



Lesley
UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2014

Transformative partnership

LESLEY'S WORK WITH LOCAL SCHOOL FOSTERS COMMUNITY APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY-FOCUSED LEARNING

The Lesley University Graduate School of Education is in its third year of a close partnership with the Kennedy-Longfellow School, an elementary school in Cambridge, to explore the transformational uses of educational technology in an urban public school setting.

Funded by Al Merck, philanthropist and former Director of Merck & Co., Inc., and his wife, Kate, the partnership has offered extensive resources to students and fostered new collaborations with teachers and administrators. At the Kennedy-Longfellow, Lesley has worked to develop a supportive culture and community approach to technology-focused learning that is centered on the students.

Fourth grade teacher Karla Anderson, who has been teaching at the school for 15 years, says the partnership and the technology integration can transform a classroom.

"It's definitely changed my instruction and the student learning greatly," says

Anderson, who integrates technology throughout the school day, enabling her to differentiate her instruction and allowing students to share their work more readily.

The partnership has achieved a number of goals, including the move toward a one-on-one model in classrooms so that each student has a tablet



Students use a Bee-Bot robot to learn programming and robotics.

or other device. Students are learning programming and robotics, and the school has a new "MakerSpace" lab to facilitate inquiry.

"The iPads allow for a lot of individualized practice," notes Anderson. "They can work at their own level, and all the

kids are quizzed on cumulative skills. I can access their initial score, how many times they attempted an answer, and see whether or not they improved with additional effort."

The partnership is coordinated by project leaders Lesley Professor Emerita Anne Larkin and Assistant Professor Sue Cusack, who notes that digital

The partnership is also a research project, with the goal that its successes can be replicated. Early findings reflect that teachers are assuming new levels of ownership for technology integration in their teaching and learning practices, and that teacher-to-teacher interaction is flourishing in ways it hadn't previously.

For Anderson's students, the use of technology has taken learning to new levels. For reading and literacy, her students listen to a recording of a book, read the book on their own, and record themselves reading the book and play it back, which facilitates fluency and self assessment. Then they take a quiz at their individual level.

"The increased amount of engagement in learning through the use of these tools is pretty spectacular," Anderson marvels. "The technology facilitates the learning by decreasing road blocks for some learners, increasing engagement in individualized learning for all, and exposing students to 21st-century skills."

inclusion is a key component of the partnership's success—making sure all students receive the same exposure to technology and the same opportunities regardless of their exposure to technology outside of school.



Urban Teacher Center: A great teacher every time

UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WITH WASHINGTON, D.C. AND BALTIMORE SCHOOLS GETS RESULTS

The Graduate School of Education began a unique partnership with the Urban Teacher Center (UTC) of Washington, D.C. in 2010 to prepare K-12 teachers to work in high-need inner-city schools in the Washington-Baltimore area. The successful combination of an institution of higher education known for teaching teachers and an institution that provides an alternative route for aspiring teachers has produced a growing number of classroom-ready, credentialed educators with a wealth of experience and content knowledge.

The first 39 residents began the program in 2010. Currently, 244 participants from 29 states are enrolled in various stages of the program. There are plans to expand the program to more cities. Says one UTC teacher, “My principal loves UTC. While the learning curve in education is steep, the fellows in our program are able to quickly perform as well as much more experienced teachers because of the resources and support we receive.”

For more information about UTC, visit lesley.edu/urban-teaching-center

A fairer approach to discipline

DAN LOSEN '87 LOBBIES FOR MARGINALIZED STUDENTS

He straightens his tie and waits to enter the hearing room. The research he's presenting to legislators will tip the balance toward a new education law that helps urban youth.

Every day, Dan Losen thinks about how to improve the public school experience for disadvantaged students around the country. A teacher for 10 years, he's now a civil rights attorney and directs the Center for Civil Rights Rem-

edies at UCLA. The center examines school policies and laws that disproportionately affect students of color and students with disabilities.

“The promise of American public education isn't being fulfilled for urban students,” says Losen. His work is all about leveling the playing field for all learners, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, disability status, or language.

Losen and his team mine data to throw light on pressing education problems, such as school discipline policies that result in higher suspension rates for students of color and those with disabilities. “These

students are among the most vulnerable, the most at risk for dropping out and getting into trouble with the law,” he says. “And when you don't finish school, your life opportunities are severely diminished.”

“When we take a more compassionate approach to disciplining students, while still holding them accountable, we'll begin to see changes to the tremendous inequities in our educational system,” he says.

Losen's research on these issues makes people pay attention. He often receives calls from superintendents and invitations from lawmakers to help draft new rules. “But a law

on paper doesn't mean much until it's implemented,” he says. “That's when I get really excited, when I see a piece of legislation implemented so it will begin to make a difference in students' lives.”



Anne Benoit '13 wins national award

ALUMNA WEIGHS IN ON COLLEGE-TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has honored recent Ph.D. in Educational Studies graduate Anne Benoit with the Robert J. Menges New Researcher Award.

Anne, who is a lecturer at Curry College in Milton, Mass., received the honor for her dissertation study at Lesley, "Learning from the Inside Out: A Narrative Study of College Teacher Development," which she wrote for her specialization in adult learning and development.

AERA is one of the largest organizations of educational researchers in the world, with more than 25,000 members, and she accepts the award this month at the annual conference in Philadelphia.



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Kids can learn a lot from a sidewalk

CREATIVITY COMMONS' NEW PROGRAM BOOSTS MATH SKILLS

Walk by Fletcher Maynard Academy, a culturally and economically diverse elementary school near Cambridge's Central Square, and you're likely to be entranced by multicolored, geographic shapes painted on the sidewalk.

No, it's not hopscotch on steroids: It's Sidewalk Math, an innovative program administered by Lesley University's Creativity Commons to teach young children how to count, build early math skills, and impart the beginnings of "number sense."

"The Creativity Commons is about innovation in learning," says program director Martha McKenna. "It's a natural that Lesley take the lead on this Sidewalk Math project."

The project's progenitor is Lesley trustee Art Bardige, an entrepreneur who spent much of his career in the educational software business. He explains that learning to count is the

foundation for success in math. But children think in patterns, and math instruction that prompts young children to see and make patterns with numbers, and use their feet, hands, fingers, and toes as learning aids will be more meaningful than rote memorization.

Lesley officially launched the Sidewalk Math program in September 2013, with a reception of Cambridge educational and political dignitaries. Fletcher Maynard Academy Principal Robin Harris was the emcee.

"This wouldn't be possible without Lesley University," Harris said at the event, honoring Bardige, McKenna (who led students in some counting-related songs) and Ryan McQuade, a design major and mathematics minor at the Lesley University College of Art and Design, who led the effort to paint the patterns on the sidewalk.

Bardige is also quick to credit the city, particularly the Cambridge Department of Public Works, with allowing the project to move forward.

"Cities are understandably protective of their sidewalks, so this is really a big deal," says Bardige of Cambridge's support of Sidewalk Math.

McKenna adds that while kids are learning, the neighborhood is benefiting from some colorful, eye-catching art.

"Parents walk on the sidewalk with kids and they're bored because what's there to look at?" McKenna says with a laugh. "It's just the sidewalk."

Sidewalk Math's imprint is expected to extend past the grounds of Fletcher Maynard Academy this year, as Bardige says he'd like to see the patterns outside other schools, public places, and even on the sidewalks of supporters from private businesses.

A family's legacy

RUSSELL FELLOWSHIP SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FACULTY



Trustee Allene Russell Pierson

Dr. Paul and Allene Russell gave a transformative gift to Lesley's Graduate School of Education in 1997—they endowed a professional development fund for faculty. Since then, over 100 faculty fellowships have been awarded

which provide resources to engage in a wide range of scholarly activities. The result represents major contributions to the field of education and to communities close to home and around the world.

Several Russell fellows recently met with Dr. Russell and his daughter, Allene Russell Pierson, to thank them for their farsighted philanthropy and bring them up to date on recently funded projects.

Dr. Russell served as chief of surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital for over three decades, and Allene Russell Pierson's mother served on Lesley's Board of Trustees for over 25 years.

A teacher and 1983 graduate of the Graduate School of Education, Pierson was elected to Lesley's Board of Trustees in 2013, following in her mother's footsteps.

"Lesley's leadership in the field of education is due in large part to the inspired faculty who are passionate about their profession and the individual students they teach," she says. "I am so pleased that my parents set up an endowment for professional development that continues to have such a positive impact on so many faculty throughout the school."

The Ballad of John, Yoko, and Lesley



The 50th anniversary of the Beatles' "British Invasion" reminds us that John Lennon and Yoko Ono visited Lesley in 1973. Captured in this photo relaxing on the Quad, John and Yoko were here to participate in the first International Feminist Conference, led by Betty Friedan, author of "The Feminine Mystique." This historic event, sponsored by the National Organization for Women, drew feminists from 27 countries.



Make a difference in your community with Lesley

Join Lesley alumni across the country for our annual Alumni National Day of Service on April 26th. Check our website for information about locations and volunteer activities, and if you don't see one in your area, you can start one by contacting us at alumni@lesley.edu.

This Alumni Council initiative demonstrates Lesley's educational mission of service and community engagement—we hope you will help us help others by signing up to volunteer.

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Learn more
lesley.edu/ambassadors



Associate Professor Danielle Georges leads a class.

'I am an educator because I am an artist'

PROFESSOR DANIELLE GEORGES WINS PRESTIGIOUS POETRY FELLOWSHIP

The impact of politics and history on Associate Professor Danielle Georges' life is reflected in her poetry, which explores topics including Haitian identity and weaves beautiful language with social justice concerns.

Georges teaches in Lesley's Creative Arts in Learning Division and recently won a prestigious 2014 Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellowship for Poetry along with a \$10,000 unrestricted grant. The fellowships recognize exceptional work by Massachusetts artists, and she was one of six fellows selected from a field of nearly 300 poets.

"Danielle is the consummate artist-teacher, whose ability to explore and change the world

around her is evidenced by this distinguished award," says Graduate School of Education Dean Jack Gillette. "She brings to both the work of teaching and her art as a poet a sensitivity to the importance of dialogue between perspectives that too easily could pass each other by."

We spoke with Professor Georges about her work:

Q: What was your reaction to winning the fellowship?

A: I've been a poet most of my life, so this award is incredibly encouraging, especially here in Massachusetts, a very literary and academic state.

Q: What do you write about?

A: Most artists are affected by the social, environmental, and

political events around them. I have written many poems about Haitian identity and the troublesome treatment and representations of Haiti and Haitians from my position as an artist of the Haitian diaspora.

Q: Why poetry?

A: I love plain old beautiful language, and the forms and architecture of poetry. I love how poems, often so small, can contain so much.

Q: How does this relate to your teaching?

A: Art provokes and promotes thought, and inspires us to explore and transmit ideas in compelling ways. Teaching and art, in my opinion, share this same notion of exploration.

Ultimately, I am an educator because I am an artist.

Q: Why are the arts important in education?

A: The majority of the students I work with are practicing teachers who seek a broader understanding of how to enhance instructional practices in their areas of concentration. We explore how the various art forms, especially poetry and writing, help create critical thinkers, educators, and human beings. My students are doing the great work of teaching not only our future readers and writers, but future nurses, engineers, social and cultural workers, scientists, and beyond. The arts create powerful pathways to reach all kinds of learners.

Upcoming Events

SPRING 2014

Alumni National Day of Service

www.lesley.edu/alumni-service

April 26, 2014

Modeling with Mathematics by Dr. Anne Collins

9:00 am–3:00 pm

April 26, 2014

Center for Mathematics Institute

July 29–31, 2014

Alumni Day

November 15, 2014

For more information on alumni events, please visit

www.lesley.edu/alumni



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