

EDUCATION

Danville welcomes 'guests' for CSIU teacher training



Joe Sylvester/The Daily Item

Instructor Michael Lord, center, in light blue shirt, and guest teacher trainees, including Eric Roberts and Phebe Strzempek, flanking Lord, listen to trainee Jillian Zanoline, left, in yellow, during a discussion at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit training at the Danville Primary School on Thursday.

Program gets college grads ready for classroom work

By Joe Sylvester

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DANVILLE — Melissa Fox has a degree in theater, but she would like to be an elementary school teacher.

The problem is the 42-year-old Danville woman does not have a teaching degree.

She is going back to school to obtain a master's degree in elementary education. But even before that, she soon could substitute teach as a guest teacher.

Fox was among two dozen participants in the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) guest teacher training at the Danville Primary School Thursday and today.

Training guest teachers is a way to increase the number of substitute teachers for Valley school districts, especially in Danville, where there is a dire need.

"It will be good experience, and I love working with children," said Fox, who does volunteer work and is on the board of Camp Ability, at Camp Victory in Millville.

Others had various reasons for wanting to fill in as a teacher.

"I have a passion for teaching," said Phebe Strzempek, 40, Danville, a native of Turkey. "I used to be a full-time teacher."

Robyn Morales, 31, of Northumberland, said substitute teaching

See **CSIU**, Page B2



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Guest teacher trainees, from left, Eric Roberts, Melissa Fox, Robyn Morales and Ale Barben were among two dozen participants in the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit guest teacher training at the Danville Primary School Thursday and today.

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CSIU, from Page A1

will allow her to pursue her two interests.

"I always wanted to be a teacher. I also always wanted to be a photographer," said Morales, who holds a degree in photography from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. "This way I get to do both."

Being a mom, the schedule allows her flexibility, she said.

Jillian Zanoline, 34, of Berwick, who holds a degree in speech pathology and audiology, is a stay-at-home mom.

"I'm ready to get back out into the workforce," she said.

Ale Barben, of Mifflinburg, has experience substitute teaching in southern Illinois, where she only needed a four-year degree but not a teaching degree. Barben, 25, has a degree in criminal justice.

"I'm taking this so I could substitute in my home district,"

she said.

Eric Roberts, who helps coach soccer at Southern Columbia Area and teaches life skills at a summer camp, feels teaching would help him get to know his players as students.

At the training session on Thursday, Roberts, 25, of Numidia, said the training was as good as it could be.

"They kind of prepare you to learn on the fly," he said. "It's helping us prioritize. It's definitely going to have a learning curve."

"It's good training, very interactive," Morales added.

CSIU Trainer Michael Lord on Thursday talked about the substitutes' professional responsibilities, schools' daily routines and strategies for instruction and student behavior during a variety of sessions.

The trainees fanned out this morning to various Valley school districts and CSIU classrooms to observe. He told them

to look for staff-student ratio, interactions between students and the teacher, what strategies worked and how many students needed support or redirection, and how effective consequences were. They were scheduled to return this afternoon to discuss classroom management.

During one of the sessions on Thursday, Lord liked Zanoline's observation that teachers should not look down on students but, instead, get down to their level.

Lord also offered some basic professional tips.

"Bring your driver's license, try to get there kind of extra early, because you don't know what parking might be," Lord said.

He said one time he substituted and the teacher later criticized him because he didn't use her lesson plans. They were stacked under a pile of books, he said.

"Don't be afraid to ask questions," Lord said.

"Follow the teacher's lesson plan as best you can," he added. "The difference between elementary school, middle school and high school — you come to first grade, you're teaching. You're not going to have a free period all day."

He said schools will not put substitutes in a position to see the subs fail.

"Always be positive and respectful," Lord noted.

After completing the training, candidates can apply for a day-to-day substitute teacher emergency permit with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The permit allows guest teachers to work as substitute teachers for CSIU educational programs and at Valley school districts through the CSIU's Central Susquehanna Regional Guest Teacher Consortium.

Substitute teachers in Valley schools are paid about \$100 per day.