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# The Learning Curve

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## University Instructors is Pleased to Provide Services In:

MARYLAND • WASHINGTON, D.C.  
VIRGINIA • NORTH CAROLINA  
SOUTH CAROLINA • GEORGIA  
ALABAMA

*The Learning Curve is a publication of University Instructors, Inc., and will be distributed via .pdf on a quarterly basis throughout the school year.*

## A Baltimore City School Looks to Positively Impact Students

University Instructors (UI) offers many different types of programs, all of which focus on a single overarching objective; namely providing our partners with service solutions in support of Measurable Positive Student Outcomes (MPSO). In pursuit of this goal, UI recently partnered with Arlington Elementary/Middle School, in Baltimore, Md., to provide them with a new Reading and Math Initiative for the 2010-2011 school year.



The program is designed to augment academic achievement, in addition to providing reinforcement for Arlington's dedicated staff. UI instructors employ a small group instructional strategy designed to improve Reading and Math skills for students in grades 3-8.

The rapport built between Arlington and UI this school year is based upon

the shared desire for positive student outcomes. Principal Terelle Gray noted, "At Arlington, our goal is to make each child successful, where learning is non-threatening, and where students can put their efforts where they need to be. The focus for our students is for them to be successful – in their schoolwork, themselves, and all they endeavor to do."

Principal Gray further noted that the students participate willingly and display confidence as they leave class for small group instruction. "Arlington Elementary/Middle looks forward to positive data from the tutoring," she added.

*For more information about UI's School Solutions, please call us at 800-826-1250, option #2, option#2. For more information about Arlington Elementary Middle School, please visit their website at [www.baltimorecityschools.org/234/site/default.asp](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/234/site/default.asp)*

## Federal Programs

### Changes to i3 Fund Announced

Based upon 'lessons learned' in the aftermath of the 2010 Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) competition, the US Department of Education (ED) announced its intention to give the Education Secretary far more flexibility when establishing a) final i3 priorities (funding targets); b) qualification requirements (the levels of funding to be made available); and c) selection criteria (components comprising the scoring rubric) for all future i3 competitions.

This is a positive sign, given an earlier announcement from ED that there would be no i3 RFP in the spring of 2011 (which sent a wave of disappointment across the many consortiums of potential applicants who were already pre-planning and designing what they hoped to be the next successful proposal - University Instructors included). This gave rise to speculation that the 'new sheriff in town' (otherwise known as the House of Representatives) was planning to eliminate this targeted funding initiative altogether in the face of massive federal deficits.

The announcement on January 10th that ED is proposing changes affecting future competitions is an indicator that i3 may still have legs; ED doesn't normally announce long-term changes to programs having a no-term lifespan. It also signals that future Congressional appropriations for i3 and other discretionary funding programs will require consensus building from both sides of the aisle. The results of the November 2, 2010 mid-term elections promise interesting days ahead for US K-12 education...very interesting indeed!

## Louisburg Elementary's Mighty Mustang Summer Camp is Model 21st CCLC



Louisburg Elementary School (LES), in Louisburg, NC, is known in Franklin County as the "home of the Mustangs". Not ordinary mustangs, mind you, and LES has very specific goals for its students: improve student performance in Reading, improve student performance in Math, and increase parental involvement. In an effort to achieve these goals and help combat summer learning loss, LES partnered with UI to establish the Mighty Mustang Summer Camp through a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant.

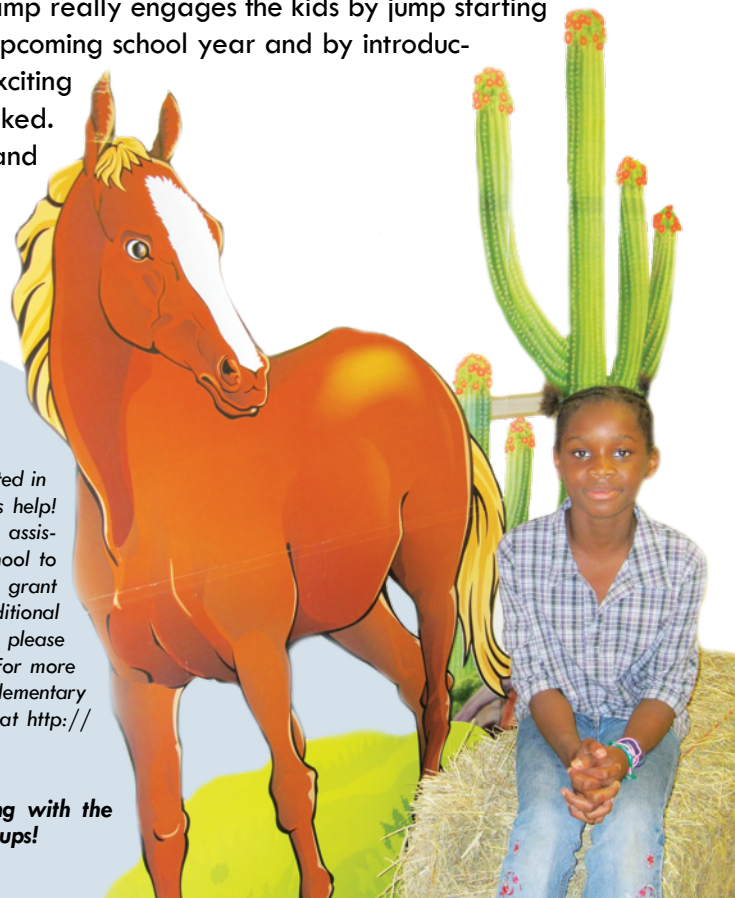
The Mighty Mustang program launched during the summer of 2010. Due to its success, LES and UI are making plans for the 2011 camp, where 60, 2nd-5th grade students will focus on core content in Reading and Math and experience enrichment workshops and field trips. These activities have been designed to improve their standing in the upcoming school year, as well as increase motivation for success, and encourage them to make positive life choices.

The Mighty Mustang Summer Camp is a collaborative effort between LES and UI and has been designed by school leaders to meet 21st CCLC program criteria based on student, school, and district needs. Pending a renewal of funding, the camp will be in session Monday-Friday for two weeks and daily activities will center on: academic recovery, studying/test taking skills, character education, parental involvement, recreation, art and music. As a way to integrate parental involvement within the program, parents are invited to participate in both daily enrichment activities and field trips.

Kimberly Leonard, site director for the Mighty Mustang Summer Camp, is enthusiastic about the camp. "This camp really engages the kids by jump starting their academics for the upcoming school year and by introducing them to new and exciting experiences," she remarked.

As she shared pictures and stories from last year's camp she added, "The character building component instilled a confidence in them that will be stamped in their hearts forever."

*If your school or district is interested in applying for a 21st CCLC, let us help! University Instructors can provide assistance by partnering with your school to provide resources for writing a grant proposal and much more. For additional information on how UI can help, please call 800-826-1250, ext. 113. For more information regarding Louisburg Elementary School, please visit their website at <http://www.fcschools.net/les/les.html>.*



**Photo: Campers enjoyed posing with the Mighty Mustang for their close-ups!**

# Technology Empowers Educational Decision Making

A common phrase in the age of K-12 accountability is 'Data Driven Decision Making'. The definition is intuitive, as one analyzes data to make decisions. This is based on the assumption that better decisions will result from information than anecdote. On the surface it sounds like a plausible concept. In practice, however, accurate data can be hard to come by, especially when there has been insufficient development of the technology to gather, store, analyze, and then report it in an understandable format.

Not that long ago, a student file was just that - a manila folder containing necessary and useful information written or printed on paper - usually stored in a file cabinet in the school office until transferred to long-term storage. Oh... and each student had a separate file for elementary, middle school, and high school, none of which were ever merged.

Today, a student file is a portable electronic record that can be stored indefinitely and linked or merged with other files relating to the student. A student file contains standard information but may also contain the student's scores on every quiz, test, and assessment as well as a myriad of other data. When this information is examined, both separately and together it provides educators with a picture of the student's progress and style of learning. The improvements over past methods of recordkeeping are staggering.

The challenge now is learning how to analyze and interpret all of this new information so it can be used in the classroom. New teachers entering the profession are well acquainted with technology and its uses in education as they are 'technology natives'. Others are 'technology immigrants', and must learn new terminology as

well as new processes. The result, however, is worth the effort, as it provides differentiated instruction that meets the unique needs each student.

For those willing to forge ahead into the world of data driven decision making, there are a number of excellent sources for information. A good place to start might be to read the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of the Harvard Education Letter. *The "Data Wise" Improvement Process - Eight steps for using test data to improve teaching and learning* by Kathryn Parker Boudett describes a process developed by a group of faculty and graduate students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and school leaders from three Boston schools during a two-year project. Your first data driven project will be to find a copy of the letter at [www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org). Happy hunting...and may the Choice be with you...

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## Believe & Achieve *by Alan J. Carter, Sr.- CEO*

"Education is, at least, the endeavor to get people to do things they could not previously do, to understand things they did not previously understand, and perhaps, to become the people they did not expect to become" -*Sockett (1988, p.195)*.

### Can't?

One of the more insidious words in the educational environment is the word 'can't'. A contraction of polar opposites...'can' is positive, 'not' is negative; 'can' predicts advantage, 'not', portends disappointment; 'can' represents strength, 'not' signifies weakness. Unfortunately, the word is so embedded in K-12 culture that it has become a belief, and its followers are many.

At-risk students are often classified as unmotivated, disengaged, and disinterested; yet studies have found, there is no difference in the level of self-confidence and expectation of success when comparing preschool/kindergarten aged children of poverty with their privileged counterparts. Somewhere along the way in their K-12 education, these children of promise leave the Community of Can and begin to adopt what M. Kay Alderman calls 'failure-avoiding strategies'. If they believe they don't have the ability or believe the effort will be wasted, it's safer for their self-worth to simply not try.

One method to encourage them to stay in the Community of Can is to first assure them that their human value doesn't rest solely on academic success, and second, encourage them to believe in themselves. Then find a copy of M. Kay Alderman's book *Motivation for Achievement - Possibilities for Teaching and Learning*. Believing that MPSO is possible for every student, regardless of perceived ability, University Instructors exists to reinforce the efforts of those responsible for developing educational supports for students. Our desire is to see the day when the word 'can't' is removed from the K-12 lexicon.



## BEST PRACTICES

### Defining Success and Using Data Contribute to Program Effectiveness

The foundation of the University Instructors' mission is MPSO – Measurable Positive Student Outcomes. While working with our many school clients, we have found that clearly outlining program objectives and outcomes before beginning delivery leads to a collaborative definition of 'success'. This allows us to design program milestones against which we can measure our progress and further provides the opportunity to use data to improve program delivery while the program is still being delivered... all of which increases the likelihood of MPSO. This is just one example of using data to make program decisions.

A good rule of thumb about data is: "If it isn't measured - it cannot be managed".



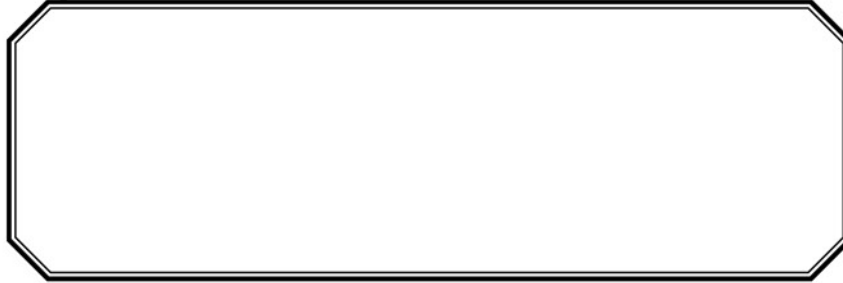
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- UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS -

## Summer Camp

UI provides turnkey Summer Camps for elementary and middle school students. Our camp programs provide students with a unique summer learning experience and the chance to develop leadership and life skills necessary to improve school performance and promote positive behaviors. UI has the passion, capacity and experience to partner with you to positively affect the lives of your students and encourage them to achieve their fullest potential.

For more information about our Summer Camp opportunities and how our programs can benefit your school or district, please call 800-826-1250.



## About University Instructors

University Instructors (UI) has a successful track record of providing K-12 academic support to more than 150 school districts and 600 schools throughout the southeast.

The foundation of UI's mission is to deliver **service solutions in support of Measurable Positive Student Outcomes™**. In an effort to consistently achieve these results, we work with each client to clearly define realistic and attainable objectives for every UI solution.

### UI Service Solutions:

- ◆ Customized Daytime Interventions
- ◆ Afterschool Academies
- ◆ 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- ◆ Flexible Educational Staffing Options
- ◆ RTI Tier I, II and III Tutoring
- ◆ Expanded Learning Time & Enrichment
- ◆ Summer Camps and Activities
- ◆ And More...

Corporate Office: 2100 W. Laburnum Avenue, Suite 100D • Richmond, VA 23227

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**UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS**

If they believe, they will achieve. ®

To provide service solutions to reinforce the effective delivery and implementation of K-12 educational supports that lead to measurable positive student outcomes.

toll free: 1-888-826-1250 • press option #2, then option #2

[www.universityinstructors.com](http://www.universityinstructors.com)

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