



## **John Fahey's the one ...**

***who helps enhance teacher education by teaching JMU students, classroom teachers and schoolchildren***

### **Position**

Assistant professor; assistant to the coordinator of the Educational Leadership Program

### **Area of Expertise**

One of the country's top experts in the use of toys as teaching tools

### **Highlights**

Heavily involved in a JMU partnership program with Waynesboro (Va.) Schools; JMU freshman adviser; former high school director of instruction, principal, former middle school teacher; daughters Jodie and Jessie are JMU students.

### **How are you involved in the partnership deal right now?**

I spend one day a week in Waynesboro schools doing a variety of things. I've gone into classrooms and taught kids, I've taught teachers, I've served as an adviser to principals, helping them understand data or other issues they might have to face.

### **What's up with using toys to teach?**

One of my areas of interest is teaching science to younger children using toys as instructional devices. It's been done before, and I've found a few new ways of doing it that are soundly based in research. I know it works by the excitement of the kids. They love it when you bring out a toy to teach, and they actually go into greater depth and remember more with the use of toys. I truly believe in it.

### **So using toys fits with your teaching philosophy?**

I really like to have something for people to see and touch, particularly kids. That gives them the hooks they need to help them learn, it helps them make associations and it helps them remember. If you've seen it, you'll remember it, and the same goes for if you've touched it.

## **Do the Waynesboro kids know who you are?**

If you see me walk into the school, all the kids know who I am. They say, "Hi, Dr. Fahey," and that's not the easiest name to remember. They ask me when I'm coming to see them and what I'm going to do next. It's really a great feeling. For me, those are some of the best days of the week.

## **What good is the partnership for JMU students?**

The partnership helps us in our teaching of JMU students. It helps me in training administrators and it helps other folks here who train prospective teachers. If students have questions, they can direct them to an actual teacher in an actual classroom, which is invaluable feedback.

## **Why be a JMU freshman adviser?**

I feel like I'm an ambassador for JMU, here to help sell the university and its wonderful opportunities. And having two daughters here who are very, very pleased with JMU helps contribute to my overall feeling of satisfaction about the job we're doing here. Freshman adviser is a wonderful way to get to know a lot about the university, and to get to work with a lot of different young students.

*- Bill Gentry*