A Welcome from the Program Director

Finding Passion – Goals – Purpose

Welcome to our first Edition of The Navigator! We are passionate about the Early Childhood and Human Development field and one of our goals is to help you work towards obtaining the education, certificates and associates degrees that help you define your professional purpose and fulfill your passions!

Can you answer this question: what is my purpose? Your life’s purpose may not seem obvious. Some people know from childhood what they want “to be when they grow up.” Many of us find our purpose, which then ignites our passion, later in life. Some of us cannot identify a clear direction, while others appear to have it all planned out. Some students select a major before they even enter college; however, most change their majors at least 4 times before they actually earn a Bachelor’s degree.

I came into the Early Childhood and Human Development field quite by accident. I started out pursuing a degree in Secondary Education, wanting to teach high school political science and history. Along the way, I married and dropped out of college to help my husband complete his education…and then the next thing I knew I had a small baby and searched high and low for child care that met my expectations. Keep in mind, this was 1974…long before DES regulations or DHS regulations for family child care homes, long before QIRS and First Things First and only Mesa, Glendale and Phoenix Colleges offered any child development courses. I opted to open my own childcare business and then went back to school to bring my education in line with my passion.

Fast forward to the mid-1990’s and I went back to school again to earn a graduate degree in Early Childhood/Human Development and to transition into a full time Early Childhood/Family Studies faculty position at Glendale Community College…which ultimately lead me to Rio Salado College in 2006 to start Rio’s Early Childhood and Human Development Program.

Ask Di…

Questions for the Life Coach

Dare to be Extra-Ordinary!

People who are extraordinary are present to the moment, see magic in simple things and have a deep appreciation for the life they have been given. They leave an imprint and touch others by their very presence. Being extraordinary means we experience the ordinary and add a little something extra to it. It has no age limit.

More inside!
How to Be Successful: Moving to Graduation

You’ve completed your coursework, and now it is time to celebrate and be recognized for your accomplishments. Applying for graduation at Rio Salado College may be achieved by following a few simple steps.

1) Download the application at:

2) Applications can be mailed, faxed, or hand delivered to the address on top of the application.

3) If a student wishes only to apply for a degree/certificate, and not participate in the commencement ceremony, only the first page needs to be submitted. If a student plans to take part in the ceremony, both pages of the application must be completed and submitted, along with the required fee of $25. This fee is non-refundable.

4) Students should submit their applications when they are near completion of their final course for their program.

5) If transfer courses are required to complete a program, students should arrange to have official transcripts sent from other institutions during the final semester of the program. Official transcripts are only those sent directly from other institutions to RSC. Go to my.maricopa.edu and under “Academics” choose the drop down menu for “Other Academic” – “Official Transcript”, identifying the institution that has your records.

NOTE:
This newsletter is designed to support students who are taking coursework leading to certificates and degrees in the following disciplines:
• Early Childhood
• Family Life Education
• Career and Technical Education
• Adult Learning and Educational Leadership

Meet Your Instructor
Ronnie Armstrong

I have been in the Early Childhood Education field for over 23 years. I started out as an assistant teacher in high school and have held almost every position in the field up to Director, Regional Director and Corporate Trainer. I have two daughters who are now in college. The joke in our home is that my daughters and I all went off to preschool together and I’m the only one still there.

Along with my role as an adjunct instructor, I am currently a professional coach for the Arizona Director’s Academy through Rio Salado College. Also, I am the owner of Strategic Training Solutions, which specializes in early childhood education training, management/leadership training, and CPR/First Aid Certification.

I have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of child care programs and educators in the state and across the country. I have facilitated training for many of the organizations in the state of Arizona as well as at the national level.

I have dedicated my professional life to improving the quality of care for children, teachers, and administration working in the Early Childhood Education field. As dramatic as it sounds, I believe Early Childhood Education is the foundation for the future of our society and what we do makes a huge difference in the world.

What I like about on-line learning...

Of course, the flexibility provided through on-line learning is the first thing that comes to mind but what I like most is that on-line learning allows students to direct their own learning. Students can take the information from their coursework and apply it directly to their practices in early childhood education.

What makes a student stand out in my courses...

As an instructor, I take pride and joy when students share with me how the coursework has made a difference in their teaching or administrative practices. Just this week, I had a student share that she had been teaching for many years and had never seen the value of child-centered learning. Through her coursework, she tried changing her teaching style and could not believe the difference in her classroom. I also appreciate when students share their thoughts and opinions about what they are learning.
What is TaskStream®?

TaskStream® is a customizable, electronic portfolio, assessment management and performance-based instruction tool. For National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation of two-year programs (of which our Early Childhood program is currently going through), specific student assignments (signature assignments) are to be evaluated based on a faculty-developed rubric associated with the NAEYC Standards addressed by each assignment.

The electronic submission of the Signature Assignments serves two purposes.

1. It serves as college accreditation data collection and a storage site, as instructors evaluate each student’s Signature Assignments in connection with NAEYC performance based outcomes. We must collect and report this data on a regular basis.

2. It provides a platform to build an electronic portfolio for EED255 for those students completing the coursework that leads to Certificate or AAS completion.

After each student submits their Signature Assignments to TaskStream®, instructional faculty use program-approved rubrics to evaluate the assignments.

If you need assistance with TaskStream®, contact the Early Childhood Program directly at (480) 517-8732 or e-mail the program directly at ecehd.helpdesk@riosalado.edu

Dare to be Extra-Ordinary!

As a matter of fact, children come into this world as extraordinary miracles. I only have to remember the first time I held my granddaughter to remember the gift of being present to that moment, the awe of looking into the eyes of the next generation and the gratitude I felt for the life cycle. That was an extraordinary experience.

It is the choices we make between birth and death that make us extraordianry. I have been blessed to know people who have lived fully after the age of 90. One extraordinary 91 year-old woman lives in Indiana. She lives in her own home, still drives herself, volunteers at her church and works 2 days a week at a hospital gift store. Each morning she spends ½ hr. on the treadmill, completes a practice of stretching and closes her routine with meditation. She claims her longevity is a result of healthy living, strong family and community support and a positive attitude. So you see, we all have the ability to be extraordinary.

I dare you to be extraordinary! Accept the challenge and your life will change in ways you only imagined. It is really not as daunting as it may appear; it requires three things:

• Find your passion and purpose and live it full out.
• Align your thoughts and actions with your dreams.
• Take healthy risks and step outside the box.

Continued …

Supporting Your Success

The Early Childhood and Human Development Undergraduate Program at Rio Salado College participate in a variety of grant and scholarship programs that support students pursuing national credentials, college certificates and degrees. Click the link below to learn more about the current grant and financial aid opportunities to support your college success!

http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/earlychildhood/grants/Pages/default.aspx
Rio Salado College is here to support your success!

Rio Salado College is here to help you become the success you want to be. Listed below are supports for you:

- Academic Advisement
- Cashier's Office
- Computer Labs
- Counseling
- Disability Resources & Services
- Financial Aid
- Helpdesks and Additional Assistance
- Library
- Testing
- Transcript Request
- Tutoring
- Veteran Affairs

Academic Advisement: My.maricopa.edu

So what is my.maricopa?

Think of my.maricopa as a student’s tool to use for your student needs and services. It is the “Student Center” typically found on college campuses where you would go for assistance with admissions and enrollment, student records, tuition and financial aid, or registration to name just a few. Truly a one-stop shop for all your student needs.

Students will continue to be advised to go to my.maricopa. One of the common questions that advisement receives from students taking coursework at Rio Salado College is: “Do I need to enroll with my.maricopa if I have taken courses from one of the other Maricopa Community colleges?” No, YOU DO NOT need to reapply, if you have taken course at one of the sister colleges. It does not matter when you took the courses, what name you took the courses under, or what courses you took. You are still considered a student within the Maricopa Community College system. What you WILL NEED TO DO is readmit now, as a student attending Rio Salado College.

If you have never used the student self-service center, you will need to establish an MEID (Maricopa Enterprise ID) and a password. Go to the website: my.maricopa.edu and get started today! If you have already established your MEID and password, choose “login” and follow the prompts available to you for logging in.

In addition, the advisement department at Rio Salado College now has, for your convenience, an online webinar to answer any questions that you may have regarding advisement. Go to www.riosalado.edu; click “Academic Advisement” under Quick Links. A box on the right called “Sign up for Group Advising” will take you to additional information on this new “RIO 101” educational experience.

Advisement questions can be directed to the Academic Advisement Office at Rio Salado College at (480) 517-8580.

Other Community-based Training Opportunities

Please join us as we welcome you to the 2011-2012 ECE Saturday Great Seminar Series. These seminars will take place once a month and are being offered as professional development opportunities for early care and education professionals at our Rio Salado Conference Center in Tempe and our Communiversity @Surprise. Each Seminar has been designed to provide participants with information, knowledge and skills that will enhance their practice in the field of early care and education. Participants will receive a Continued Education Certificate (CEU) for attending each seminar. The CEU certificate can be used to meet ADHS, DES and CDA National Credentialing training requirements.

To review the schedule and obtain the registration information for the Great Seminars please visit our web page at: http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/earlychildhood/Pages/training.aspx
Student Success Today

Frances “Bitsy” Boyles, is the first student to be spotlighted as a Rio Salado Early Childhood Success Story. Frances is a native of Arizona. She considers our State pretty special and “…can’t imagine living any where else, especially since my children reside here” she adds. Frances and her husband (of 31 years) have two children, and Bitsy proudly shares that her son is completing his PhD in English and her daughter is an Assistant GM of a local hotel chain. Bitsy can be found most days at Mona’s Country Day School in Chandler where she is the Assistant Director. She attributes her longevity with Mona’s to the “close-knit family feel” that is found there.

Frances has worked with children for over 25 years, starting her career at Weinberg Elementary, where she was employed for 11 years. “I feel I make a difference in the lives of children. I know they make a big difference in mine,” she proudly shares. At Weinberg, Bitsy began her own educational journey. She participated in a pilot project where she was awarded her CDA National Credential while working full time as the Preschool Assistant. After leaving Weinberg, Bitsy moved to Mona’s Country Day, where she has worked for the past 12 years.

Last year, Bitsy participated in the APEX project, offered through Rio Salado College. “The APEX project helped me to continue my educational journey. My coach helped me pick an educational pathway, offered me guidance and support, and helped me enroll in several college courses at Rio.” There is no stopping Bitsy. After finishing her work with APEX, she applied for the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, and was awarded funding to continue her coursework at Rio. With a strong hard work ethic and lots of determination, Bitsy hopes to be awarded her Academic Certificate in Child and Family Professional Development at the end of October 2011. “With lots of prayers and encouragement I hope to finish my AA by the end of 2012. Sometimes I think I would like to go back to working in the public school, but when I have a week like this week, in which I get to enjoy everything around me, and I don’t have to worry about test scores, benchmarks and pleasing Administration….Nope, I love my position!” she adds with pride.

“Thank you,” Bitsy, for the difference that you make in the lives of Arizona’s children!

From the Program Director (Con’t)

I would have thought I was dreaming if you told me in 1974, as I was holding my brand new baby, that I would complete a Doctorate and be the Director of a college Early Childhood/Human Development Program!!!! But with an education, dreams can come true.

So what do I want to “be” when I grow up? It took a while and a few starts and stops and detours, but I found my life’s passion and love to come to work every day because we get to work with students like you…helping you identify your passions, work towards completing your educational goals and finding your life’s purpose.

I hope that our Newsletters bring valuable information to you and make you feel a bit more connected to the work that we do on your behalf. Let us know how we can help you reach your goals so that you can work towards the fulfillment of your passions and purpose.

Best Regards,

Diana L. Abel, Ed.D.
Director and Faculty

Dr. Sue’s Book Corner

The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams That Win Consistently
By: Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker

Leading the Indianapolis Colts to the Super Bowl victory in 2007 and to ten consecutive playoff berths isn’t what makes him a distinctive leader. No, it’s his insights as a parent to seven children, a strong Christian, a winning NFL coach, and a strong humanitarian, and a willingness to share the effectiveness of being a winning leader. He addresses the mindset of a mentor leader (It’s not about me!), the maturity of a mentor leader. He speaks directly to the methods of a mentor leader (the seven E’s of Enhancing Potential) and the measure of a mentor leader (Building Other Lives of Impact) in this #1 New York Times best selling book. Download it to your Kindle® or iPad® or curl up with the hardback version but whichever format you choose, choose it as book this Fall!
FIND YOUR PASSION: Imagine a time in your life when you felt a sense of joy, a sense of purpose or a deep sense of connection to something that you valued. For me it is the ocean. I grew up in Massachusetts and spent summers on the South Shore of the Atlantic Ocean. I didn’t realize the significance of that passion until I moved out to the desert and felt something missing in my life. It became clear to me what was missing when I was floating on a mat in a swimming pool and felt this deep sense of calm. I knew then that I needed to find places in Arizona that would reconnect me with nature and the sound of water. I began visiting lakes and creeks around the state and discovered the most sacred of places. I dreamed that some day I would create a sacred space in my own backyard that would include colorful flowers, rocks and running water.

ALIGN YOUR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS WITH YOUR DREAMS: We carry perceptions, assumptions and stories in our minds and we believe they are all true. Our belief or attitude translates into action. Attitude and action creates experience. Experience produces results and the cycle gets reinforced. When was the last time you had a dream, a dream of something you wanted in your life? One of my clients had such a dream. She is a very talented Adult Education Teacher teaching non-credit writing class at a local Community College. She had found her passion and purpose, loved what she did and received outstanding evaluations from the class members as well as the Department Chair. She was looking for a career change and was advised to apply to the Community College as an English teacher.

She had always dreamed of teaching college credit classes but believed that she needed a Master's Degree to teach at that level so she never pursued her dream. She had settled for teaching Adult Education Classes and the pay that went along with it. I encouraged her to take a risk and assigned her the task of researching the requirements for the teaching position of her dreams and she discovered that she did not need the Master's Degree. Her belief had held her back, the dream was set free and she went on to teach the credit classes at the Community College.

In the last 10 years there have been significant results from brain research. Through brain mapping we can see the connection between how we think, how we feel and how we behave. An intriguing aspect of the research shows neurological patterns that emerge in the prefrontal cortex with thoughts and words and their impact on our emotional experience in the limbic system. Beautiful and uplifting words create neurological patterns in the limbic system that are different from negative words demonstrating the power of how we think and its link to how we feel.

What is your dream? Dream the dream and use your imagination to bring it alive. Imagine the details of the dream, your thought, feelings and actions. We become extraordinary when we allow ourselves to dream and align our behavior to attract what we truly want.

TAKE HEALTHY RISKS AND STEP OUTSIDE THE BOX: 15 years ago I completed a vision board that had a beautiful spa-scape on it. At that time I had no idea why I placed it on the board but it gave me a connection to nature and the things that were most important to me at that time in my life. I had never done a vision board and it was fascinating to see what emerged. I stepped outside the box of my limited backyard space and limited budget and let the dream flow onto the board. I placed the vision board on my garage wall and for 5 years the vision board greeted me everyday with the colorful rock garden and the waterfall.

The dream of creating a sacred space in my backyard was set free 10 years ago. It is a simple English garden in the backyard surrounded by the sound of running water that nurtures my soul and brings delight to all who visit. I have hummingbirds outside my kitchen window and they are what greet me now in the morning. My roses find their way to the office and into the homes of friends, and the fragrance of the honeysuckle in the walkway brings delight to my neighbors. And all of this is still in Arizona, home of the cactus, prickly pear and desert.

11 years ago I took the risk to join Best Year Yet and create my first one-page plan. I have created my plan every year since and work with a Best Year Yet partner who keeps me focused and accountable. That decision has brought extraordinary experiences into my life and today I not only live my own dream, I have the privilege of working with clients who have discovered their dreams and are making them come true.

This newsletter, The Navigator, is sent to you in an effort to support your success at attaining your higher education certificate and/or degree(s). Any topics, articles, concepts, or ideas that you have for future content of this newsletter are greatly appreciated. Please let the Rio Salado Early Childhood Education Navigator know your thoughts. E-mail your ideas to Navigator.ecehd@riosalado.edu.