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USF St. Petersburg offers summer "E-Academy" for fifth- and sixth-graders

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (May 30, 2002) -- A unique alternative to traditional summer school programs will begin this July at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

"E-Academy," or Enrichment Academy, will send students entering fifth and sixth grades on daily study trips planned to immerse them in authentic learning experiences. In this pilot program, students will visit area arts venues to learn about the jobs of employees and their working relationship to others in the organization.

Venues scheduled for visits include the Palladium Theater, the Gulf Coast Museum of Art and a private art collection. Lessons in math, reading and writing tied to the study trips will emphasize the practical aspects of learning.

The program is designed to expose students "to a variety of experiences in the community," said Bill Heller, vice president of USF St. Petersburg. "The focus, really, is on the jobs and careers in the community."

Up to 30 students from Campbell Park Elementary School will participate. The teachers will be Mary Conage, a Title I specialist at Campbell Park Elementary, and Karen Voytecki, a doctoral student at USF St. Petersburg and former Pinellas County Teacher of the Year.

The program is free to the students.

The program will operate four days a week for four weeks. USF St. Petersburg will gather data to see how the program influenced students' reading and writing skills, problem-solving abilities and their motivation to stay in school. If the program is successful, USF St. Petersburg may offer a series of two-week programs next summer.

For more information, call (727) 553-3458.