is specifically designed for family services workers with limited intensive training or experience. SSCBT is one of the recognized Head Start Family Worker Credentialing Programs.

Earning the credential requires 90 hours of classroom instruction, Field Mentor observations, and a competency-based evaluation.

The Center of Excellence has

been a collaborative partner of TCSW for many years and helped sponsor the 2014 Conference. Alex Atkinson presented awards for the fifth year in a row. Mr. Atkinson is the Program Director of the SSCBT Program at Tennessee State University and the Program Director for Financial Affairs for the Center of Excellence.

The next Tennessee SSCBT class will begin in October.

For more information about the SSCBT program, visit www.tnstate.edu/learningsciences.

The TECTA Program: Factors that Contribute to Success

By Dr. Katari Coleman

The Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) has been in the business of training and education for over 22 years. TECTA's focus is to prepare early childhood education professionals for post-secondary education experiences, and mentor them along the way. The state of Tennessee under the auspices of the Department of Human Services (DHS) funds Tennessee State University's Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences which provides direction to eight (8) sites within the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to get this work accomplished. This work is done through many levels of TECTA but most importantly starting with the TECTA Orientation. The TECTA Orientation is a 30-clock hour training that provides 10 weeks of interactions, activities, and information appropriate for adult learning. It mimics the schedule of a college academic course, to help individuals become familiar with the expectations of consistent attendance, and group participation. The belief is if someone can complete the TECTA Orientation class they have the ability to complete a college course. What makes it

even more possible is that TECTA provides financial support for tuition for individuals that complete the TECTA Orientation. Once someone successfully completes the TECTA Orientation , he usually begins his quest towards a credential or degree. TECTA's route to the Child Development Associate credential (CDA) has been via the completion of four (4) early childhood education courses at the community college level, and then the completion all the steps of documentation and evaluation required by the National Council for Professional Recognition. What we see is a clear indication that the TECTA Orientation can lead the individual to attain the CDA credential, then possibly a technical certificate, and then possibly a degree.

So given what TECTA sets out to accomplish with individuals within early childhood, I thought let's look at some numbers.

Clearly TECTA's population is different than the average post-secondary population colleges and universities are accustomed to, therefore I was overjoyed to see how well the TECTA way assist individuals towards completions. TECTA's population is majority non-traditional.

The Digest of Education Statistics (2014) reports a maximum of 31% completions across all higher education entities nationally, and 20% within public entities in 2012. In 2012 TECTA's academic completion rate was

Continued on page 7...

Graduate
Degrees
M.S., M.Ed.
Ph.D., Ed.D.

Bachelors' Degrees
B.S., B.A.

Associates' Degrees
A.S., A.A.,
A.A.S.

Earn degrees in Early
Childhood-related fields
with support from
TECTA

Technical Certificate

Students who received their CDA Credential through TECTA are 10 – 12 more credits closer to earning an Early Childhood Education Technical Certificate, at the same time receiving necessary credits for CDA renewal.

Child
Development
Associate
(CDA)
Credential

TECTA provides its program participants with assistance during the documentation and assessment process of completing the credential requirements. As funds are available, TECTA provides scholarship assistance for the \$425.00 CDA Application Assessment fee.

CDA Preparation Courses

Earn 12 credit
hours toward an
Associate
(A.A.S) Degree

Safe and Healthy Learning Environments
3 Academic Credits or 45 Clock Hours*

**Clinical
Practicum I**
3 Academic
Credits or 105
Clock Hours*

Early Childhood Curriculum
3 Academic Credits or 45 Clock Hours*

**Family Dynamics
and Community
Involvement**
3 Academic
Credits or
45 Clock Hours*

*Courses
from an
accredited
TBR
Institution

30 Hours of Free TECTA Orientation

Earn a TECTA Certificate of Completion

TECTA Orientation is the “gateway” to the Child Development Associate (CDA) preparation and degrees in early childhood. Choose from five specializations: Administrator, Center-Based, Infant/Toddler, School-Age, and Family Child Care.

The TECTA Program, continued

2,365 out of 2,683, thusly 88%. And more recently in fall of 2013, 771 completions out of 822 academic seats resulted in an academic completion rate of 94%. During the fall semester 496 individuals completed a TECTA Orientation class, and thusly either began or will begin their post-secondary journey soon.

Throughout the years 33,959 Orientation certificates have been awarded to early childhood professionals, which to me says the individuals who completed these 30-clock hours classes

should be prepared to handle a college course to advance them to their next level of learning and professional development. While there are many variables in success the data shows that the TECTA Orientation class is a positive factor when it comes to the completion of college courses for early childhood professionals.



On April 10, 2014, the TECTA Program hosted a reception for Early Childhood programs at community colleges across the state for their success in earning NAEYC program accreditation.

TECTA Students: What We Know from the Data

By Cathy Brashear

From the beginning through April 2014 we have served

- 2,580 Men
- 75,072 Women
- 144 did not provide gender in the early days

The average age of the TECTA supported consumer is 42

Where Do They Come From?

In the Tennessee Grand Divisions

- 24,511 are from the East
- 19,332 are from the West
- 32,629 are from the Middle
- 736 live in boarder states but work in Tennessee
- 444 did not provide county information in the early days

What have they been doing?

- 33,959 Orientation certificates have been earned
- 38,546 Academic classes have been completed successfully
- 3,247 CDA's have been earned
- 1,579 CDA Renewals have been completed
- 669 Technical Certificates have been reported
- 662 A.A and A.A.S degrees have been reported
- 141 Bachelor degrees have been reported
- 42 Master and Higher degrees have been reported

The Sixth Annual TECTA Summer Research Institute Provided Training for Child Care Providers



Top (l to r): TECTA staff registered over 250 attendees; Pat Wade, Assistant Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Human Services delivered the opening keynote.

Bottom (l to r): Heather Hicks discusses preschool quality; Brocklin Qualls from the Council for Professional Recognition provided the closing address.

By Dr. Celeste Brown

Over 250 participants attended the TECTA Summer Research Institute at TSU's Avon Williams campus on June 21, 2014 making it the largest Institute to date. The theme for the 2014 Institute was QRIS: The Building Blocks of Quality. The QRIS is the acronym for Tennessee's quality rating and improvement system, known as

the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program (STARS). The program rates child care agencies on a scale of one to three stars. The Institute included 14 workshops on topics related to understanding quality within this system, the foundation of quality, and demonstrations of quality.

The Institute is an annual event organized by the TECTA Management staff to provide training and resources to Early Childhood faculty, staff and administrators in middle Tennessee and is free to attend.

COELS Hosts Annual Meetings for the TECTA Program

2014 TECTA Steering Committee Meeting

By Dr. Celeste Brown

The 2014 Annual TECTA Steering Committee Meeting was hosted by the Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences on April 10, 2014. This meeting followed the TECTA State Partners Meeting held earlier that day.

The meeting is an annual gathering of TECTA stakeholders to evaluate the current program initiatives and establish new goals for the future. The Committee includes representatives from TECTA, the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Head Start,

and other organizations. This year the Steering Committee formed three discussion groups that focused on:

- Identifying practical methods to deliver TECTA services to parents and increase parent engagement
- Creating consensus around a new vision for the TECTA delivery model
- TECTA branding and gathering feedback about how to expand the reach of the organization

The committee members also shared information about their



The TECTA Steering Committee meets annually to get updates on the TECTA program and to help set the agenda for the next year.

own efforts to include TECTA services in their organizational activities. These events create the forum to discuss and share new developments in the state and make collaboration more effective.

2014 TECTA Higher Education Institute

By Dr. Celeste Brown

TECTA held its annual Higher Education Institute on April 11, 2014. The one-day series of workshops brings Tennessee community college and university faculty together to discuss relevant topics in Early Childhood Education.

The day began with a keynote presentation from Dr. Kimberly King-Jupiter. The Institute included presentations from Jude White, Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet for Tennessee, Dr. Ellen Weed from the Tennessee Board of Regents,

Dr. Victoria Harpool from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, F. Chris Curra, Ph.D. Student and President of the Peabody Grad Student Association at Vanderbilt University.

The Institute also included updates from our partners at the Department of Human Services, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the Tennessee CCR&R Network.



Dr. Kimberly King-Jupiter, Dean of the TSU College of Education, discussed the importance of program assessment

This event continues to highlight the importance of higher education as a component of professional development for child care providers.

An Update on Online Training Programs

TECTA Online Home Visitor Orientation

By Sherry Jo Anderson

Forty students in two classes have registered and have been admitted to the TECTA Online Orientation for home visitors. These are the sixth and seventh iterations of the course that is reviewed and updated each time it is offered. Each student is required to take a pre-assessment before they review the course material and, at the end of their coursework, they

take a post-assessment. The fifth orientation, which has just concluded, showed an improvement in scores from a pre-assessment average of 71.25% for home visitors to an average score of 85% on the post-assessment. For supervisors in the same orientation, their pre-assessment average was 70.33% and improved to 81% on their post-assessment.

Every week students post a reply to the assigned question on the Discussion Board and also respond to the posts of their classmates (at least 2). One of the students stated in her last correspondence, “I have really enjoyed this class and it’s been great to communicate with all of our classmates and learn new ideas.”

The Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS)

By Lin Venable

Based on research that early childhood professionals should have knowledge and skills to provide appropriate care and education for young children, the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) invests a significant amount of resources in support of several programs that support the professional development and are free-of-charge for individuals who work in licensed child care facilities. Professional development hour requirements are defined in child care legislation and the related Tennessee Licensure Rules and Standards and concentrate on five core areas – Administration, Child Development, Developmentally Appropriate Behavior

Management, Early Childhood/Childhood Education, and Health and Safety. The Tennessee Child Care Online Training System became fully operational within a specialized online portal in August of 2012 within the Center, under contract with the Tennessee Department of Human Services

TCCOTS is accessed via two online locations; www.tccots.com (top) and www.tnelds-training.com (bottom).



Online Training, continued

(DHS) through funding for Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance, and continues to provide opportunities for early childhood professionals across the state to obtain yearly required training online.

TCCOTS has evolved with the capability to support training instruction cross-platformed and supported by most common web browsers. TCCOTS has provided 40,000 training certificates of completion since its launch equating to over 120,000 training hours (inclusive of TNELDS completion numbers dating back to July of 2009).

During this 2013 fiscal year there have been 13,371 certificates of completion granted to individuals who work in child care agencies across the state. This represents over 35,900 training hours of credit. Furthermore, there are an additional 12,000 module trainings that have the status of in-progress during the time of this report.

The TCCOTS Helpdesk provides a significant service to those who experience difficulties with online training. The Helpdesk is available via phone or email. During this fiscal year there have been over 2,000

responses to help requests. Technical assistance can range from reminding eLearners of usernames and resetting passwords to scheduling a computer-generated online session to manually adjust the eLearner's computer setting to download the recommended browser and adobe programs for online training capability or other technical assistance. Helpdesk data is collected to evaluate the need for training of the child care workforce on the use of technology and online training within the TCCOTS system.

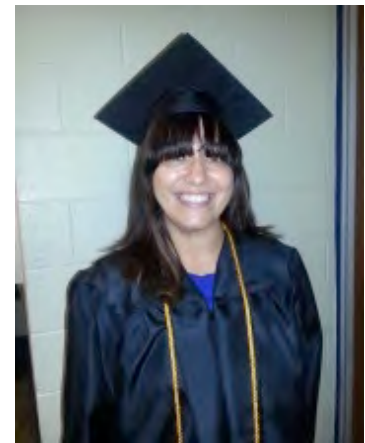
Milestones: A New Beginning

By Tracy Harper

During this season many changes have occurred. The blistery cold winter weather has departed and the season for sunshine, warm weather, and new beginnings burst into our lives. New beginnings are just what the TSU TECTA supported students, who are reaching milestones, are experiencing as they participate in graduation ceremonies at their school of choice. During this time of year, I always feel rejuvenated while watching TSU TECTA supported students, along with the rest of the students, walk proudly across the stage to receive their credentials. Some receive

Technical Certificates, while others receive Associate's or Bachelor's degrees. Whatever milestone they are accomplishing, excitement is in the air. This is the journey of Bianca Tarantola, one of many students, of which TSU TECTA provides mentoring and tuition support.

Bianca Tarantola has had many obstacles in her young life, but she persevered. She was extremely excited to dawn the cap and gown for the first time in her life. Bianca had to drop out of high school, so she never experienced the captivating atmosphere of a graduation



**Bianca Tarantola,
Spring 2014
Technical Certificate**

event. She earned her GED, then began the journey towards their Child Development

Continued on page 12...

Milestones, continued

Associate Credential (CDA). Through medical setbacks, she persevered, and on May 14, 2014, she did it! She received her Technical Certificate, with honors in Early Childhood Education. This is a major accomplishment for Bianca, but she has not completed her journey, but a major milestone. Bianca is in summer school pressing towards her Associates Degree.

Each TSU TECTA supported student has a story to tell that may have similar characteristics to Bianca's story. I can't share all of the stories, but I can share a few pictures that depict the joy that resided on their faces during graduation.

TECTA continues to "pay it forward" by making a positive difference in the lives of students, who make a positive impact on the lives of young children.

Dear Cathy, Tracy, and Stacy, and Everyone at TECTA,

I would not have been able to achieve my Technical without the help of TECTA. I wanted to take the time to thank everyone for your support and help. My dreams are coming true because of your organization and the people like you who are the glue that holds it together. This program helps people like me who are trying to make a difference in their own life by better themselves through education, better the lives of other's by serving the families and children within a community, and better the lives of coworkers by being competent, knowledgeable, and educated in the area of Early Childhood Education. This will be my first time walking for anything in my life. Thank you for all you do.

Love Always,

Bianca



Left: Sheila Westbrooks, AAS
Bottom: (left to right) Victoria Porter, AAS
Tanisia Osborne, AAS
Marilyn Boyd, CDA, AAS



The TECPAC Program Now Offers Two Academies A Year

By Norma Mason

As we embark on another year of the Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential program, we are pleased to announce that Administrator Academy will now be offered twice a year, during the fall and spring semesters. Our management team has worked hard to provide you with the opportunity to earn this credential in five months, or one semester. We will meet twice a month online from 6:30 pm-8:30 pm. If your desire is to obtain the Administrator Credential, *now is the time!*

The pre-enrollment session for the upcoming TECPAC

Academy semester was held July 10, 2014 via Webinar. At this first pre-enrollment session we discussed logistics and determined the scheduled times we will meet online. Administrator Academy I will begin August 14, and end December 9, 2014.

The Spring Academy will begin with a pre-enrollment session on January 6, 2015 and end on May 20th. Candidates accepted to each Academy will still undergo pre and post assessments of their programs and will complete a portfolio at the end of each Academy.



Please go to www.tecta.info to download your TECPAC Eligibility Application, fill it out in its entirety and email it to nmason3@tnstate.edu along with your transcript for verification of your academic courses.

TECPAC Administrator Academy I Fall 2014 August 14 – December 9

Module 1

Session 1: Orientation

August 14, 2014

Session 2: Introduction to the Academy

August 26, 2014

Module 2

Session 3: Leadership

September 9, 2014

Session 4: PAS/BAS Goal Setting

September 23, 2014

Module 3

Session 5: Early Childhood Management I

October 14, 2014

Session 6: Early Childhood Management II

October 28, 2014

Module 4

Session 7: Building Family and Community Relationships

November 11, 2014

Session 8: Curriculum

November 25, 2014

Module 5

Session 9: Observing, Documenting and Assessing

December 2, 2014

Session 10: Goals/Portfolio Achievement

December 9, 2014

A Letter of Thanks from a Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Parent

Hello,

TN Cares EHS has truly been a blessing to me and I wanted to let you know that I appreciate you for the support you have given me. As long as I have been a part of this program, you have given me the motivation to feel that I can accomplish any goal that I set forth to achieve. My motto since I've been working with TN Cares EHS is, "If you believe then you can achieve."

I have accomplished so many goals. One of my goals was to purchase a vehicle. With the motivation that you gave me, I completed this goal. I also worked on the goal to become a full-time employee and that goal was also accomplished, and now I am in the process of completing my CDA. I just recently completed my biggest goal which was to move out of public housing into my own home. I am now a homeowner.

I can only say thank you for all your support and thank you so much for believing in me. My heart is overjoyed, and I am a TN Cares EHS parent who knows that you all believed in me. Once again, thank you for all you do for TN Cares EHS. I attached a picture of our new home.

My children and I want to say THANK YOU!!



TSU Hosts Employee Recognition Luncheon

The 2014 Employee Recognition was held on April 30th on the main campus of Tennessee State University.

The COELS staff members recognized for their years of service were:

5 Years

Tamara Barnhill
Lindsey Brewer
Melissa Fleck
Julia Lynch

10 Years

Latoya Shead
Rena Turner
Tammy Wade

15 Years

Amanda Hendrix

25 Years

Janice Lovell

Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events

Tennessee State University 2014 Homecoming Week

September 21-27, 2014
Nashville, Tennessee

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)

October 11-14, 2014
Bright Past, Better Future: Remember to Rise Up!
Detroit Marriott at Renaissance Center
Detroit, Michigan

66th Annual SECA Conference

January 15-17, 2015
*The World From Our Front Porch:
Community And Culture*
Astor Crowne Plaza in the French Quarter
New Orleans, Louisiana

Region IV Head Start 2015 Annual Conference

February 2 – 5, 2015
More information coming soon

TN CAREs Treasures Family Involvement

The Tennessee CARES Early Head Start program strives to provide learning opportunities for young children through family involvement in the program. Mr. Bruce Johnson, grandfather to a child in the program, built and installed squirrel feeders. He installed two feeders on the toddler playground and one on the infant playground along with several young helpers lending a hand.



Top: Mr. Bruce Johnson demonstrates how the squirrel feeder works.
Bottom: The children assist with installing the squirrel feeders and adding food.



Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences

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The mission of the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences is to design and conduct multidisciplinary research and demonstrations concerning practices, policies, and programs that promote the educational, social, physical, and psychological well-being of children and families; and to disseminate research and information to improve public policy and the programmatic decisions of agencies, schools, institutions, and communities in Tennessee, the nation, and the global community.

PERSPECTIVES

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