



Highlights of Upcoming Events!

October 22, 29, November 5, 12, 26, December 3, and 17, 2008
National Board Certification Pre-Candidacy Class (Tucson)

November 13-15, 2008
Accelerating Minds with Language

January 20-21, 2009
Leadership and Technology

February 26-28, and March 14, 2009
Technology Integration: Audio Podcasting for Teachers & Students

Did You Know ?

Take One!

Deadlines and Dates to Remember

Ordering and Payment	December 31, 2008
Entry Submission	April 15, 2009
Withdrawal (partial refund)	60 days from online order date or April 14, 2009, whichever comes first
Withdrawal (no refund)	April 15, 2009
Deferral	April 15, 2009
Scores available online	On or before December 31, 2009



Teaming Up on Take One!

LEARNING COMMUNITIES STRENGTHENED THROUGH EMBEDDED, IN-DEPTH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching has traditionally been an isolated profession, in which teachers find themselves enclosed in their classrooms with few opportunities to share and grow through interaction with colleagues. But when teachers do get together, it's clear that good things happen. Ideas circulate and experiences are explored. The very act of communicating is often uplifting, not to mention the invaluable advice and support teachers can gain from one another. Such collaboration is all the more fruitful when teachers are working together on professional development, particularly when it is job-embedded and truly focused on teaching.

Daniela Robles is a Reading Specialist at Mitchell School in the Isaac School District in Phoenix. She recently received National Board Certification. Having experienced how the process enhanced and validated her practice, she has been an enthusiastic advocate of it among her colleagues at Mitchell, both in terms of full Certification and *Take One!*, the single-entry alternative. Through *Take One!*, teachers can experience the in-depth reflection of the National Board process without having to complete four full entries. Teachers can later transfer their bankable score if they pursue Certification.

"*Take One!* opens more doors because teachers don't need three years of experience, and don't have that full commitment of the entire Certification process," Robles says. "I have been planting seeds of interest since last February and March. I didn't really have a strategy, more of a kind of hope."

In May, she met with potential candidates. She expected perhaps four or five would respond. Instead, nine teachers and an assistant principal committed to do *Take One!* "I was completely blown away," she says.

Robles saw beyond the factors that society utilizes to label Mitchell as a "High Needs School." Instead she saw to the heart and soul of Mitchell Elementary, their teachers. A learning community ready to demonstrate accomplished teaching.

"It was deeper than a desire, instead a need, or rather a hunger. . .with these teachers to be acknowledged for being a critical element in the classroom," she says.

Because the Isaac District is in corrective action, professional development offered to these teachers was about implementing an external resource, a scripted program, rather than really focusing on teaching.

Kimberly Gammage teaches third grade at Mitchell. She found that all the required testing had distracted her from really enhancing her practice. "I want to focus on reflection, on teaching language more effectively."

"We're building a community where excellence is always the goal, absolutely valuing the teacher's background, experience, passion and commitment."

Jaime Soto, Assistant Principal at Mitchell, is also doing *Take One!* "I think it's a wonderful group," he says. "I see the dedication, I see the love for the kids. I'm forever a student anyway, this brings me back to what teaching is all about."

COMING TOGETHER AT WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY

Washington Elementary School, in the Washington School District, is another unlikely site of a learning community poised to flourish around *Take One!* A high poverty, Title One school with a majority ELL student population, Washington Elementary presents enormous challenges to its teachers. Yet 22 of them, 40% of the entire teaching staff, have signed on to do *Take One!* this year.

Leah Esmont, Program Coach and National Board Certified Teacher at Washington, has been at the heart of this development. "The whole idea is to change an entire school," she says, "that in terms of working together, every child belongs to all of us."

As was the case with teachers at Mitchell, *Take One!* was attractive to Washington teachers because it was job-embedded.

"I'm ready to fine tune my teaching," says Sara Pearson, who teaches third grade. "My entire class is ELL." Two others in Pearson's grade level will be doing *Take One!* with her. "Having the support is so important, and it will make us a more experienced team."

Pearson plans to go for full National Board Certification next year.

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Teaming Up on *Take One!*

Continued from front

Dave McNeil, the principal of Washington Elementary, sees this as an invaluable opportunity for collaboration. "I'm just excited 22 teachers are doing something together," he says. "With the teacher next door, you now have a sounding board. Bottom line is with this sense of community we'll see results in student learning and achievement."

INSPIRING ON-GOING GROWTH

One of the most compelling outcomes of teachers doing *Take One!* together is the on-going collaboration it can spark. Rather than a one-day training on a particular technique, *Take One!* moves teachers into a more reflective and student-oriented mode, which doesn't stop when the program is completed. In fact, it is often the gateway to comprehensive certification and on-going excellence.

This is precisely what is happening in Chinle, Arizona, despite its remote location on the Navajo reservation three hours northeast of Flagstaff. For years, Chinle's lone National Board Certified Teacher was the junior high media specialist Tammy Smith. But last year a cohort of teachers did *Take One!* Having discovered the power of working together, eight of them are now candidates for full Certification.

"We would not have done this without the opportunity to be a team," says Lori Stewart, Gifted Coordinator for the district. "It's a safe environment to share failures and successes. To know that someone else thinks this is important validates what you are thinking. We have a core team of support - it's why many of us are in this now."

For Sharon Deswood, who teaches third grade special education, the collaboration she discovered during *Take One!* is a great motivator to move on. "When I meet with the other teachers it's so positive, because we all have same goal to be better teachers. We focus on students, not the problems of the week."

What's striking to see is the shared commitment to improvement in all three environments among cohorts exposed to *Take One!* together. Leah Esmont's words hold true, not just for Washington Elementary School where she works, but for Mitchell and Chinle as well:

"We're building a community where excellence is always the goal, absolutely valuing the teacher's background, experience, passion and commitment."

"When I meet with the other teachers it's so positive, because we all have same goal to be better teachers. We focus on students, not the problems of the week."



EVENT SPOTLIGHT

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION: DISCOVERING THE NAVAJO CULTURE THROUGH MULTIMEDIA

Dates October 24-25, November 1, 8 and 15, 2008

Location Flagstaff-Chinle/Phoenix

Cost \$225

Deadline 10/17/2008

Registration includes:

- Transportation from Flagstaff to Chinle on October 24.
- Private accommodations at the Holiday Inn on October 24.
- Transportation and group tour of Canyon de Chelly via jeeps on October 25.
- Breakfast, lunch and snacks on October 25.
- Transportation from Canyon de Chelly to Flagstaff on October 25.
- Training, materials and lunch on November 1, 8 and 15 at the Arizona Education Association in Phoenix.

Travel to Canyon de Chelly in northeastern Arizona, to the beautiful Navajo reservation. Experience first-hand the Navajo culture and the efforts to preserve its rich and unique customs. Capture your experiences using digital photography and audio recordings to later produce an engaging Arizona Speaks podcast! This is an excellent opportunity for 4th grade teachers, those teaching Arizona history or multicultural studies.

Teacher Leaders Making a Difference



Leah Esmont
NBCT, Phoenix

Leah Esmont is a Program Coach at Washington Elementary School in Phoenix, where she provides staff

development, new teacher mentoring, and is the testing coordinator.

Esmont had intended to be a surgeon and was studying premed, when she took a job at a summer camp and fell in love with teaching kids. She changed majors that fall and never looked back. She has been teaching in Arizona for 27 years.

Esmont is an Arizona Master Teacher and received her National Board Certification in 2001. Nevertheless, this year she is doing *Take One!*, along side the teachers she is guiding. "I want to be in touch with classroom teaching again," she says. "Seeing these teachers meeting together, it's hard not to get excited. This is another step up the mountain."



Daniela Robles
NBCT, Phoenix

Daniela Robles is a Reading Interventionist at Mitchell Elementary in the Isaac School District. She recently received

her National Board Certification and serves the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the capacity of a DREAM team member (Direct Recruitment Efforts to Attract Minorities), the Governor's P20 Education Council, and on the Board of Directors for the Arizona K12 Center.

"My number one enjoyment is the connection with students and their families," she says. "That is really what makes it all worthwhile. Now I also have the opportunity to make connections with other teachers beyond my grade level and see all the wonderful practices going on."

To learn more about National Board Certification and *Take One!* visit azk12.org and select programs.

