

BOOK from Page 10

Entitled, **Alternative Teacher Certification: History, Handbook, & How-To**, the book is divided into three distinct parts.

1) The first part, history of the alternative teacher certification movement, discusses many different perspectives and provides interns, directors, mentors, researchers, and anyone involved in teacher education an objective and current review of the literature and research on alternative teacher certification. The history is excerpted from **ATE;s Handbook on Teacher Education** (MacMillan, Feb. 1996).

2) The Handbook portion of the book talks about why alternative teacher certification works. For many people, even teacher educators, the roles of policy, rule-making, the structure of higher education, the placement of teacher certification in undergraduate programs, and other dynamics of the status quo systems of teacher certification serve better to find jobs for new graduates than to find good teachers for schools. The handbook part of **Alternative Teacher Certification: History, Handbook and How-to** discusses how alternative teacher certification changes the status quo to serve first the child behind the desk. Told through scenarios based on visits to schools nationwide, the text enlivens the issues and adds to the seemingly pallid questions of policy and certification the urgency of convictions about what is best for children.

3) The new book ends with a section of "How-to." When individuals wishing to improve the lives of children through teacher certification and preparation programs sit down to create a program, where do they start? Practical items like rule creation, program building, schedules, at-will contracts, mentor training, and "pitfalls to avoid" are included in this portion which is based on the years of experience the author and others have had in program building and implementation. While every program is unique and has particular needs and idiosyncrasies, every program will share many of the same characteristics, meet many of the same needs and face many of the same questions as many others. The "how-to" is designed to make the prospect of program creation and implementation vastly simpler. □

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## Alternative Teacher Certification: History, Handbook, And How-To

By: VICKY DILL and DELIA STAFFORD

### Who Will Benefit From This Book?

- **ISD PERSONNEL WHO HIRE TEACHERS**
- **MID-CAREER & MILITARY PERSONNEL SEEKING A TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**
- **STATE DEPARTMENT EDUCATORS, LEGISLATORS, POLICYMAKERS**
- **DOWNSIZING BUSINESSES AND THOSE WISHING TO SUPPORT QUALITY EDUCATION REFORM**
- **TEACHER EDUCATORS**

Contains specific suggestions for innovative ways to solve problems! Features a variety of teacher quality topics that concern today's forward-looking school districts, policymakers, military leaders, businesses and industries.

**The National Center For Alternative  
Teacher Certification Information**  
4018 Martinshire  
Houston, TX 77025

For Information call:  
**713-667-6185**

Our Fax number is:  
**713-667-6185**

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# THE HABERMAN NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the research and support of Alternative Certification Programs  
Fall 2001 Vol. 6 - No. 2

## Florida's Alternative Certification Initiatives: A State of Change

### Florida Total Quality Enhancement Advisory

April 3, 2001, **Dr. Vicky Dill** spoke to members of the Advisory Board including key senators and business leaders of new legislative initiatives relating to alternative teacher certification in Florida. In a veritable explosion of models, Florida's policy now supports extensive certification by school districts. The Educator Accomplished Practices are the basis for approval of any entity's program and individuals must demonstrate these proficiencies in order to be certified. Dr. Dill's focus was on the key characteristics of an excellent alternative teacher certification program and on topics

such as how to use formative assessment and component modules in a program which maintains the integrity of a cohort group; how to ensure effective mentor identification and training, assessment and portfolio building. Additional expert testimony will be given the committee by key personnel at The Haberman Educational Foundation at a later date.

### Florida Association for Staff Development

**President Delia Stafford** gave an invited address May 21, 2001 to the Florida Association for Staff Development, an affiliate of the National Staff Development

Council (NSDC). Recent legislation in the state of Florida has shifted much of the responsibilities for teacher certification from the colleges to school districts themselves. Ms. Stafford's presentation, *A National Perspective on Alternative Certification*, spoke to the many responsibilities district professional developers will have structuring the training and nurturing the interns.

During the day-long presentation, pioneering efforts in alternative teacher certification programs around the state were highlighted. Programs included, for example, the Manatee County/Eckerd College Collaborative Program under the able

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We are pleased to announce that the Los Angeles, California Alternative Certification Program Directors will host the 2002 NAAC. More to Come!

# In Our Mailbox

## Florida Association for Staff Development

an affiliate of the National Staff Development Council

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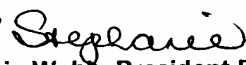
Delia Stafford  
The Haberman Foundation  
4018 Martinshire Drive  
Houston, Texas 77025

Dear Delia,

The Spring Forum Planning Committee has completed the review of the session's evaluations and we are pleased to announce that the consensus of those attending was very positive! Participants appreciated the information that was, for them, a "just-in-time" session!

The Forum's focus on Alternative Certification provided those attending with the most current information and models from which they will draw support for developing their interim programs. The districts represented will continue to network and share information as they work toward submitting an approved program.

Please accept our sincere thanks for providing us with the national perspective on alternative certification.

Warmly,  
  
Stephanie Webb, President FASD

## The Haberman Educational Foundation Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter of the Haberman Educational Foundation will collect and disseminate news of all alternative teacher certification programs and will accept contributions of information from teacher educators world wide. It will also provide services of research; policy, technical assistance, and grants related to the selection, and training of more effective teachers and principals. Items of news interest should be submitted to: The Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc., 4018 Martinshire, Houston, TX 77025, Phone: 1-800-667-6185.

The Haberman Educational Foundation Newsletter is now self-funded. Thanks to all our many subscribers in 1994-1995. The Newsletter is being disseminated internationally. Your contribution or gift to the Haberman Educational Foundation, is tax deductible.



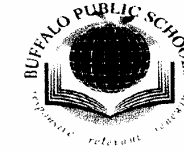
DELIA STAFFORD-JOHNSON is President of The Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc. in Houston, TX. Her research interests include urban education, violence prevention and alternative certification. Mrs. Stafford-Johnson is a member of the North Central Indiana Alumni Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society for Educators.



VICKY SCHREIBER DILL is a lecturer, writer and senior researcher for the Haberman Educational Foundation. Her research interests include teacher selection and development, violence prevention, and school renewal. Dr. Dill is a member of the Delta Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society for educators.

# In Our Mailbox

BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
701 CITY HALL  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202



DAVID W. HESS  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
FOR SECONDARY, CONTINUING  
& ADULT EDUCATION

MARION CAÑEDO  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

May 15, 2001

Ms. Delia Stafford, President  
The Haberman Foundation  
4018 Martinshire  
Houston, Texas 77025

Dear Ms. Stafford:

We wish to thank you for your company's kind donation of a full two (2) day training by Dr. Habertman and Bettye Topp to our Secondary Principals and Central Office Staff in the Haberman Interview Methodologies. We are impressed at the donation, not only of staff time, but also of the donation of the \$15,000 workshop. This was most generous of the Haberman Foundation.

Information about the Haberman Principals Interview technique was shared yesterday evening in an update to the Board of Education. As Dr. Haberman suggested, we will be using his method to develop a pool of urban leaders. This pool will be drawn by individual school interview teams, which will encompass parents and other members of the community. They will select the principals for specific schools. You can be assured that the Haberman techniques will help us to identify effective leaders for our schools in the Secondary Division of the Buffalo Public Schools.

We look forward to continuing to work with your organization.

Sincerely,

David W. Hess  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Secondary, Continuing  
& Adult Education

c: Marion Cañedo  
Yvonne Hargrave  
Board Members  
DWH/KGR/ml

**FLORIDA** From Page 1

leadership of **Ms. Molly Drake**. Molly Drake also is a trainer for The Haberman Educational Foundation. The Manatee County/Eckerd College program is but one excellent example of the creative efforts now occurring in Florida. Other programs highlighted included Orange County Public Schools, Broward County, and Hillsborough.

The luncheon speaker was Mr. Joseph Balchunan, the 2001 Florida Teacher of the Year whose "Four C's" of effective teaching are: Critical Thinking, Cooperation, Communication, and Cultural Acceptance. Mr. Balchunan discussed the key role of professional development in an effective teacher's life.

**Dr. David Ashburn**, Director of Professional Educators in the Department of Education also keynoted at the event, bringing the state perspective and updates on current legislation. Dr. Ashburn has worked with the Department of Education in Tallahassee since 1977 and has guided the department's interpretation of many critical certification issues. □

Region 7 Service Center in Kilgore, Texas has provided school leaders opportunities for training in both the Star Teacher and Star Principal selection processes. Pictured here are Superintendents who attended the most recent Principal Selection training with Dr. Martin Haberman and Delia Stafford from the Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc. June 21 - 22, 2001. Pictured (LtoR): Supts. Dr. Richard Montgomery, Dr. Martin Haberman, THEF, Carolyn Dungan Coordinator Region 7, Dan Noll, Diana ISD and Dr. Larry Bennett, Gilmer ISD.



## New York City Schools

**New York City Schools.** Training in the Star Teacher Selection occurred in New York City for that city's public school principals and Human Resource specialists April 23-27, 2001. Approximately 200 principals and recruiters received teacher selection training over the five-day period. Overseeing the project was Ms. Winn Radigan, Director of Teacher Development for the Board of Education of the City of New York.

One participant in their evaluation of the training said, "I give the workshop an 'I' – Interesting, interactive, informational and inventive!"

**Other Training Events:**

- **Buffalo, New York** January 8-11, 2001
- **South Bend, IN** January 19, 2001
- **Golden Apple Foundation** January 25, 2001
- **Nashville, TN** January 31, 2001
- **Dallas, TX** February 13, 2001
- **Lake City, FL** March 2, 2001
- **Bay City, MI** March 21, 2001
- **Middle Cities, MI** March 22-23, 2001
- **Tyler, TX** April 2, 2001
- **Round Rock, TX** April 9, 2001
- **New Leaders for New Schools** April 20, 2001
- **New York City** April 23-27, 2001
- **Buffalo, NY** April 6, 2001

The National Center For  
Alternative Teacher Certification Information  
at *The HABERMAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION*  
announces a new book!

## Alternative Teacher Certification History, Handbook, & How-To

by

**VICKY DILL and DELIA STAFFORD**

For many years, leaders in the grassroots movement which generated many successful alternative teacher certification programs have been wanting a book which discusses all in one place the many reasons why alternative teacher certification has been so successful. That book is now available.

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# Dr. Martin Haberman Receives Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from The State University of New York (SUNY)

Dr. Martin Haberman, Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters May 19, 2001 at SUNY Cortland and Aminy Audi. In order to receive an honorary doctorate from the SUNY system, all colleges must unanimously agree on the choice; Dr. Haberman was their choice. Hooding Dr. Haberman was Dr. Judson Taylor, Trustee of the SUNY Board of Regents. In receiving the award, Dr. Haberman commented to the graduating class:

"Why do some have careers which soar while others with similar training have careers that languish and go unrecognized?"

The answer does not lie in ability, or luck or who you know. It lies in persistent effort. After failing at thousands of trials, Edison identified tungsten as the filament for the light bulb and quipped, "The difference between coal and diamonds is that diamonds stayed on the job longer." Jefferson's version of how to be lucky was, "The harder I work the more I have of it." In answer to a reporter who asked him what makes a champion, Mohammed Ali responded, "When the bell rings the champ is the one who comes out for another round."

The great teachers I have prepared and then learned from are inner directed. They are certainly aware that even a mediocre baseball player will earn double and even triple what they will earn in a lifetime. They are very aware and sensitive to the fact that the very children and youth whose lives they save will not understand or appreciate it and will actively resist their most empathetic efforts. . . their greatest honor is to have the students think they have learned everything by their own unaided efforts. In this way, the teacher empowers the students to believe in themselves and to press on to the next level. The surest way to put meaning into your own life is to help others put meaning into theirs.

The challenges and opportunities we face as Americans persist above the noise and static called the evening news. They deal with questions like, 'Can diverse people really live together peacefully in a free country? Can we live up to our own stated values? . . . The bravest man in the world is also the most foolish. He would stand between brand new college graduates and the awarding of their degrees. Now that I am an alumnus, I will certainly not delay your becoming one. I wish you happy, productive lives.' □

Dr. Haberman (second from the left), honored by the State Universities of New York, received a Doctorate in Humane Letters from State University Cortland, N.Y., May 19, 2001. Seen here speaking in his honor is Regent Audi of the New York State Higher Education Board.



## The National Association Of Alternative Certification (NAAC) Honors Dr. Martin Haberman at a Celebratory Luncheon

The NAAC Conference on Padre Island was the setting for an extraordinary "Tribute to Martin Haberman" celebration lunch. Six speakers attested to the powerful influence of the life of this remarkable educator and visionary. Those joining the litany of praise for the work of Martin Haberman included Dr. Carl Patton, President of Georgia State University and member of The Haberman Educational Foundation Advisory Board; Dr. Kenneth R. Howey, Director of the Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Dr. Michael McKibbin, Project Officer, Alternative Certification for the State of California and member of The Haberman Educational Foundation Advisory Board; Dr. Sam Carmen, Executive Director, Milwaukee Teachers' Education

Association; Delia Stafford, President, The Haberman Educational Foundation at the National Center for Alternative Teacher Certification Information, and Dr. Linda Post, Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Typical were the words of Dr. Carl Patton who noted,

"Martin's distinguished academic record and his gift of contributions to the education literature set an example for all academics. Martin writes clearly, skips the jargon, and tells things like they are. On top of this, his work is accessible. I think Peggy Gordon-Elliott, President of Akron University said it best in her tribute to Martin in the preface to Star Teachers of Children in Poverty, 'There is nothing ordinary about what he does or how he thinks. Martin Haberman is

one of those rare intellects who understand the importance of the work they do so clearly that they constantly probe at the edges of its paradigms to be certain that there is no more or better work possible.' Martin believes children are the only investment that counts. . ."—Carl Patton

Delia Stafford, Mistress of Ceremonies, also feted Dr. Haberman with a tribute as well as a plaque honoring his achievements and milestones benefiting the children of America. Dr. Haberman graciously thanked the group for their support and told a few jokes. It was a fitting tribute after a decade of alternative teacher certification implementation—an initiative Dr. Haberman and others started many years ago and have seen come to ample fruition.□



Dr. Carl Patton, President of Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia spoke at the 2001 National Alternative Certification Conference which honored Dr. Martin Haberman at the noon luncheon. Dr. Patton provided insights into the exemplary career of Dr. Haberman. Dr. Patton pictured here with Delia Stafford-Johnson, President of the Haberman Educational Foundation, also serves on the Haberman Foundation Advisory Board. He is an advocate of alternative certification and Georgia State University boasts its own altcert program in Atlanta, Georgia.

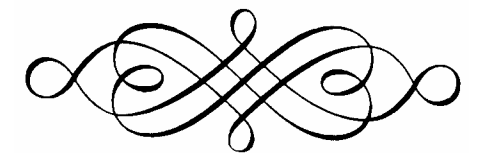
### COAL MINERS from Page 5

On the other hand, a successful teacher would continue to work with Peter until he not only obeyed, but also was doing his work, actually learning. Haberman calls the predisposition of successful teachers of at risk youth to see it as their job to keep trying until students are both motivated and learning, "persistence" or "creative problem-solving." This is the first of the "midrange functions" or non-negotiable characteristics and beliefs all "star" teachers share. What observers realized was that successful teachers were not only continually generating options to the present course of action, but were defining and evaluating these options relentlessly. If they did not, students stopped learning. So, in sum, teachers see it as their work to endlessly generate ways to get Peter to sit down and to avoid sending him to the principal. They also see the process as something about which they must be intensely persistent. This orientation towards endless problem-solving and the commitment it reflects to do whatever it takes to ensure that each child learns something every day is an approach to life; it's not something successful teachers pick up in a course in college (see Haberman, M. Star Teachers of Children in Poverty. West Lafayette, IN: KDP 1995). Hence, the primary role of selection to ensure that powerful beliefs are present upon which staff development can be built.

Persistence is one of the most pivotal life skills students need to support their own resilience and star teachers need to model this. Children at risk often live moment-to-moment; their home lives are fraught with chaos and they must ask themselves continually, "What will I do next? Next?" They seldom have daily models of behavior proffered and the natural consequences returned; for example, if I choose to wander around the class all afternoon, I will have to do today's assignment at the zero hour tomorrow. No punishment, just consequences. For an at-risk student, such actions and their natural consequences are a vital part of breaking the "invincible" syndrome. If I speed, I may get a ticket; if I sell drugs, I may actually get jailed; if I have sex, I may get pregnant or sick. Teen invincibility can only be challenged if the teen sees hundred of successful decisions made and the hundreds of natural

consequences experienced. In sum, successful teachers model persistence not only to demonstrate how individuals at risk overcome hurdles, but also to display the evidence of decisions made and their implications. Forget the Coal: Who Am I There For? As we noted in earlier columns, teaching successfully requires great maturity. When teachers demonstrate persistence, the belief that they should persist emerges from their commitment to engage students in meaningful instruction and decent human relationships. The commitment is NOT to change the child's home life, to rid the neighborhood of violence, or to raise the student out of poverty. The commitment is to make the classroom an enticing place to visit, to have learning activities that will at one time or another, engage all children, and to leave no student behind—no matter if s/he is handicapped, language different, gifted, or medically fragile. Persistent teachers are there for the students, and not to ensure that they themselves have a trouble-free day. They understand that problems will arise continually; their expectations are that not only will problems arise, but that these problems will need to be solved immediately, astutely, and while doing something(s) else, often including turning the mistake into a lesson. Star teachers work at solving dilemmas unceasingly, eventually, even occasionally, coming close to a real resolution. While rare, it does happen that a student has an "Aha!" moment the teacher gets to see and enjoy; more often, the teacher's persistent vision modifies the student's life and helps them want to stay in school and succeed. For the teacher, inching along is victory. She has forgotten the coal! She's onto diamond. As Thomas Jefferson said, "The difference between coal and diamonds is that diamonds stayed on the job longer."

For further information about how your school or university can develop Alternative Teacher Certification programs, please contact The National Center for Alternative Teacher Certification Information at <http://www.altcert.org/> or call 713-667-6185.□



# The National Association For Alternative Certification (NAAC) Conference An Effective Vehicle For "Revisiting The Past, Exploring The Future"

The Eleventh Annual Conference of the National Association of Alternative Certification (NAAC) took place April 18-20 on Padre Island at the Radisson Resort. Karen Sherwood, NAAC Program Committee Chair, ably guided the approximately two hundred attendees. Programs from literally around the world were featured in the three-day long celebration of over a decade of progress in finding new and better ways to bring the smartest and best teachers to the nation's children.

Presentations heard followed one or more of four strands: 1) "Lessons Learned," 2) "Technology – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 3) Curriculum Alignment and Assessment," 4) "Visions for the Future." Not every minute was all work, however. Attendees also had opportunities to visit school sites, have an evening in Mexico, enjoy a Catamaran Cruise, or do team-building exercises on the beach. While South Padre Island is not the easiest place to reach – by foot, car, or air – it was more

Delia Stafford-Johnson and Abel Gonzales are former Presidents of the Texas Alternative Certification Association. The Texas organization (TACA) was responsible for hosting the first National Association of Alternative Certification conference in 1991 in South Padre Island, Texas. At that conference President George Bush, Senior, sent official greetings to the conferees. The Texas State Board of Education awarded President Bush an



The National Association for Alternative Certification Conference held on South Padre Island, Texas gave the original members attending an opportunity to renew their commitment to their vision of finding and certifying great teachers from outside the traditional teacher education programs. Pictured here are six who attended the first ever Alternative Certification Conference in 1991 at South Padre Island, Texas. L to R, Dr. Mike McKibbin, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Dr. Vicky Dill, Senior Researcher @THEF, Delia Stafford, President THEF, Abel Gonzales, President Texas Alternative Certification Association 1991, Dr. Bill Wale, Texas State Board for Educator Certification Austin, Texas, David Keltner, Assistant to Secretary US Department of Army Washington DC, and Treasurer of NAAC.



honorary Texas Alternative Certification teaching certificate at the conference the following year. Dr. Charles E. M. Kolb who now serves as the President of the Committee for Economic Development in New York City, accepted the teaching certificate and spoke on behalf of then President Bush. Dr. Kolb was Senior Policy Advisor during the Bush Administration. Dr. Kolb is a member of the Haberman Foundation Advisory Board.

## Coal Miners": How Persistence and Creative Problem Solving in "Star" Teachers Build Resilience in Kids at Risk or in Poverty

Why Alternative Teacher Certification Programs and Research-Based Teacher Selection Together are Uniquely Designed to Meet the Needs of at-Risk Students  
by Vicky S. Dill, Ph.D. and Delia Stafford-Johnson

When successful teachers of at-risk youth stay on the job and teach all children-what do we see? That was the question of a lifetime for Dr. Martin Haberman, now Distinguished Professor of Education at The University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. As early as 1958, Dr. Haberman set about answering the question, "What's the difference between teachers who are unqualifiedly successful - those who the principal, the other teachers, the students, the parents all identify as "stars"-and those who quit or fail to teach multicultural, poor, urban, or children at risk?" Haberman spent the next forty some years refining and replicating the answers to this question. He did so by observing successful multicultural teaching, by repeatedly interviewing "stars" to confirm what he was finding, and by ongoing longitudinal research. What emerged from stars' thinking was a set of beliefs about what stars think they're doing when they teach and from these beliefs spring consequential actions. Only three strikes? The teacher's out. When teachers see teaching primarily as dispensing information in the presence of compliant students, we see scenarios like this:

Ms. Matthews: "Peter, please sit down; you have your assignment."

Peter: "Yeah." [after five minutes, he's up wandering around again]

Ms. Matthews: "Peter, didn't I tell you to sit down? Why are you up walking around?"

Peter: "I'm bored, miss."

Ms. Matthews: "Peter, look at Classroom Rule #3. What does it say? Read what it says."

Peter: "Students should comply with all the rules."

Ms. Matthews: "Do you know the rules, Peter?"  
Peter: "Yes, miss."

Ms. Matthews: "So why are you wandering around?"

Peter: "It feels good. May I sharpen my pencil?"

Ms. Matthews: "No!!!!!! You may not? Look at rule #5. When are we supposed to sharpen our pencils?"

Peter: "At the beginning or end of class." [Gets up and throws a wad of paper away]

Ms. Matthews: "Now what?" (she's shouting)

Peter: "I'm a bad aim, really miss; and it was a lay-up shot." [His voice is surly; he looks around at his friends who are now laughing and cutting up]

Ms. Matthews: "That's it, Peter! I told you three times to sit down. You're in SAC until Friday!"

Peter's bored; Ms. Matthews sees teaching as telling kids what she knows about a subject and requiring compliance with the rules. Ms. Matthews was a perfect pawn; Peter agitated, she complied with his ruse by escalating threats until he triumphantly gets to leave class and be with his friends in detention. Many teachers think compliance is the same as class management; they think reading rules is order. But clearly, Peter is the winner here. He's not only with his friends, he probably won't have to learn much in SAC; he certainly won't have to be motivated.

# Atlantis 2000: A Dream Emerges from Star Teachers

This is the story of possibility – what star parents, star teachers and a dream can do together. It is the story of the Zilkha family and a software package they developed together called “Atlantis for Windows.” **Atlantis 2000**, the improved version of Atlantis, is a suite of Graphing/Math software products with a wide range of applications for industry, government, and education. It is useful in math, science, engineering, and business.

Mr. Zilkha was a mathematics teacher in Israel in adult education and at the high school level. He taught adult mathematics with the clear conviction, “There is nobody I could not teach mathematics; if you give me three months, I can teach you math. The concept can be taught easily, especially using Atlantis.” Mr. Zilkha developed the mathematical code which is the “heart” of Atlantis (10% of the total code) focusing on the user interface, graphing, files, etc.

Mr. Zilkha’s son Eithan developed 90% of the software, rapidly improving the product as it was used and is being continually improved, adapted, and translated into many international languages. It has recently been adapted to the pocket PC’s which use Microsoft Pocket Windows. The pocket version has most of the functionality of Atlantis 2000. In order to familiarize teachers with the product, when a school purchases a site license for \$795, the teachers are allowed to copy

Atlantis 2000 to their computer at home. Students can also obtain a copy from the website ([www.SigmasoftC.com](http://www.SigmasoftC.com)) for \$39 to use it at home. Atlantis helps in preparing lab reports, company numerical and analytical solutions, prepare test problems, visualize functions in 2D and 3D, learning math and science concepts, etc., and helps in abstract thinking.

Encouraging children at home, Mr. Zilkha notes, means that you teach them some of the philosophy of life. “You have to have a dream. Without a dream, you are nothing. Each one of my children had a dream. My daughter wanted to be a vet; my sons wanted to excel in mathematics, science, and computers. So I always encouraged them to work hard day and night to achieve that dream. Of course, not to lose their balance. They have many activities outside of the house; when I saw they were off balance, we called them back. We did it as parents; you can do it with children in a much bigger way. I believe you need to spend time with your children – a couple of hours together, sometimes with them as a group, sometimes one-on-one sessions together for lunch or breakfast. We had an open system—talk and have an open relationship so I would know if they had a problem. I would know what it was and try to help. If there is no problem, I would ask how I could further their dream from there.”

I also had a dream for myself. By coming to America, I thought I could realize my dream. Especially the freedom and the resources, the big market and the people, allow

people from other countries to have a chance. I worked hard to realize my dreams and attempted to create some revolutionary products for industry and education that would create a big impact and benefit and advance for mankind. I thought the best way would be to start with the heart of life – mathematics. Without math, we cannot think, plan, or advance. We have to learn how to think in an abstract way. Think about golf. It’s mathematics!”

I named the software Atlantis because of the mystery of the lost continent of Atlantis; the people in that lost continent were excellent in mathematics and science. I also thought maybe Disney would have a movie and we’d get lots of hits on our website. That movie came this month. I think it’s called “Atlantis The Lost Empire.” What a boon for us!

“My boys and I share the workload. My oldest was 17 and my youngest 10 when we started working on this software evenings and weekends. I was working as a geophysicist in Houston and together with Eithan we came up with this revolutionary product; it took us two years part-time to develop it. I then knew it was safe to quit my job and develop it fulltime (websiting, sales, worldwide distribution, networking, business partners, investors, etc.).”

My son Eithan graduated from UT top in his class, and was #1 in his class and didn’t even need

to go to classes. By the time he went there, he was working for three companies – Sigmasoft and two other companies. Alon is also working for Sigmasoft and another local software company. It sounds like a dream, but everyone can do it.

We are talking about this because we know it will inspire parents to do more for and with their children. Everybody can do it, I am convinced of that.

“Parents are definitely central to the motivating task,” Eithan said. “They need to push hard enough but not too hard. Part of it is developing pride in the children; every time I saw the pride they had in me, I felt more motivated to do excellent work. Teachers definitely play a big role in it. When teachers are impatient and abrupt when kids ask them questions, it certainly discourages them from going back. I might get the vibes from a teacher that she didn’t really want to answer the questions, I would move on.

There are two teachers who really stand out. One was a second grade teacher who saw additional math ability in me; she put me on a special curriculum—

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***Without math, we cannot think, plan, or advance. We have to learn how to think in an abstract way. Think about golf. It’s mathematics!***

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just one other kid and me – and that showed me more motivation as a 7-year old. Another was also a math teacher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade; he actually developed a friendship type of relationship with me. He encouraged me to do extra work and he supported the extra curricular activities we did.”

At UT, I showed the professors

The Zilkha family, father Sasson and son Alon, of Houston, Texas, featured here with Dr. Vicky Dill, Senior Researcher at the Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc. during a recent interview to record the story of possibility and success. ([www.SigmasoftC.com](http://www.SigmasoftC.com)) for more information on Atlantis 2000.



my software; back when I showed it to them, they saw the potential. One teacher in particular with background in math and computers especially saw the potential. In terms of the quality at UT, there was a mix. Certainly the smaller classes were better.

What is my dream? My immediate dream is to make sure I work with my father to

make our business a success; we hope to give something back to the community. Really what I’d like to do is advance our company and take our financial success to extend and help in many other ways. Eithan continued, my sister Liat was always very good in math; my father was very good in teaching her. She always excelled in math. Her major was zoology

and she is now accepted to Veterinarian school at Texas A&M.

“We are committed to giving 1/3 of our market capitalization dollars every year to scholarship for students, medical research, drug and alcohol control, fighting depression, etc. etc., to the work of others, states” Mr. Zilkha. When I designed Atlantis, we intended to put it on every machine. I want to channel it into companies that give scholarships; in honor of my mother, my brother who died as a soldier, my mentor in business, my mentor in graduate school. We will continue to develop companies with a vision and a master plan, all of which will make a major impact in helping others. That is our master plan.”

“At one point I said to myself from my memories of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, “We shouldn’t fight. If I get out of this war alive, I will be determined to make a difference. But when you build a high-rise, you need a very strong foundation. That is what I have done. Together we can make a better world.”