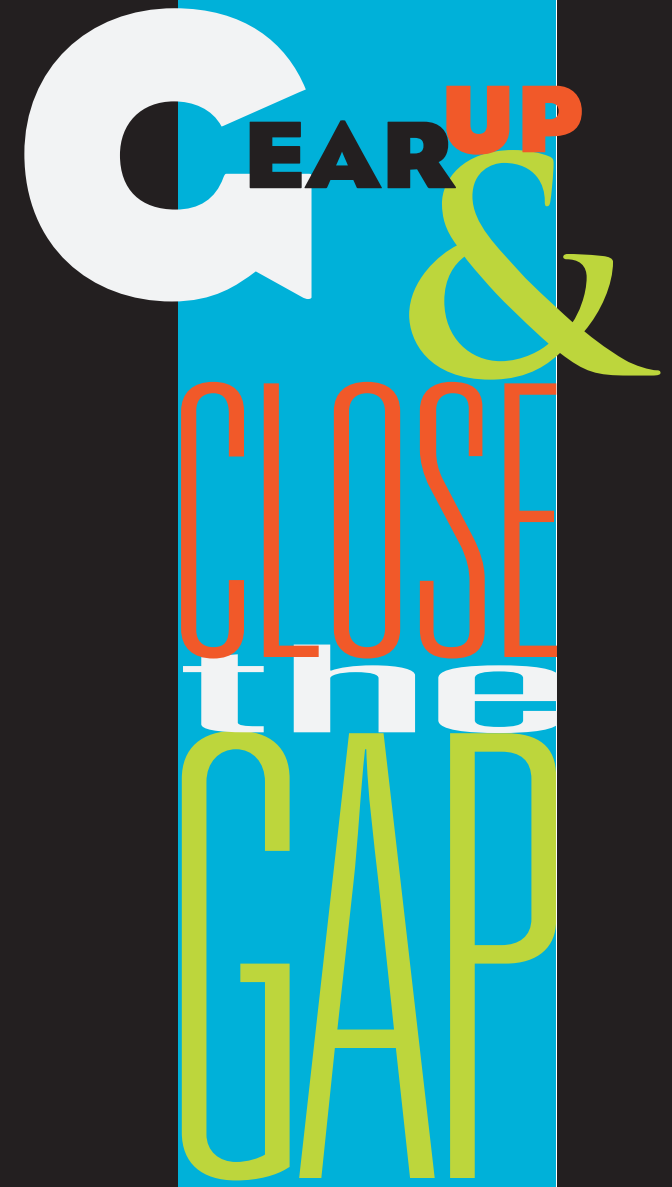


Middle Schooling for Postsecondary Access and Success

Underserved students simply do not enroll in postsecondary programs or complete college at the same rate as their white, middle or upper-income peers. Research suggests that this discrepancy is due in large part to the lack of opportunity for underserved students beginning in middle school. Middle grades educators must become engaged in the discussion of how college access differs for students and involved in making the changes needed to guarantee each child equal postsecondary opportunities and choices.

Closing the gap will require middle schools to use the most effective practices for all students, focus on interventions specific to underserved students, and develop the capacity to do both. (Camblin, 2003)



What's the Post Secondary Strand all about?

In response to these findings into the role of middle schooling and students' post-secondary success, VSAC's GEAR UP Program and the Middle Grades Collaborative have teamed up to offer a new strand at the Middle Grades Institute (MGI) from June 25th to June 29th, 2012 at the Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT. This strand will be built upon three core themes:

- The key role that middle grades education plays in postsecondary access and success.
- Student voice in teaching and learning.
- Student efficacy as fundamental to success in the middle grades and beyond.

Teacher Strand

During the Institute week, and throughout the fall follow-up, teachers will examine best middle level practices for postsecondary access and success.

The primary objectives of the strand are framed within the following essential questions:

1. What middle level theories, practices, and approaches will ensure post-secondary access and success for students?
2. What cultural belief systems appear to contribute to the success of post-secondary students?
3. How do young adolescent aspirations, student efficacy and teacher efficacy contribute to post-secondary success?
4. What current research and programs related to middle level education have demonstrated success for at-risk students?
5. What modes of inquiry and practical teacher resources related to these themes will best inform our teaching practice?

Student Strand

In addition, the Institute will offer a three-day, residential program for middle level students that models effective middle grades approaches to post-secondary access and success. The Student Strand incorporates the following relevant, hands-on activities:

- Problem-based learning
- Service learning
- Student choice
- Early awareness of post secondary education activities

Students will be selected by a wide variety of factors including socioeconomic status, family post-secondary background, and academic performance.



Integration between the Teacher Strand and the Student Strand will occur throughout the week. Students are intentionally integrated into the overall Institute experience and asked to participate as “student experts” in other strands of the Institute. They are asked to provide feedback and to work with educators. This collaboration and partnering between students and teachers is considered one of the highlights of the Institute.

What are my roles and responsibilities?

Your role may include the following:

1. Inform students, parents, and fellow faculty about VSAC's GEAR-UP Program.
2. Identify students who would benefit from the student strand of the Institute and distribute informational flyers and permission forms to parents.
3. Conduct informational meetings with parents.

What are the costs and benefits?

Teachers will receive a stipend for participating in this strand. In addition, MGI room, board, and registration costs *for teachers and students* will be funded by VSAC's GEAR UP Program.

If you have questions or are interested in participating in this exciting opportunity, please respond by April 15th, 2012.

Email Regina Toolin at Rtoolin@UVM.edu

Camblin, S. J. (2003). *The middle grades: Putting all students on track for college* [Electronic Version]. Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. Retrieved July 20, 2007 from www.pathwaystocollege.net/pdf/MiddleGrades.pdf.

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