Teaching Science to Save the Planet

LESSONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

Charles W. "Andy" Anderson

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE  » Our Influence on Rehabilitation Counseling  » New (Post-BA) Fellowships for Future Teachers
Visible along Michigan Avenue in East Lansing, these glazed terracotta figures of “Children Reading” greet visitors outside the entrance to Williams Hall. American artist Clivia Calder created the sculpture approximately 70 years ago.
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AS THE 2009–10 ACADEMIC YEAR COMES TO AN END, WE LOOK BACK ON WHAT HAS BEEN A VERY CHALLENGING YEAR IN THESE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES. MSU HAS HAD TO PLAN FOR significant campus-wide budget reductions, and indeed, higher education institutions around the country are doing the same thing. In the College of Education, we have now outlined many areas for reduction that will unfold over the next two years.

By no means, however, has this year been absent of accomplishments, new initiatives and opportunities. WE CONTINUE TO EXPAND THE GLOBAL EDUCATORS COHORT PROGRAM IN TEACHER PREPARATION. IN fact, this spring, GECP students will be heading to China on a faculty-led study trip that will involve visits to universities, schools and classrooms. In this issue of the New Educator, you will read about our new partnership with Southwest University in Chongqing, China that involves an annual exchange of graduate students. Through this partnership, students from each participating university will be immersed in the culture and learn about the educational system of the host country. As you well know, our faculty is globally engaged and their connections are bringing rich opportunities for our students to gain global experiences and competencies.

This year also brought us two new fellowship programs for post-baccalaureate students. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, with funding and collaboration from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, will sponsor up to 20 Fellows who will be selected annually to enroll in our master’s degree program that will lead to teacher certification. This program is targeted for students with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics or science with the goal of increasing the number of certified science and math teachers in high-needs schools. The second program, the Woodrow Wilson-Rockefeller Brothers Fund Fellowship, will provide fellowships to post-baccalaureate students of color to achieve teacher certification through our master’s program. We expect to receive our first cohort of Fellows in each program beginning with the 2011–12 academic year. Our selection for participation in these fellowship programs is both an honor and recognition of the quality of our teacher preparation program.

And, in spite of the economy, this past year we documented several new endowments for scholarships and fellowships. For the 2010–11 academic year, over 157 students in the College of Education will receive funds from 87 endowed scholarships and fellowships. In total, we are awarding over $600,000 from named scholarships and fellowships to students in education.

As we close this year, we take pride in all that has been accomplished by our very talented and hard-working faculty even in difficult times. As we look forward, we will manage the budgetary conditions that face our college, and we will continue to look for new opportunities and embrace new initiatives. Have no doubt, we are not standing still, we are planning for the future, charting new directions, and creating an exciting portfolio of research, academic programs, and outreach while staying true to our mission and maintaining the highest standards in all that we do.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the New Educator, which provides a glimpse of the range of projects and programs that makes this college and its faculty major players on the state, national and international stages. As always, we appreciate your loyalty, commitment and support.

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CAROLE AMES
Alumni, Interns Gather in Chicago. The college hosted a special gathering for Chicago-area alumni on March 12, 2010 at O’Malley’s West, a Chicago bar and grill owned by Michigan State University alumni. About 40 people attended the free event, which featured drink specials, half-off appetizers and a drawing for MSU sports memorabilia. The happy hour party was planned, in part, as a way for College of Education teaching interns and recent graduates to build connections with fellow graduates in the region. About 45 teacher candidates completed their fifth-year internship in Chicago Public Schools during the past two school years, with a larger group expected next fall.
College Partners to Offer Online M.A. in Health Professions Education

Michigan State University is launching a new online master’s degree program to help prepare healthcare professionals for critical roles as academic leaders and faculty in their fields.

The Education for Health Professions program will be offered jointly by MSU’s top-ranked Colleges of Education and Osteopathic Medicine, with courses set to begin this fall.

“Nationwide, colleges of medicine, nursing and other healthcare professions are increasing their enrollments to meet projected shortages of healthcare providers in the near future,” said Donald Sefcik, senior associate dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine. “These increases require that we also expand the supply of highly qualified educators and administrators.”

The new online program is designed for healthcare educators and practitioners who want to improve their understanding of teaching, learning and student assessment, as well as organizational leadership issues.

Hybrid Ph.D. in Educational Technology Now Available

The College of Education is now offering its doctoral program in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology substantially online with a new hybrid option focused on the evolving role of technology in learning.

The blended four to five-year program, which combines online coursework with summer classes on campus, is designed to meet a growing demand from experienced education professionals who want to earn a Ph.D. while continuing in their current positions.

These professionals currently serve in K–12 schools, universities or research institutions, and understand how new technologies, including online learning, continue to transform education.

Few research universities offer online doctoral coursework in education, said Punya Mishra, associate professor of educational technology. Classes are slated to begin in June.

“We are meeting a clear national demand from highly qualified professionals who want to enhance their scholarly abilities but can’t devote four years to full-time study on campus,” said Mishra. “We are looking for students who are closely connected to the world of practice, and that will in turn enrich the research conducted here at MSU.”

With today’s emphasis on data-driven accountability, educational leaders need rigorous preparation in research and evaluation of learning with technology. In addition, educational technology—especially the rapidly expanding world of online learning—calls for educators who deeply understand how theories of learning and development can inform the design of learning environments of the future.

The hybrid version of MSU’s highly-ranked Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology will make extensive use of technology so that much of the program can be learned from anywhere in the world and give students a rich, personal experience in online learning.

Students will take one online doctoral course during each fall and spring semester. Summers will include an intensive two-week session on campus followed by five weeks online. Students also will be required to meet university residency requirements during the fall semester of the third year.

MORE INFORMATION

• Visit http://edtechphd.com. Interested prospective students may also contact coordinator Robin Dickson at epetphd@msu.edu or (517) 884-2094.
• Punya Mishra also writes about the program online at http://punya.educ.msu.edu.
New Rules Apply: Preparing School Administrators

DID YOU KNOW? Michigan passed legislation last winter requiring all school administrators to obtain certification, which had been voluntary until now.

The Department of Educational Administration at MSU has a couple of options to help educators qualify for the state certification for building-level leaders.

First, all students who earn a master’s degree in K–12 Administration from MSU (or have any time since 2006) may be recommended for the School Administrator certificate. They must have an overall grade-point average of 3.0 or higher, complete all program requirements and submit an application for the certificate (www.educ.msu.edu/programs/forms/2009/AdministratorApplication.pdf).

MSU offers the master’s program in both East Lansing and Birmingham, where some courses are now available mostly online in addition to a handful of face-to-face sessions.

Secondly, educators who already have a master’s degree in an associated area (such as curriculum or special education) may enroll in the Plus 18 program. Students complete 18 credits from a selection of core administrative studies courses.

“College of Education faculty members have a long record of success tailoring their expertise on teaching, learning and assessment to continuing professional education,” said Michael W. Sedlak, associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Education.

“This program is a great opportunity for two nationally prominent professional schools to bring their strengths to bear on the education and development of tomorrow’s healthcare professionals.”

MORE INFO
Jon Rohrer, adjunct assistant professor
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needed to hold administrative positions.

Coursework will cover curriculum design, teaching and learning styles, evaluation and testing, public health policy and law, budget and finance, and more.

The 30-credit program is designed to be as convenient as it will be challenging. Courses will be delivered totally online by experts in the fields of medicine, law, business and education. That includes John Dirkx and Marylee Davis, both professors of higher, adult and lifelong education, and Edward Roeber, an expert on assessment.

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Professor Susan Printy said the K–12 educational administration programs at MSU, which she coordi-
nates, focus on preparing administra-
tors as instructional leaders, which matches a major shift occurring in the field.

“We emphasize what it really means to improve teaching and learning—to make school improve-
ment authentic and not about com-
pliance,” she said.

MORE INFO
www.education.msu.edu/ead/k12
(517) 353-8480 or k12adm@msu.edu

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MSU COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

SPRING / SUMMER 2010
DOCTORAL DEGREE RECIPIENTS | Fall 2009

GRADUATE ADVISOR

CURRICULUM, TEACHING & EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Shih-Pei Chang Amer Segall
Weiqing Wang Elizabeth Heilman

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & TEACHER EDUCATION
Rae Young Kim Lynn Paine
Wang Jun Kim Peter Youngs

EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Lisa Margherita Sensale Robert Floden
Min-Jung Bae Richard Prawat

HIGHER, ADULT & LIFELONG EDUCATION
Bernard Gwekwerere Reitu Mabokela

K-12 EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
Garth E. Cooper Amer Segall

KINESIOLOGY
Laura Anne Kietzmann Deborah Feltz

MEASUREMENT & QUANTITATIVE METHODS
Qi Diao Kimberly Maier
Adam Edward Wyse Mark Reckase

REHABILITATION COUNSELOR EDUCATION
Wilaphorn Kotbunngkair Michael Leahy

SPECIAL EDUCATION
Svjetlana Cursic Gary Troia
KINESIOLOGY PROFESSOR James Pivarnik and doctoral student Nicole Forrester traversed the wintry conditions of Canada as two of the 12,000 other torchbearers carrying the Olympic flame from Greece to Vancouver for the 2010 Winter Games.

Pivarnik, director of MSU’s Center for Physical Activity and Health and president of the American College of Sports Medicine, was selected to carry the torch by Coca-Cola as one of its 20 ambassadors of positive living.

“It is a humbling feeling to have been chosen for this wonderful event,” he said. “I am grateful to my American College of Sports Medicine colleagues for choosing me to represent the organization, as well as the opportunity to represent Michigan State University.”

Over several months, the torch visited more than 1,000 communities and traveled 27,000 miles.

Pivarnik was part of a team that carried the torch on Jan. 18 and Jan. 19 through Calgary.

Forrester, a Canadian high-jumper who competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, helped carry the Olympic Flame through Markham, Ontario—just outside her hometown of Aurora—on Dec. 17.

Forrester loaned the torch she carried to the Department of Kinesiology, which placed it on display inside IM Sports Circle for the duration of the 2010 Winter Games.

>> Jason Cody and Nicole Geary
Providing small classes for at least several consecutive grades starting in early elementary school gives students the best chance to succeed in later grades, according to groundbreaking research from Spyros Konstantopoulos.  

The research by Konstantopoulos, associate professor of measurement and quantitative methods, is the first to examine the effects of class size over a sustained period and for all levels of students—from low- to high-achievers. The study appeared in the American Journal of Education.

Konstantopoulos also is a member of a committee for the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences that will make official recommendations on class size to the states. He said the recommendations will mirror his research: that the best plan of attack is to provide small classes (13 to 17 students) for at least several years starting in kindergarten or first grade.

"For a long time states thought they could just do it in kindergarten or first grade for one year and get the benefits," Konstantopoulos said. "I don't believe that. I think you need at least a few years consecutively where all students, and espe-
Policies that hold teachers more accountable—and reward them—for student achievement have become a hot topic across the country, especially as President Barack Obama emphasized his support for merit pay proposals this spring.

Value-added models (VAMs), the complex statistical methods used to determine how individual teachers (or schools or instructional practices) actually affect test scores, have been facing their own controversy as education researchers dispute how to draw valid inferences.

A team of scholars from Michigan State University hopes to resolve that debate, and ensure more policymakers and educators base their assessments on reliable data, through a new study supported with a $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences.

Principal investigators Cassie Guarino and Mark Reckase from the College of Education and Jeff Wooldridge of the Department of Economics—who represent leading experts in the fields of assessment and econometrics—say they will evaluate and identify which commonly used VAMs accurately estimate the effects of teachers, schools and instructional practices.

They plan to apply new tools for checking and improving the validity of value-added measures using real data from elementary schools and, ultimately, develop national guidelines for dissemination. The three-year project is expected to culminate in a two-day conference.

“If fair measures of teacher and school performance can be derived from student test scores, they can have a potentially transformative effect on the teaching profession by allowing policymakers to reward good teachers and provide professional development to those who need it most,” Guarino said.

His research used data from the massive Project Star study in Tennessee that analyzed the effects of class size on more than 11,000 students in elementary and middle school. Konstantopoulos found that students who had been in small classes from kindergarten through third grade had substantially higher test scores in grades four through eight than students who had been in larger classes early on.

Students from all achievement levels benefited from small classes, the research found. But low-achievers benefited the most, which narrowed the achievement gap with high-achievers in science, reading and math, Konstantopoulos said.

Although the study didn’t evaluate classroom practices, Konstantopoulos said the reason for the narrowing gap likely is due to low-achieving students receiving more attention from teachers.

“This is especially important in poorer schools because teacher effectiveness matters more in schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged and low-performing students,” he said.
The College of Education will prepare more educators needed to teach science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Michigan’s urban schools as part of a new statewide fellowship program announced in January.

MSU is one of six universities selected to participate in the W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Woodrow Wilson Michigan Teaching Fellowship. The Fellowship was created after the Kellogg Foundation awarded a $16.7 million grant to the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

The program provides promising future teachers—who can be recent college graduates or career-changing engineers and scientists—with an intensive master’s degree program in education and places them in hard-to-staff middle and high schools for a minimum of three years. Statewide, the Fellowship will prepare 240 teachers over two years, beginning in 2011.

President Barack Obama named the program among the best new efforts to improve math and science achievement during an “Educate to Innovate” Campaign event at the White House on Jan. 6. The following day, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced the participating universities: MSU, University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University and Wayne State University.

“MSU is committed to helping address critical shortages in the work force as Michigan faces the demands of today’s global economy. Our College of Education has already made the enhancement of effective math and science teachers a top priority,” said President Lou Anna K. Simon. “The Woodrow Wilson fellowship will allow the teacher education program to build on its strengths and produce more teachers able to provide high-quality STEM instruction in our state’s urban schools.”

Woodrow Wilson Fellows that come to MSU will attend summer courses and complete a full-year teaching internship in Detroit or Grand Rapids modeled after the university’s highly-regarded initial certification program for under-

Fellowship Prepares More STEM Teachers for Urban Schools

Michigan State University also is one of nearly 30 institutions nationwide selected to participate in the Woodrow Wilson–Rockefeller Brothers Fund Fellowship for Aspiring Teachers of Color beginning with the 2011–12 academic year. The program is intended to help recruit, support and retain individuals of color as K–12 public school teachers in the United States.

Once selected by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, fellows may choose to complete the fellowship at any of the approved universities, which also include Stanford, UCLA and University of Washington. They receive support for a master’s degree, experience teaching in a high-needs school and guidance to obtain a teaching certificate, in exchange for committing to teach for at least three years in an urban or rural school.

Visit www.woodrow.org/wwrbf.
graduates.

The new 15-month Fellowship, which culminates in both a master’s degree and teaching certificate, will focus on preparing individuals for careers in urban settings where STEM teachers are in especially high demand. The teacher education faculty at MSU has experience developing successful urban education programs in partnership with Detroit Public Schools, as well as a history of creating courses for teachers in collaboration with the College of Natural Science.

Carole Ames, dean of the College of Education, said MSU hopes to enroll 20 fellows beginning in summer 2011. Fellows receive a $30,000 stipend.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for the state of Michigan,” Ames said. “The Kellogg Foundation–Woodrow Wilson Michigan Teaching Fellowship will attract prospective teachers of mathematics and science, enable high-quality preparation to certify these teacher candidates and fill a tremendous need in hard-to-staff schools. The beneficiaries will be the students in Michigan who will have highly qualified teachers in the critical areas of mathematics and science.”

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CAP Program Aims to Boost Interest in Technical Careers

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION scholar Barbara Schneider is using a $1 million federal grant to create a program designed to better prepare high-schoolers for technical careers by spurring interest in science, technology, engineering and math courses, or STEM.

It’s not unusual today to find students aspiring to become forensic scientists and other high-profile professionals based on what they learn from TV shows and movies, said Schneider, MSU’s John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Education.

The challenge, Schneider said, is redirecting their interest to realistic careers such as microbiology where they learn what microbiologists do and what types of education and extracurricular experiences are needed to pursue such an occupation.

With the National Science Foundation grant, Schneider and her team are developing a school-wide model to improve students’ understanding of the educational requirements for a given career path and help them develop the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors to achieve that objective. While other university-run programs have focused on increasing college-attendance rates of students from underrepresented groups, the College Ambition Program, or CAP, is likely the first to encompass all students in a school.

Schneider and colleagues have been laying the groundwork to launch CAP at a rural school and an urban school in mid-Michigan starting this fall.

“The whole-school design allows for the inclusion of students who may not have identified with a career in STEM due to lack of information and exposure,” she said. “Research shows that low-income and underrepresented groups tend to be unfamiliar with STEM job opportunities and the educational requirements needed to attain that goal.”

The National Science Board recently identified a key challenge facing the development of a qualified STEM work force as a lack of consensus among schools, parents, students and the community regarding the importance of STEM.

Both participating schools are classified as economically disadvantaged and have lower-than-expected rates of students going to college.

The three-year program will involve:

• Two types of mentors for the high school students: undergraduate students at MSU (including education and STEM majors) and professionals working in STEM fields. Schneider said mentoring can be invaluable for disadvantaged youth who have limited exposure to the college-application process, life experiences at college and career opportunities.

• Course counseling and advising. Ninth-graders will work with MSU program teams to design a four-year high school plan that is consistent with college entrance requirements and focuses heavily on math and science.

• Help in preparing for college entrance exams, including receiving practice test questions and vocabulary enrichment materials.

• Assistance with the college admission process, from financial planning to pursuing scholarships.

• Resources for teachers, principals and guidance counselors for their role in better preparing students for success in the STEM fields.

MORE INFO
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ON THE WEB
www.woodrow.org/michigan

Andy Henion
THAT’S BECAUSE THE CURRICULUM
in the United States attempts to cover too many topics without tying them together.

Kids jump from a unit on weather to one on simple machines. They learn ambitious collections of facts in separate required silos: biology, chemistry, physics.

But you don’t need to recite Newton’s Laws to be an excellent truck driver or baseball player. And the life cycle of stars won’t help us understand how our everyday actions affect ecosystems.

“Students are not getting the big ideas they need to be scientifically literate citizens,” said Amelia Wenk Gotwals, an assistant professor of teacher education.

She and other faculty members in the MSU College of Education are working to improve science education by zooming in on the scientific concepts all students really need to know, and determining how to grow understanding from one year to the next.

Led by veteran ground-breaker Charles “Andy” W. Anderson, their research on learning progressions—a new way to refine curriculum goals—has begun to shape the national dialogue during a critical turning point for science education.
IF YOU ASK ANDY ANDERSON . . .

Students have a better chance to

SAVE OUR PLANET

tomorrow if they are

TAUGHT LESS

in science class today
The National Research Council created a committee early this year that will develop a conceptual framework for new K–12 science standards.

Leaders agree the curriculum must change. The work of real scientists has become much more interdisciplinary in the last 20 years and yet many teachers still don’t have resources to effectively make connections across science content areas.

While scholars debate how to break down the status quo, Anderson takes a strong stand as an advocate for reconceptualizing science standards around environmental literacy.

For more than 10 years, he has been studying how children learn about things like air, soil and trees and their resulting confusion about concepts that literally explain how the world works, from molecules to the laws of matter and energy.

He helps run a large-scale effort to improve science teaching in Michigan’s rural school districts (and across the country) by engaging teachers in environmental science and education research. In the fall of 2008, he became co-principal investigator of a $12.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to create a culturally relevant framework (or learning progression) where environmental literacy drives students’ learning of core science and mathematics concepts.

And that was only the latest in a series of related research grants for Anderson, a sort of conscientious rebel in his field, serious about securing our planet’s future by creating informed citizens in today’s classrooms.

President Barack Obama recently included support for environmental literacy in a new Department of Education program, identifying it among “the subjects important to a complete curriculum” with history, arts, financial literacy and foreign language.
Anderson, who was recently invited to serve on the national Climate Change Education Roundtable.

Children especially tend to adopt a “force-dynamic” view of the world in which plants and animals take actions (like growing) with access to the right enablers (such as soil, rain and sunlight).

“They must think of a tree as not just an actor, but as a system that’s part of a larger global system. It’s moving carbon from the atmosphere into biomass, one of millions and millions of trees doing the same thing,” Anderson said.

“We need to understand the balance of these processes. In order to understand them, you really have to go down to the atomic molecular level.”

With a vibrant team of postdoctoral researchers and graduate students, Anderson’s line of research on environmental literacy now covers three strands important across school science curricula: carbon cycling, water and biodiversity.

His goal has been to determine the sequences of content and teaching strategies that lead students to progressively more sophisticated understandings of certain core ideas—in this case, the knowledge young people need to be responsible stewards of our planet from upper elementary school through college.

Penn State University professor Deborah Smith, a member of the NRC committee developing the new science standards framework, said Anderson’s learning progression work is among the most thoroughly developed and has become a model for science education scholars across the country.

“Unless we understand how the world works, we’re not going to make rational decisions to protect it.”

—Sue Zygodlo, fourth-grade teacher at Lawton Elementary School

GETTING TO THE CORE . . . FOR LIFE ON EARTH

Anderson, a professor in the College of Education since 1979, wasn’t always so focused on integrating environmental literacy into contemporary curriculum.

Among the first researchers to study conceptual change theory, his thinking about effective science teaching—and preparing effective teachers—had already been on the cutting edge for more than 20 years when, in 2000, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) asked him to help organize a conference.

The topic: What would it take to develop a complete package of research-based curriculum materials for K–12 science? His conclusion: Impossible.

“There are too many benchmarks that we are supposed to cover,” said Anderson, who decided there must be a better, coherent way to condense the objectives. “I asked the question: What is it everyone needs to understand or our nation suffers?

“And that is what led me to environmental science.”

Nearly everyone, at least since the 1990s, will say they value protecting the environment. But they often know very little about how to do that.

For example, when you ask kids how to improve water quality in their town, the most common answer is ‘don’t litter.’ Most adults believe planting trees is good for the environment because it reduces pollution, which is true but very vague.

“You need a scientific understanding of what the trees do with carbon dioxide before you can really understand when and how planting trees might help with an issue like climate change,” said

On the web

- Science Education at Michigan State University: https://www.msu.edu/~science
- Board on Science Education (National Research Council): http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/
research implications but also the socio-cultural implications of his work,” said Smith, who was on the MSU College of Education faculty in the late 1990s. “He’s so thoughtful, he just goes to the core—the absolutely essential things that we need to help children understand.”

Making change in classrooms, homes . . . and more

The MSU Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) in Hickory Corners, Mich. is like base camp for dozens of teachers willing to challenge their students—and themselves—with inquiry-based teaching strategies tied to ecological literacy.

Through the K–12 Partnership, they come to the field research and education facility for regular workshops and return to 11 southwestern Michigan school districts where they receive continuing support from MSU graduate students, or “building-level scientists.”

Many of the professional development activities are based on research findings from Anderson, who co-directs the program with MSU science professors Tom Getty (Department of Zoology) and Phil Robertson (Department of Crop and Soil Sciences). In turn, he relies on participating schools to pilot and assess teaching materials.

The K–12 Partnership has been supported by a series of NSF grants since 1999.

“I think environmental science is the perfect laboratory for students to see things holistically,” said Jonathan Schramm, a postdoctoral research associate who works with Anderson and serves as a KBS building-level scientist. “Teachers feel it greatly increases their ability to talk to their students about science in an inquiring way.”

Elementary teacher Sue Zygadlo said Lawton Community Schools’ participation in the K–12 Partnership, and the resulting emphasis on environmental literacy across the science curriculum, has led to district-wide changes for the small school system. Teachers formed a lead K–12 science team to share planning, and science MEAP scores have steadily increased in both fifth and eighth grade, consistently beating the state average.

Classrooms moved outside, where students work among streams, rain gardens and nature trails.

“It’s opened up a whole world to our students, who really consider themselves scientists,” Zygadlo said. “Andy gives us the framework, helping us every step of the way and pushing us to new limits.”

Back at KBS recently, Anderson and Schramm took notes as Zygadlo’s colleague Marcia Angle, a science teacher at Lawton Middle School, explained how students responded to lesson plans about matter and energy created by Anderson and his team.

As they and other teachers talked about how the materials affect children’s overall understandings, Angle stopped to mention that one of her students had proudly talked his mom into air drying the family’s laundry to reduce energy consumption.

“He’s transferring his learning because of these lessons,” she said, tapping her binder and smiling. “He made a change in his home, Andy.”

And that is what Anderson, who drives a hybrid car and grows much of his own food, ultimately hopes science education can do—inform and encourage behaviors that matter.

Young people must be equipped to recognize how their actions as citizens—workers, consumers, voters—affect the environmental systems on which we and our descendants depend.

“The kids in middle and high school now are going to be making environmental decisions 20 and 30 years from now, and we don’t know exactly what the issues will be then,” he said. “We need to give them a set of tools for reasoning about the issues they are going to encounter.”

Leading the approach: Learning progressions

The MSU science education faculty studies how students develop critical kinds of scientific knowledge and skills over time.

Michelle Williams has been tracing how children grasp ideas about heredity, Christina Schwarz is exploring how students learn to use scientific models and Amelia Wenk Gotwals helped create a successful framework for teaching urban
Angela Calabrese Barton became co-editor of the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* (JRST) on Jan. 1, making MSU home to the premier journal in the field of science education for five years.

Joseph Krajcik of the University of Michigan serves as her fellow co-editor while other MSU faculty members are involved as associate editors (Andy Anderson and Christina Schwarz) and as editorial board members (Gail Richmond and Amelia Wenk Gotwals).

Published monthly, JRST is the official journal of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST). Anderson previously served as co-editor with MSU Professor Emeritus James Gallagher.

Visit www.narst.org/publications/jrst.cfm for more information.

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“Learning progressions represent an attempt to bridge major gaps between cognitive science research on how people learn and the current methods for teaching and assessing science. By nature, they require teachers to be pickier about what and how they teach. And, although there is still much research to be done, some science education scholars predict learning progressions will ultimately help the field decide what core ideas all American students need to be successful citizens.”

Leaders who oversee the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have considered incorporating items based on learning progression frameworks (Alonzo and Anderson served on a national group exploring the possibility), and the new NRC committee is paying attention.

“Our learning progression and others are going to be used as the foundation for the new national standards, and to exemplars of what could happen,” Schwarz said.

She is co-principal investigator, with colleagues from five other institutions, of the $3 million MoDeLS project (Model Designs for Learning Science). The researchers are developing a learning progression for the core practice of modeling—creating simplified, often visual representations as a way of explaining scientific ideas.

They have shown how fifth and sixth graders learn to construct increasingly accurate models for processes like condensation and evaporation that involve invisible components and use them to explain other related phenomena.

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Michael Leahy became a counselor with a central purpose: to help people with disabilities achieve their goals.

Thirty-five years later, that commitment has never wavered.

He didn't stop thinking about the day-to-day challenges facing individuals with physical or emotional impairments when he was promoted to executive vice president of a massive rehabilitation center or when he left practice to pursue his Ph.D.

He wasn’t caught up in academic accolades when Michigan State University’s rehabilitation counseling degree programs were first ranked No. 1 in the nation, or even when he won his fifth major research award from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

Leahy—who has built a legacy of excellence in the College of Education and liter-
ally defined what it takes to be an effective counselor in his field—is a respected leader driven by unpretentious passion. “He has a sincere and deep commitment to the profession and to improving the lives of people with disabilities,” said James Herbert, professor in charge of the Rehabilitation and Human Services Program at Penn State University. “He has been one of the few academics that have not only made significant contributions in research but also in service.”

Along with holding leadership roles

“Our ultimate goal is to promote a more normalized view of disability, so that people think about it as a naturally occurring instance in a lifetime,” Leahy said. “We need to embrace it as another aspect of diversity, and make sure individuals with disabilities have every opportunity to pursue a successful life.”

Building a better counselor

The role of a rehabilitation counselor and what he or she needs to be highly qualified—a unique and changing collection of knowledge and competencies—has been the focus of Leahy’s research.

And, over time, his body of empirically validated findings has become a driving influence on curriculum and training standards accepted across the field. In fact, Leahy’s studies have directly informed accreditation requirements for academic programs in rehabilitation counseling (through the Council on Rehabilitation Education, or CORE) as well as the test specifications used to certify rehabilitation counselors (through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, or CRCC).

Leahy, who does not have a disability himself, was inspired to pursue the profession by way of a college job in a group home for people with severe intellectual disabilities. He knew early in life that he wanted to be in a “helping role” and here was a population overcoming barriers to basic civil rights. Individuals with disabilities have the lowest employment rate of any group in America.

It was while working at an Indianapolis rehabilitation center in the 1980s when Leahy first recognized a need for more extensive training; that, to truly help their clients, rehabilitation counselors must understand the psychological and social impacts of various disabilities as well as the medical dimensions. They must also possess strong counseling skills, be able to manage a large caseload and much more.

As emphasis on professionalization grew, Leahy saw a long line of unanswered research questions and an opportunity to make a difference on a larger scale.

He launched his academic career while earning a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin--Madison and arrived at

MSU in 1986. His latest national study, on knowledge domains required for effective rehabilitation counseling practice, wrapped up in 2009.

A top-notch training ground

Brian Phillips remembers being very nervous when he traveled from Salt Lake City to explore MSU’s doctoral program in rehabilitation counseling, nervous to meet someone whose work he had been reading since his introductory courses.

“When I came out, I was 99 percent sure I wouldn’t come if they would take me. He made me feel confident that I could succeed in the program.”

Phillips was equally impressed by the university’s renowned reputation and the warm welcome he received. As a third-year Ph.D. student, he is

WHAT IS A REHABILITATION COUNSELOR?

The rehabilitation counselor’s job is to guide the individual—whether their disability is blindness, a brain injury or a learning barrier—through all issues related to achieving a better quality of life, such as educational needs, accommodations in their home or vehicle and possibilities for employment. They must deal with the “whole person.”

Elevating Ability

in nearly every rehabilitation counseling organization at some point in his career, Leahy and his team continue to evaluate critical aspects of rehabilitation services provided by the state of Michigan. This 10-year partnership with a state agency—found nowhere else in the country—has led to significant improvements for citizens with disabilities seeking help with employment.

And now Professor Leahy is preparing for an even bigger assignment: developing a new national occupational information system for the Social Security Administration. The system will determine eligibility benefits for nearly 11 million disabled adults and, most likely, be used as a reference by all rehabilitation counselors across the country.

State and federal workers compensation programs, and private and public professionals such as lawyers, vocational rehabilitation specialists and physical and occupational therapists also are expected to use the system.

Leahy will serve as the Washington-based project’s senior research consultant while remaining at MSU with colleagues John Kosciulek, Virginia Thielson and Nancy Crewe to prepare future professionals, and rehabilitation counseling educators, for tomorrow’s jobs in the high-demand field.

S P R I N G / S U M M E R  2 0 1 0
now among more than 1,500 doctoral candidates and master’s students who have studied rehabilitation counseling at MSU from all over the world.

The discipline has a rich history at MSU going back to the mid-1950s, but the original Ph.D. program had dissolved by the time Leahy joined the faculty. He led an effort to redesign the doctoral track and, in the mid-90s, to launch the Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies.

“We thought it would bring all our programs together and give us a stronger identity,” said Leahy, who still oversees the office. “It’s been effective.”

MSU’s graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling have been ranked No. 1 by U.S. News & World Report since 2003 among approximately 100 institutions nationwide. (The top ranking is currently shared with University of Wisconsin–Madison.)

Attracted by both faculty stature and broad opportunities, doctoral students form a close-knit community that keeps a weekly lunch meeting and, under Leahy’s direction, collaborates on research each year with peers at Penn State and Iowa, a group they call “the big three.”

Leahy and his colleagues have created a culture that values the individual needs of students and expects all of them to achieve the highest professional standards. This includes up to 40 master’s degree students who balance coursework with at least 750 hours of intensive practice counseling clients with disabilities in the field.

Besides the master’s and Ph.D. programs, the Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies also encompasses ongoing research and development projects such as REACH (Rehabilitation Education and CHange)—which provides online professional development for rehabilitation counselors in the field—and undergraduate courses related to disability.

The classes provide doctoral students, who are mostly preparing for academic positions, with valuable opportunities to practice teaching. They also introduce various topics from a disability perspective for up to 1,000 MSU undergraduates each year.

Leahy said that no other institution offers the same comprehensive mix of educational programs in rehabilitation counseling. And that is critical in a specialized field always struggling to recruit enough talent.

“Everyone we train is employed before they leave,” he said. “The demand is extraordinary and it will continue to be.”

The model partnership

Project Excellence is perhaps the greatest testament to Leahy’s concern for connecting research with service, and for exposing doctoral students to top-quality training.

MSU has a long-standing relationship with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), which employs rehabilitation counselors who provide job assistance to citizens with disabilities all over the state. Building on their history, Leahy and leaders of the state agency agreed in 2001 to explore opportunities in program evaluation.

After winning the competitive bid, MSU faculty and graduate students began receiving regular, ongoing opportunities to analyze Michigan trends, practices and initiatives related to rehabilitation counseling. The state, in turn, started expanding its capacity to use data to improve programs serving more than 40,000 people each year.

Nine years later, Project Excellence has generated nearly $5 million for research assistantships at MSU and influenced lasting changes at MRS affecting everything from staff training to customer satisfaction levels.

“I think we do a better job of assuring customers get the services they need, that customers are treated equitably and that we maximize the dollars because we provide services that are more effective,” said Lori Shader-Patterson, who directs the evaluation and program support division of MRS.

“We are better, not just with customers but with the way we are organized and the way we are able to collaborate and share information.”

Nineteen doctoral students have interacted with agency staff and worked alongside faculty, for three to four years at a time, on literature reviews, instrument construction, data analysis, writing reports and more—all with current and real implications for people in Michigan.

“It’s really a complete experience as
a researcher,” said Virginia Thielsen, co-principal investigator with Leahy.

“It gives them the kind of confidence in doing applied research that we could never simulate through a project or two,” Leahy said. “Employers at other universities are finding it very attractive.”

Funding for Project Excellence will continue through at least 2011, pending contract extensions or renewals with Michigan’s Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth.

To Ireland and beyond

Despite juggling Project Excellence, teaching and a large number of doctoral advisees, Leahy always seems to be thinking about what’s next.

Particularly about ways to generate understanding—and positive change—for individuals with disabilities throughout society.

In 2007, he developed a groundbreaking study abroad program after MSU leaders turned to him with concerns that few students with disabilities participate in international learning experiences. More than 40 students with and without disabilities have now taken the trip to Ireland, with a fourth group led by Leahy departing this summer.

The relationships he established with colleagues in Ireland, where disability laws are among the world’s most progressive, are creating additional opportunities to elevate MSU’s status as an advocate for persons with disabilities on an international scale.

Leahy is the co-chair of an international research conference in Dublin this October that will bring together presidents of top technology companies, urging them to invest in products and services that improve the daily lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities such as mental retardation and severe autism.

The event, which includes plans to have Irish president Mary McAleese and Apple CEO Steve Jobs as key speakers, also will launch a new research institute on intellectual disabilities based in Dublin at the Daughters of Charity. Trinity College of Dublin and MSU will be partners in the initiative.

“This is an opportunity to further our international efforts in collaboration with institutions of higher learning and practice settings,” said Leahy, who also begins consulting with Social Security Administration officials on research for the new occupational information system this summer.

Both ventures, as always, carry potential to create unique real-world research experiences for MSU students.

They also prove Leahy’s determination to improve the rehabilitation counseling profession—no matter how long-lasting—is as strong as ever.

“He manages to balance an awareness of the history and a very keen vision for what needs to change in the future,” Phillips said. “That combination, for a doctoral student, is all you can hope for.”

Co-principal investigators Michael Leahy and Virginia Thielsen (right) meet with doctoral students who serve as research assistants for Project Excellence, a unique partnership between MSU and the state of Michigan for researching and evaluating rehabilitation services.
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP has become one of the more prominent education reform and research issues since the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001. The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between demographic subgroups of students. It is most often used to describe the troubling performance gaps between African-American or Hispanic students, at the lower end of the performance scale, and their non-Hispanic white peers, as well as the similar academic disparity between students from low-income and well-off families. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, drop-out rates and college completion rates. It has become a focal point of education reform efforts.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative assessment of what American students know and can do in various subject areas. NCLB requires all U.S. states and jurisdictions to participate in NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8 on a biennial basis. The purpose of NAEP has always been to monitor change over time. Under NCLB, NAEP has a new role—to act as a serious tool in evaluating results of state assessments and to provide a common base for gauging the progress of the nation and the states in the content areas of mathematics, reading, writing and science.

NAEP results during the pre-NCLB (1990–2001) and post-NCLB (2002–2009) periods can be analyzed among different racial and socio-economic groups of fourth and eighth graders from across the nation to evaluate the impact of NCLB in closing the achievement gap up to 2009. Figures 1 (opposite) and 2 (following page) show trends in eighth grade mathematics achievement for selected racial/ethnic groups and by economic status as measured by eligibility for the U.S. Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program for economically disadvantaged students. The objective of this article is to answer the most controversial question in education today: Has NCLB been effective in closing the achievement gap in America’s public schools?

Yong Zhao and NCLB

In preparing for this article, I read Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization by Michigan State University Distinguished Professor Yong Zhao. Published in September 2009 by ASCD, this thought-provoking and challenging book is valuable to the discourse in American education. Zhao provides a refreshingly international perspective and “pulls no punches” in his criticism of recent educational reform movements in the United States. I was particularly interested in his views about NCLB’s impact on testing and accountability in public schools, and whether the law is meeting its goal of closing the achievement gap.

Zhao contends that NCLB has failed to improve education and that the results have been to turn public schools into teaching factories where children are trained to take standardized tests that do not measure the types of skills necessary in the 21st century and our changing global society. Zhao is opposed to the use of standardized testing results to reward or punish teachers and schools. He argues that continuing with the present policies under NCLB will harm the American public school system and undermine the quality of education in the U.S.

Zhao states: “In a way, the reforms that aim to save America are actually putting America in danger. NCLB is sending American education into deeper crisis because it is likely to lead [to] increasing distrust of educators, disregard of students’ individual interests, destruction of local autonomy and capacity for innovation, and disrespect for human values.”

Zhao is very much opposed to national or state academic standards, which he contends will do more harm than good. In a section titled “No Child Left Behind: The Arrival of the Dictator in Education,” Zhao states, “Even without national tests, there is little doubt that education in the United States has become authoritarian. Through NCLB, the federal government has been telling Americans that reading and math are the most valued subject areas and what schools should teach. Through various high school exit exams and state core curriculum programs, the state governments have decided that math, science, English, and possibly social studies are of the most worth if Americans are to succeed in the global economy.”

Professor Zhao contends that uniform tests produce monolithic thinking, and that in our modern global economy the passion that results when people are encouraged to develop along diverse paths is far more valuable than the large-scale mediocrity that results from national education standards and a test-centered school culture. Zhao advocates a model that emphasizes educational reform aimed at reducing subject content
emphasis and increasing skills related to critical thinking, problem solving and innovation.

**Shakrani on NCLB: Response to Zhao**

*I am not certain we can do one at the expense of the other.* Skill-centered learning at the expense of knowledge-based education has not worked in the past and will not work, now or in the future. From the “life adjustment movement” of the 1950s to “outcome-based education” in the 1980s, one “innovation” after another devalued academic subject matter while emphasizing problem solving and inquiry-based skills related to everyday life to meet the practical interests of young people. None of these initiatives survived for any length of time; however, they inserted into American education a deeply ingrained suspicion of academic studies and subject matter.

Many educators have become obsessed over “critical-thinking skills,” “individualized-learning styles” and so on. But they have paid precious little attention to the disciplinary knowledge that young people need to know in order to progress effectively in their academic studies. We cannot ignore what matters most; we cannot think critically without first having a substantial amount of knowledge to think about. Thinking critically and solving problems involves comparing and contrasting and synthesizing what we have learned, and a great deal of subject matter content knowledge is necessary before we can begin to reflect on meaning and think critically about alternative solutions. Proponents of “21st century skills” who emphasize critical thinking, problem solving and creativity might wish it was otherwise, but we do not restart the world with each new century. We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. What matters most is our cognitive capacity to make generalizations, to see beyond our immediate experience. The intelligent person who truly is the practitioner of critical thinking has the capacity to understand the lessons of history, to grasp the inner logic of science, mathematics and technology, and to realize the meaning of philosophical debates by studying them.¹

Professor Zhao concludes that “American education is at a crossroads. Two paths lie in front of us: one in which we destroy our strengths in order to catch up with others on test scores and one in which we build on our strengths so we can keep the lead in innovation and creativity.” *I do not accept this dichotomy.* I am sure we will continue.

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Our duly elected representatives at the national and state levels must ensure that quality K–12 education is the right of all children, not just the economically advantaged. If the United States moves along the path of effective accountability and quality education standards for all, this should be interpreted not as an “authoritarian” but as an enlightened education reform effort.

Closing the achievement gap in education

NCLB has been instrumental in bringing the focus of NCLB on improving the scores of racial, ethnic and economically disadvantaged students. This is according to results from NAEP, considered the nation’s best measure of achievement trends in mathematics and reading proficiency.

There is independent evidence indicating that all groups of students have made gains in mathematics and reading, but the gap remains unacceptably large. A systematic trend analysis of NAEP results at the national and state level for public school fourth and eighth graders in reading and math during pre-NCLB (1990–2001) and post-NCLB (2002–2009) periods made the following conclusions related to different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups:

1. NCLB did not have a significant impact on closing the achievement gap in the NAEP reading and math achievement of 4th and 8th grade students.
2. NCLB did not have a significant impact on improving reading achievement in the post-NCLB period.
3. NCLB had a slight impact on improving the mathematics achievement of all students. However the pace of improvement was the same before and after NCLB.

These results will stoke debate about how to rewrite the law when the Obama administration brings the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) up for reauthorization later this year.

The administration is advocating for the adoption of rigorous national curriculum standards for all students, followed by the development of a uniform assessment instrument that emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving skills, to ensure career or college readiness for disadvantaged students. To close the achievement gaps, educators must give economically disadvantaged, African American and Hispanic students, as well as students with special needs, access to better resources and a more rigorous curriculum in mathematics, science and language arts. They also must ensure that high-quality teaching and instruction is distributed equally across schools in affluent and poor neighborhoods.

Economists are concerned about the impact of the achievement gap on the nation’s future well-being. Table 1 shows the shift in economic demographics in all public schools; there are now far more lower-scoring poor minorities in relation to economically advantaged students. In April 2009, a report was released that shocked both the educational and business worlds. It put a $700 billion price tag on the “education...
achievement gap,” and concluded that the impact of this gap on the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) was equivalent to a “permanent national recession” much deeper and longer lasting than the one started in 2008.1 This study and others clearly show that shortfalls in academic achievement impose heavy and often tragic consequences, via lower earnings, poorer health and higher rates of incarceration. Lagging achievement as early as fourth or eighth grade appears to be a powerful predictor of rates of high school and college graduation, as well as lifetime earnings.

There is, nevertheless, reason to hope—and to work. NAEP data showing the wide variation in achievement among states, cities and school systems serving similar students suggests that the opportunity and output gaps related to today’s achievement gap can be substantially reduced. Some researchers and studies across the country are proving that race and poverty don’t determine the destiny of all students; many schools across the country are demonstrating that economically disadvantaged children can be educated to world-class standards. Schools that are majority black and economically disadvantaged are performing well above national norms: Whitney Young High School in Chicago, Davidson Magnet School in Augusta, Georgia and Amistad Academy in New Haven, Connecticut are prominent examples. All of these schools offer rigorous and in-depth comprehensive curriculum and modes of instruction that emphasize subject matter knowledge and skills. America’s history of bringing disadvantaged groups into the economic and political mainstream over time, and the progress of other nations, suggest that large steps toward closing the achievement gaps are possible.

The present NCLB law relies heavily on state-developed assessment instruments (such as the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, or MEAP, in Michigan) as the basis for school accountability, which is misleading since many state-administered tests tend to significantly inflate achievement levels as well as deflate racial and social achievement gaps. The higher the stakes of these state assessments, the greater the discrepancies between state-level NAEP results and that of tests developed by each state for NCLB purposes. These discrepancies were particularly large for economically disadvantaged, African-American and Hispanic students. Since the inception of NCLB in 2002, state assessment results have shown improvement in math and reading, but students are not showing similar gains on the state NAEP—the only independent national test used across all 50 states and all political jurisdictions. If NCLB continues the current policy direction, academic achievement is not likely to improve significantly, although it is very possible that the 50-plus state curricula and testing programs will continue to give a false impression of higher achievement in order to meet adequate yearly progress requirements.4

Hope for the future

The continued existence of large achievement gaps raises doubt about the success of NCLB efforts to provide greater and more equitable educational opportunities, particularly as the proportions of disadvantaged minority and economically disadvantaged students continue to rise across the nation. The goal of ensuring that all students have the opportunity to reach their academic potential is called into question if educational programs continue to leave significant proportions of students lagging behind in their academic achievements.

A highly skilled workforce is the lifeblood of any successful national economy. Regrettably, the U.S. K–12 public education system is failing to provide equitable levels of educational performance for every student regardless of race, ethnicity or income level. Therefore, the answer to the question: Is NCLB effective in closing the achievement gap in America’s public schools? No. The achievement gap has not changed significantly since 2002 in America’s public elementary and middle schools.

Education historian Diane Ravitch5 has written that “our public education system is a fundamental element of our democratic society. Our public schools have been the pathway to opportunity and a better life for generations of Americans, giving them the tools to fashion their own life and to improve the commonwealth. To the extent we strengthen them, we strengthen our democracy.”

Let us hope that the proposed changes in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will help achieve the NCLB goal of closing the achievement gaps in our public schools.

NOTES


### Table 1: Percentage of Students Assessed in 8th-Grade NAEP Mathematics, by Race/Ethnicity (1990–2009)

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John Dirkx is looking for meaning. Context.

He believes it’s still missing from most efforts to educate adults who have fallen behind in their academic skills. And with today’s turbulent economy, as job loss sends thousands more people back to the nation’s classrooms, the problem is intensifying.

Instructors in adult basic education programs and remedial college courses must listen more closely, Dirkx says, to who they serve. Career interests, past educational experiences and emotional issues both in and outside the classroom can dramatically influence the success of students, especially adult learners hoping to reshape their futures.

An MSU professor of higher, adult and lifelong educa-
What does an academically underprepared adult typically encounter when they return to school?

“Many programs require them to first take courses and get themselves up to speed in academic areas before they are able to pursue professional or occupational areas of preparation. It’s frustrating; many didn’t do well or didn’t have a positive attitude about schooling when they were younger.

When they are facing months or even years of preparation in academic areas, they feel like they are visiting it all over again—unless the experience has changed dramatically.

They have to remake their sense of self as a learner and develop a sense of confidence. For most of them, their confidence about learning is in the basement some place or below that even. . . . Some of them are incredibly bright people, gifted even, but they have developed an attitude about education that is not very positive because of their prior experiences and they have to overcome that.

They face this need to rework their sense of self as a learner and the lack of academic preparation, just a sheer lack of being able to read, write and do math at a level that’s acceptable for postsecondary work.”

So how big is the problem?

“We are talking about a very large number of people . . . If you take a look at the national population of students beginning their first year in a community college, probably about 60 percent are academically underprepared in one or more of the subjects of reading, writing or math. There is a heavy proportion that is academically underprepared in all three.

Also, each year we have a large number of people who drop out of high school and don’t immediately get into alternative high school or GED programs. These kinds of programs, the adult basic education programs, are literally the only thing they have available to them to help them succeed at the postsecondary level—to get to college in the first place.”

Are community colleges and adult education programs well prepared to serve these populations?

“They are starting to realize how important it is for these adults to transition into postsecondary programs. That’s happened probably within the last five years, and it’s really moving into the mainstream now. However, we are just on the beginning cusps of that in terms of changing programs.

In the past, community colleges have relied on very traditional forms of teaching the disciplines. The emotional aspects, the issues of self confidence and reworking the learner identity, have for the most part been relegated to counseling services, if they are addressed at all.”
Instructors are subject-matter experts and they believe their job is to foster expertise within their particular subject matter. I don’t think that’s what developmental education students need. They need to understand how doing writing better, how doing math better will improve their life and chances of employment . . . ”

Q What are the consequences of dismissing personal issues and emotions in the classroom?

A “When students start to struggle with reading or math, there’s an immediate emotional response. Most of them don’t [go back to school] without some amount of anxiety. Dislocated workers tell me, ‘When I first came here, I was scared to death.’ That’s the language they use. If in the curriculum and the teaching you are not acknowledging that aspect, you are really telling the learners that, ‘You can get over it.’ That’s not what teachers are there for.

There are teachers who will let students take the time to vent and then return to the task of learning. But in those cases even the teachers who appreciate the need to pay attention to emotions aren’t necessarily integrating those emotions into the learning process.

Developmental education programs have very high rates of attrition. In some, 50 percent or more of the students leave and we don’t know what happens to them. But with the emphasis on transition to postsecondary education, I think we are beginning to realize that we can’t ignore the people who are not being successful.

More and more, we understand that learning is a holistic kind of enterprise, that you can’t just attend to the intellectual aspects and ignore the affective dimensions.”

Q What can teachers do differently?

A “Let me give you an example from [a] dislocated worker program. I was sitting with a 50-year-old man in a math class. The teacher was teaching the addition and subtrac-
“We have to have transformation of these programs so that the basic skills and the vocational dimensions are interconnected and integrated.”

Q  How do programs incorporate more of the context they need?

A  “Most of these programs would be improved if they took the curriculum and revised it so that the basic skills are taught within the context of some aspect of career awareness. It can’t always be a specific career preparation program—some

adult learners don’t know what they want to do for sure—but we know enough about career pathways that if people are interested in health for example, they don’t have to start out in a program for registered nurses . . .

Most academically underprepared adults, by in large, are seeking gainful employment. They want jobs that are going to provide for their livelihood, and meaningful work would be nice too. They are going to need some form of postsecondary education . . . It’s not going to happen with simply a high school education anymore. And in order to help them get through that process, we have to have, on a very large scale, transformation of these programs so that the basic skills and the vocational dimensions are interconnected and integrated.”

Q  How can colleges begin to make these changes?

A  “It’s certainly through professional development and increased awareness, but you don’t just do this class by class. You do this as an institution. You try to create a change in the culture of teaching within the institution.

There are a variety of different institutions around the country that are known now for being leaders of these practices, of really paying attention to developing contextual approaches to developmental education . . .

We know what needs to be done. This is not a secret. We’ve known for a good 15 to 20 years that we need to be using more integrated and contextual approaches in the teaching of adults. We have known about it at a theoretical level. We know that some teachers are experimenting with it, but at an institutional basis, we have had a great deal of difficulty getting wholesale adoption of these practices into teaching.

That’s true for developmental education and very true for adult basic education where the teaching is often part time. For so long, we have felt that this could be done on the backs of volunteers and tutors and retired teachers. These volunteers are heartfelt and they care a lot but caring a lot is not going to really do what needs to be done.”

STUDYING ADULT LEARNING AT MSU

As a member of the Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) faculty at MSU, John Dirkx helps prepare master’s and doctoral students for various leadership and teaching roles that support adult learners. He focuses on remedial, occupational and professional education, as well as professional development for teachers in higher and adult education. Visit www.education.msu.edu/ead/hale.
Li Wins AERA Early Career Award

Guofang Li, associate professor of second language and literacy education, was presented with the 2010 AERA Early Career Award during the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in Denver this spring. The prestigious honor—which went to fellow College of Education professor Nell K. Duke last year—recognizes a scholar’s distinguished portfolio of cumulative research within the first decade after receiving a doctoral degree.

Li, who earned her Ph.D. from the University of Saskatchewan in 2000, has been committed to studying how immigrant and minority students bridge language and literacy gaps in the United States. Originally from a Chinese village where few children went to school, Li is particularly interested in the home literacy practices of Asian immigrants and the cultural and educational conflicts arising between families and mainstream schools.

A principal investigator with the Literacy Achievement Research Center (LARC), Li’s work has appeared in many top-tier journals. Her publications include a monograph and seven books, including Culturally Contested Pedagogy: Battles of Literacy and Schooling between Mainstream Teachers and Asian Immigrant Parents, for which she won the Edward Fry Book Award from the National Reading Conference in 2006. She also is co-editor, with MSU Professor Patricia A. Edwards, of Best Practices in ELL Instruction out this spring from Guilford Press.

Prior to joining MSU, Li was an assistant professor at the University at Buffalo, where she was a recipient of the 2004 Outstanding Young Investigator Award. She also previously won the Early Career Award from Division G of aera.

Li will now present the Early Career Award Lecture during AERA’s annual meeting in 2011.

Faculty Selected to Edit Journal of Literacy Research

Five faculty members from the College of Education have been selected to serve as editors of the Journal of Literacy Research (JLR), an honor reserved for the nation’s top scholars on literacy, language and education.

Douglas K. Hartman (far left) and Susan Florio-Ruane (left), both professors of teacher education, became lead editors starting on Jan. 1. Their editorial team of co-editors, in place through 2012, includes teacher education faculty members Nell K. Duke, Laura Apol and Jeffrey Bale, along with four colleagues at the University of Connecticut.

The interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed research journal is a publication of the Literacy Research Association, formerly the National Reading Conference.

Hartman, who came to MSU as senior editor of the JLR, said the group re-competed for the editorship against an open field of proposals from other academic institutions across the country.

“When you have a field as diverse as literacy, you need a faculty with expertise that can approach that diversity,” he said, noting that MSU is home to one of the nation’s largest and most productive literacy research centers.

The Literacy Achievement Research Center, or LARC, brings together 26 principal investigators and 45 research assistants studying related topics ranging from informational literacy and poetry to teacher development and digital communication.

Doctoral students will have additional opportunities to experience the scholarly publication process while the JLR remains based in the College of Education.

“The university has made an investment in literacy research through LARC,” said Florio-Ruane. “It’s a gathering place and a catalyst for excellent scholars—and also for mentoring.”

Kinesiology Chair Is National Track Champion

Department of Kinesiology Chairperson Deborah L. Feltz became the 800-meter champion in track in the 55–59 age group during the National Senior Olympics in summer 2009—beating her previous time by more than 13 seconds.

Feltz is an expert in sport psychology who says her research on self-efficacy has helped her achieve success on the track. She started competing in the Senior Olympics at age 50 and expects to improve her time again at the games in 2011.
Twenty-five thousand feet above the green hills of Germany during World War II, Louis Stamatakos stood straddling the sky, feet hooked in the ribs of his crew’s aircraft. Cold air—oh, you can’t imagine how cold—rushed at the 19-year-old tail gunner from the nose of the plane. Around him, people screamed bloody murder. Pings of metal sounded as anti-aircrafts exploded. And he knew: One misstep and he was gone.

Two bombs were caught below the plane, and Stamatakos had been chosen to hack them off.

Hanging on to the side of the plane, with an axe in hand, he struck the shackles holding the bomb. Again and again he swung at them, until both bombs fell.

Almost 65 years later, Stamatakos, now an 84-year-old retired MSU professor, walks to the front of a room, a cane in hand. His wife, three sons, their wives, seven grandchildren and a crowd of onlookers watch as a small star is pinned onto the jacket of his suit.

It’s a Silver Star—one of the nation’s highest honors for bravery in combat. Long after the plane landed that day in 1945 and the men kissed the ground, long after Stamatakos returned home, married and was hired for the “best job in the world,” the star was presented to him during a ceremony on Feb. 17, 2010 in the House Speaker’s library in the state Capitol.

“I thank you for coming, for honoring me at this time,” Stamatakos said at the ceremony. “And I honor you for your friendship, for your patience on occasion and for taking time off from your lives and your weeks and honoring me. I thank you all. This is very touching and I’ll never forget it.”

Many faculty members and students from the College of Education—past and present—were in the audience that day, proud to see their former colleague and teacher hailed for an act of outstanding leadership long before he pledged his service to the improvement of higher education.

Stamatakos joined what is now called the Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education (HALE) faculty in 1967 and retired 25 years later. Along with a few other professors, he is credited with developing programs in student affairs administration that broke new ground in the field and established MSU as a lasting national leader.

Stamatakos also prepared numerous doctoral students—perhaps more than anyone in the country at the time—who went on to become senior student affairs officers and college presidents. He was committed to creating learning environments and practitioner-scholars that would really take the overall well-being of students seriously.

Each year, an award is given in Stamatakos’ name to a master’s student who demonstrates a strong commitment to the student affairs profession and to the ethical standards that epitomize his values.

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin presented Stamatakos with the Silver Star after his sons—Philip, Theodore and Timothy—tracked down survivors of the mission over Germany and submitted his nomination to the Army. Stamatakos was surprised with the news when he received a package on Christmas Eve.

He lives in Okemos with his wife, Bess, and remains connected to the HALE programs at MSU.
Kinesiology professors emeriti Janet Wessel and Gail Dummer are co-authors, with former MSU instructor Luke Kelly and doctoral graduate Thomas Sampson, of *Everyone Can! Skill Development and Assessment in Elementary Physical Education (with Web Resources)*, a curriculum resource for teachers and text for college courses related to curriculum and instruction. It was released by Human Kinetics Publishers in 2010.

Associate professor of special education Gary A. Troia is the co-editor, with doctoral students Rebecca K. Shankland and Anne Heintz, of *Putting Writing Research into Practice: Applications for Teacher Professional Development*, published in 2010 (New York: Guilford Press).

Lynn Fendler, associate professor of teacher education, is the author of *Michel Foucault*, a book in the Continuum Library of Educational Thought series, which is a major international reference on the work of seminal educational thinkers. Her book was published in early 2010.


Marilyn Amey, professor and chairperson of the Department of Educational Administration, received the inaugural Mentoring Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). The award honors an individual who has shown, through their mentoring activities, a tireless dedication to the future of ASHE and the higher education profession.

In addition, Amey was recently named editor of the *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*. M.A. and Ph.D. graduate students will join Amey as managing editors during her three-year appointment ending in March 2013.

Professor of higher, adult and lifelong education Ann E. Austin was selected as an AERA Fellow, a distinction intended to recognize American Educational Research Association members known nationally and internationally for their sustained, outstanding contributions to education research. Austin, who also directs the Global Institute for Higher Education at MSU, was one of 67 fellows inducted for 2010, the program’s third year. College of Education professors Barbara Schneider, William H. Schmidt, Jere Brophy (deceased) and professor emeritus Joe Byers were previously named among the inaugural AERA Fellows.
Matthew Diemer, associate professor of counseling, is the first recipient of the Early Career Professional Award given by the Society for Vocational Psychology, a section of the American Psychological Association, Division 17. Diemer received the honor at the APA meeting last August.

Professor of teacher education Patricia A. Edwards received a Scholastic Heroes award at the 2010 Scholastic Classroom and Library Group Book Summit in honor of her efforts to promote the importance of literacy education. The summit was held in Palm Beach, Fla. in February.

Edwards, president of the International Reading Association, also was invited to be a Scholar-in-Residence at the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) conference in Indianapolis last November.

Professor of kinesiology Dan Gould, who directs the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, received an honorary doctorate from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) near Brussels, Belgium on December 9, 2009. The university presented the honor to Gould for his 30-year record of research and outreach in applied sport psychology. While in Brussels, he discussed developing a continuing relationship between faculty from the VUB department of Sport Policy and Management and from the MSU Department of Kinesiology. Gould also gave a variety of lectures and workshops during his stay.

Assistant professor of teacher education Beth Herbel-Eisenmann received the 2010 Early Career Award from the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE). Herbel-Eisenmann, who was recognized during the AMTE conference in January, honors members for outstanding early career contributions in teaching, service and scholarship.

James T. Minor, assistant professor of higher, adult and lifelong education, received the 2010 Outstanding Recent Graduate Award from the School of Education at University of Wisconsin–Madison. Minor was selected in honor of his efforts to advance educational equity and his contributions to higher education policy and academic governance, particularly through his research on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He earned his Ph.D. from the school’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in 2001.

Kristin Phillips, assistant professor of teacher education, has received the 2009 Gail P. Kelly Award for Outstanding Dissertation from the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES). Phillips, who earned her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, was honored for research on educational development issues in rural Tanzania. She is now helping to lead a major MSU outreach project in Tanzania.

Kristen A. Renn, associate professor of higher, adult and lifelong education, was named an American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Diamond Honoree. The award recognizes higher education professionals who, throughout their careers, have made outstanding contributions to higher education and to student affairs in particular. Renn was recognized at ACPA’s 2010 convention in Boston.

Professor of counseling Robbie Stewart received a 2009 Supervision and Training Section award from Division 17 of the American Psychological Association (Counseling Psychology) for excellence in supervising student research activities. Two of her research teams also received outstanding poster presentation awards from Division 17 at the APA meeting in August. Recipients include former counseling students Aaron Smith and Molly Heyn, Shavonne Moore, Lisa Pohl, Kristin Zupek and Sharea Ayers.

Gary A. Troia, associate professor of special education, is now serving as president of the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness.

Michelle Williams, assistant professor of teacher education, was a visiting scholar at the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at University of Wisconsin–Madison on April 4–6, 2010. She was nominated to participate in the Visiting Minority Scholars Lecture Series, which aims to celebrate and promote the contributions of minority scholars in education, strengthening ties with faculty at UW and throughout the nation.

Emily Brozovic, graphic designer for the College of Education, and Nicole Geary, communications manager, received a Silver Award for Best Annual Report in the 2009 Pride of CASE V Awards Program (a division of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education). The award recognizes the college’s 2007–08 Annual Report.

IN MEMORIAM


Robert C. Hatfield, professor emeritus of teacher education, died February 27, 2010 at age 80. Hatfield joined the faculty in 1969 and retired in 1992. His wife, Patricia, survives.

After receiving a degree in packaging engineering, Shuhan (Hannah) Yang had to shift career plans dramatically in order to follow her passion for studying teachers.

However, the education master’s student from Chongqing, China says she didn’t realize she wanted to pursue a Ph.D. in the field until she traveled all the way to Michigan State University.

Yang spent most of the last academic year experiencing American student culture, coursework and approaches to research in the MSU College of Education as one of 10 students and two faculty members visiting from Southwest University (SWU) in Chongqing.

The delegation’s extended stay in East Lansing represents the latest exchange in a partnership involving the two institutions, a relationship creating new opportunities to embrace global perspectives at each university—and for each scholar involved.

“I feel more ambitious now, like I want to bring some changes to classes in China,” said Yang, whose studies will focus on issues facing minority teachers in her region after she returns. “I am learning so much, and not just about research methods.”

Officials at SWU’s College of Education chose to sponsor the seven-month trip as an opportunity for their students to learn about the educational system in the United States and to develop new perspectives that can inform their own research and teaching.

Last May, MSU coordinated a three-week study trip to China for eight MSU doctoral students as well as eight students from the University of Washington and the University of Delaware, which also are partners in the exchange program. The trip provided a rich and intensive array of experiences for students to learn about the dynamics of the educational system in China and to meet with teachers, administrators, policy leaders and scholars at major universities.

Southwest University hosted part of that group and will host fellows from the three participating American universities again this spring.

MSU College of Education Dean Carole Ames’ vision for establishing such a partnership first materialized while leading a study tour in China two years ago.

The growing relationship with SWU is affording the kind of exchange and engagement that will benefit graduate students as they become teacher educators, researchers, educational leaders or policymakers.

Gaining global understandings and knowledge through first-hand experiences is critical for all professions, and especially educators.

“A strong foundation”

The College of Education organized an extensive agenda for the SWU delegation in Michigan.

After touring campus and settling into apartments last September, the scholars were presented with a range of activities to help them expand their understanding of higher education in the U.S., interact with expert faculty and build relationships with educators who have similar scholarly interests.
Each SWU student was paired with a faculty mentor and a graduate student mentor, as well as one relevant course to observe each semester.

As a group, the scholars visited k–12 schools and attended in-depth seminars with College of Education professors nearly every week. Topics ranged from the overall structure of American education and teacher preparation to poetry, physical development, science teaching and special education.

“They’re getting a strong foundation in the U.S. educational system and a certain number of research and policy issues,” said assistant professor Peter Youngs, who mentored one of the SWU students and gave a lecture to the group on U.S. policy affecting teacher quality and preparation. “The experience is going to help them advance with their own academic work in various ways.”

Beyond scheduled courses and events, many of the students also joined informal study and discussion groups. Some developed unique connections with educators from outside MSU whom they met during visits to schools and meetings of LATTICE (Linking All Types of Teachers through International Cross-cultural Education) or GIFT (Global Initiative Forum for Future Teachers, see page 36).

‘New friendships and open minds’

SWU doctoral student Hongen (Grant) Li, who joined the GIFT planning committee, was asked to assist a teacher from nearby Wardcliff Elementary by assessing the learning abilities of a young student from China. He helped break down a language barrier in the school and with it, some of his own ideas about instruction in American classrooms.

“Coming to MSU has been a very good chance to broaden my perspectives,” said Li, whose research focuses on curriculum and pedagogy. By talking with faculty and students, he was also able to gain new insights about the role of extended field placements and Web 2.0 technologies in a teacher preparation program.

“This program has provided a very good opportunity for both SWU and MSU to explore different education systems, and also different cultures.”

Scholars from the two nations came together to celebrate Halloween, Christmas and Chinese New Year, to make traditional Chinese dumplings and hear marching band music, to thank one another for new friendships and open minds. Dean Ames hosted a special dinner and reception for all participating faculty and students at Cowles House (the MSU president’s house) in February.

Assistant Dean Barbara Markle, who hosted Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations at her home, said interacting over the course of an entire academic year—building on strong ties already established in China—has allowed the graduate students and faculty members involved to get to know each other on a personal and intellectual level despite their differences.

And that can be priceless.

“This gives them a terrific professional base to begin their career as a scholar,” Markle said. “Those are relationships that can last throughout a career.”

A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP: THE NEXT EXCHANGE

Seven Ph.D. students in the College of Education representing a cross-section of disciplines were selected to travel to China this spring as participants of the second annual Doctoral Fellowship for Enhancing Global Understanding.

The Southwest University College of Education in Chongqing will host the group, which also includes six students from University of Washington and three from University of Delaware, from May 13 to June 5.

Since 10 students from SWU spent the 2009–10 year at MSU, some of the traveling U.S. scholars will have met and interacted with many of their Chinese peers before they arrive in country. Their agenda includes visits to schools, time with faculty mentors, lectures from leading SWU education professors and an opportunity to present their own work.
It’s a Thursday night at Erickson Hall and an unusual mix of two dozen faces gather around tables: sophomores and second-year Ph.D. candidates, MSU faculty and local teachers, students from Michigan, Minnesota, Indonesia and China, to name a few.

“If you want to learn about other people, the first thing you need to know is their name,” one facilitator wearing a blue T-shirt says and turns to write his own—Dwi Yuliantoro—on a board. In Javanese, he explains, the last name means ‘someone who can conquer.’

Participants follow his example and silence soon gives way to lively conversations around the room, each person’s name touching off mini-lessons about language, history and culture.

It is only a warm-up for the evening’s discussion about bringing global perspectives into K–12 classrooms—one in a series of monthly sessions designed to forge new connections between domestic and international scholars in education.

The Global Initiative Forum for Future Teachers, or GIFT, provides a unique form of ongoing professional development for pre-service teachers in the College of Education by allowing them to learn about diverse cultures and educational issues alongside international graduate students.

The forums, which began during the 2008–09 year, have attracted up to 50 people at a time with presentations on topics such as teaching abroad, internationalizing the curriculum and what it means to be a global citizen.

“It’s really eye-opening every time,” said Abby Vermeulen, a sophomore teacher candidate enrolled in the Global Educators Cohort Program (GECP).

Members of the Global Educators Cohort Program, more than 50 teacher education students who experience specialized courses and activities focused on developing global outreach initiatives that can be sustained over time.

“The world is increasingly globalized and open, so it makes sense to try to think of ourselves as global citizens and help wherever we see the opportunity,” said Ashley Maloff, a GECP sophomore who serves on the GIFT planning committee. “It enriches the cohort experience, and we always get such a diverse group of people.”

Scholars visiting from China’s Southwest University attended many sessions during the 2009–10 year. In total, the college is home to nearly 200 international graduate students from more than 40 countries. Many of them are eager to mentor and share their heritage and expertise with prospective teachers, and vice versa.

“I believe that I still need to improve my teaching,” said Ainur Rosyid, a teacher from Indonesia pursuing a master’s degree in K–12 educational administration at MSU. “That’s why I am often inspired by the experiences of teachers from other countries.”

Along with international students, GIFT attendees also often include faculty and teachers from local-area schools. The program is modeled after the success of the LATTICE network (Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-cultural Education), which encourages practicing teachers to collaborate with international students and scholars at MSU as they integrate global perspectives into their classrooms.

The members of AIMS may be starting small, but they hope their ideas will add up to substantial improvements for people in other parts of the world.

As a new student group at MSU, AIMS (Action for International Movement and Sustainability) raised money for earthquake victims in Indonesia last fall and has now begun a project that could lead to building private latrines for girls at schools in sub-Saharan Africa.

Members include students in the Global Educators Cohort Program (GECP) as well as other undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Education, and from other disciplines across campus. Organizer Annie Kelly, a post-BA student pursuing her teaching certificate, said they are committed to developing global outreach initiatives that can be sustained over time.

“The world is increasingly globalized and open, so it makes sense to try to think of ourselves as global citizens and help wherever we see the opportunity,” she said.

AIMS also began collecting materials needed at the Refugee Development Center in Lansing this spring.

For more information, e-mail kellyan7@msu.edu or call (517) 242-5979.
Kinesiology Scholar Honored for Teaching on Campus

Kinesiology doctoral student Sheila Kelly received an Excellence-in-Teaching Citation from MSU during the university’s annual Awards Convocation in February. Kelly was honored for outstanding efforts to motivate and engage undergraduate students as an instructor for many of the required kinesiology courses. She also shows great promise as a scholar in her field, publishing and presenting her research at the national level.

On the Forefront of Research: Student News from AERA

- Annis N. Brown, a doctoral candidate in teacher education, was elected to serve as chair-elect for the Graduate Student Council (GSC) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) during 2009–10. She becomes chair and earns a seat on the AERA national council following the annual AERA meeting in May. Brown previously served as a division representative and a community leader of the GSC, which provides a national network of resources for student scholars in education.

- Kenne Dibner, a Ph.D. student in educational policy, was honored by the Law and Education Special Interest Group of AERA for submitting the best student proposal for the 2010 AERA meeting. Dibner received the Emerging Scholar Award during the conference on May 3 in Denver.

- Two sophomores in the college’s Urban Educators Cohort Program were selected to participate in the AERA Undergraduate Student Education Research Training Workshop during the organization’s national meeting this spring. As fellows, Lindsey Barrett and Alexis Jackson were introduced to education research, including various methods and applications, from senior researchers across the country. They also worked with faculty and graduate student mentors and attended pre-selected presentations. Their registration and lodging expenses are covered by AERA.

EAD Doctoral Student Oversees Curriculum in Local District

Kari Krantz-Selleck, a Ph.D. student in K–12 educational administration, was recently hired as executive director of curriculum and staff development at Holt Public Schools in Holt, Mich. Selleck, who also received her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from MSU, was previously curriculum director at Corunna Public Schools in Corunna, Mich.

Undergrads Co-present at National Conference

A pair of teacher education doctoral students recently shared the spotlight with four seniors from the College of Education during a presentation for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in Philadelphia.

Joanna Dueweke, Lindsey Polinko, Brittney McCullers and Amalia Dunlap, who each represent different teaching majors, served as co-presenters during a panel session about using a variety of texts and other media while teaching in secondary classrooms. Instructors Cathleen Clara and Sheila Marquardt, both Ph.D. students, arranged for the group to attend the November conference after remarking that the field of education should see the work of undergraduates in their TE 302 courses.

Their co-presenters were comfortable and articulate while responding to the critiques of teachers and teacher educators. Clara and Marquardt said the experience “has empowered these pre-service teachers to be advocates for culturally relevant pedagogy and to interact well with experienced colleagues.”

The group received financial support from the Department of Teacher Education and the Undergraduate Research Office at MSU.

TE Doctoral Student Honored for International Work

Dwi Yuliantoro, a doctoral student in curriculum, instruction and teacher education, received a Homer Higbee International Education Award for exceptional service to advance international understanding and cooperation at MSU. The honor, presented by International Studies and Programs on March 24, recognizes Yuliantoro’s engagement in activities such as Speakers Bureau, GIFT (Global Initiative Forum for Future Teachers) and LATTICE (Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-cultural Education), his efforts to recruit students from his home country of Indonesia and many other contributions outside his academic studies.
Last year, Lindsay (Martin) Knippenberg tunneled into the base of a 50-foot-deep glacier to challenge the limits for life on Earth. Meanwhile, she encouraged more than a few young people to broaden their perspectives about science—and consider new possibilities for their future.

Hundreds of U.S. students and fellow teachers, back in the comfort of their classrooms, followed Knippenberg as she spent two frozen, thrilling months on a research expedition studying microorganisms in Antarctica. The journey was part of PolarTREC, a National Science Foundation–funded program that allows K–12 teachers to conduct cutting-edge polar research and share their experiences through blogs, discussion boards and Webinars. Only 15 teachers were selected for the 2009–10 school year from more than 250 applicants across the nation.

“I try to do things with my students to show them that you can go outside your comfort zone and achieve great things,” said Knippenberg, a high school biology teacher in St. Clair Shores, Mich. “Most of them thought I was crazy, but it was inspiring to see them get excited about science in ways they wouldn’t have before.”

But Knippenberg, who graduated from MSU’s secondary education program in 2002, doesn’t shy away from unique opportunities to enrich her teaching in the field. She went on research trips to study seals in Alaska and wolves in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula as an undergraduate at MSU. Then she hiked through the mucky wetlands of an Ohio wildlife refuge while working on her master’s degree in environmental science from University of Michigan–Dearborn.

At South Lake High School, where she’s been teaching for seven years, Knippenberg organizes a host of community-based projects for students as coordinator of the Environmental Club. Principal Lou Steigerwald wasn’t surprised to see her pursue PolarTREC.

“It’s the sort of thing that Lindsay does to extend her knowledge—go and find new things to know about and bring them to her classes,” he said.

An extreme learning experience

From her tent in the McMurdo Dry Valleys of Antarctica, Knippenberg huddled over a laptop and documented her daily activities via satellite. She posted pictures, described ongoing field work, mapped out lesson ideas for teachers and carried on conversations with students all through her own section of the PolarTREC Web site.

When the Grosse Ile, Mich. native wasn’t translating complex biogeochemical concepts into language for a general audience, she was doing everything the researchers did: cutting ice blocks by chainsaw (go to polartrec.com to see a video of the full tunneling process), drawing samples of glacial sediment and (later) running tests in the laboratory.

The six-person team from Montana State University and Louisiana State University was looking for proof that microorganisms can live trapped inside Antarctic debris-rich glacier ice—a question with implications for the extreme conditions of icy moons and...
planets elsewhere in our solar system. The researchers found strong preliminary evidence but need more analysis.

"We teach about the scientific method, but to watch me go through it helps students understand how it actually works," said Knippenberg, who made an introductory trip to lead principal investigator Mark Skidmore’s Montana State lab last summer and hopes to continue collaborating with the team.

The “elegantly simple” class experiments and other strategies Knippenberg devised to synthesize science concepts while in Antarctica have already inspired Skidmore, a geomicrobiologist, to share his research in local schools.

“Most scientists are adept at their work, but relating it to middle or high school kids, that’s not where our skill set lies,” he said. “If I wasn’t excited about science by my teachers, I don’t think I would have gone on to be a scientist.

“It’s important to train the next generation.”

Making it real, memorable

Always enthusiastic about science, Knippenberg says she nearly traded teaching for a career in research herself. The chance to influence kids—and Michigan State’s full-year teaching internship—won her over.

“Thinking back, I remember how easy my first year of teaching was and how prepared I felt,” she said. “It was almost like I was starting my second year of teaching, not my first . . . Now I’ve been doing it for seven years and I can’t imagine anything different.”

Leaving her classroom for Antarctica (NSF paid for the substitute teacher), she was free to follow in the climbing shoe prints of top-notch researchers and revel in the splendor of bright blue ice under 24-hour sun.

Still, she became most immersed in making the dreamlike world real for students.

Blogging, about where bacteria could grow and what it takes to run a
Ubiquitous, user-friendly and ever-evolving, the many venues of social media continue to expand. Consider these statistics compiled by Jake Hird, a senior research analyst for Econsultancy (econsultancy.com):

- Facebook’s 350 million users worldwide post 3.5 billion pieces of content each week.
- Twitter has 75 million users who average 1.3 million tweets each hour.
- LinkedIn has over 50 million members worldwide.
- Flickr now hosts more than 4 billion images.
- Wikipedia has more than 14 million articles—nearly a million added in the last six months.

Though just the tip of the iceberg, this is really powerful. What does it mean for us? As professionals, educators and learners, I believe it means opportunity. Opportunity to grow and to connect with others around the world who are immersed in the same work that we do every day.

I am a middle school teacher and since October 2009, I’ve been involved in a technology-rich, practice-embedded professional development program called PLP—Powerful Learning Practice. One part of this process has been to build a Personal Learning Network using tools such as Twitter. At first, I was skeptical. Why would I want to spend time tweeting trivial information? Twitter seemed to be the silliest thing I’d ever come across. It isn’t. When used with a specific purpose, tools like Twitter can shrink the world by carving out focus and expand the horizon by introducing new ideas. The depth and breadth of what I have learned through the network I’ve started to build is amazing. There are so many people out there doing so many incredible things that it’s impossible to describe it in this small space. Time spent investigating social media tools will be time well spent. Give it a try.

As MSU College of Education alumni, it means we need to connect. The College of Education is working hard to increase and improve its Web presence with a complete redesign of the main Web site. Visit www.education.msu.edu and take a moment to complete the survey you find there—we value your input! While you’re there, take advantage of the links to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Flickr. Join the hundreds of College of Education alumni who are already fans of the college on Facebook, following us on Twitter and members of our group on LinkedIn. Strengthen your connection with the college by sharing news and resources with the network.

We look forward to hearing from you. See you online!

Wendy Darga
Class of 1989 and 1992
ALUMNI NOTES

Teri Hepler, Ph.D. ’08 (kinesiology), received the 2010 Sport and Exercise Psychology Dissertation Award from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) for research likely to make a significant contribution to the sport psychology knowledge base. Hepler is an assistant professor in the Department of Human Performance and Physical Education at Adams State College in Alamosa, Colo.

Andrew Hugine, Jr., Ph.D. ’77 (higher education), has become the 11th president of Alabama A&M University in Normal, Ala. Hugine previously served as president of South Carolina State University, where he spearheaded construction of a major residence facility and staged the first debate in the 2008 Democratic Party Presidential Candidate Debate Series—the first such distinction by a Historically Black College or University.

Jody Jessup-Anger, Ph.D. ’09 (higher, adult and lifelong education), recently received the 2010 Burns B. Crookston Doctoral Research Award for scholarship that brings greater understanding to the development of students or the administration of student affairs. Jessup-Anger, who is now an assistant professor at Marquette University, received the honor from the ACPA Professional Preparation Commission in March.

Nils Kauff man, Ph.D. ’09 (educational policy), received the Gill-Chin Lim Award for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation in Global Studies from the office of International Studies and Programs at MSU. Kauff man, whose dissertation focused on educational change in Moldova since the end of the Soviet Union, is now working as a consultant with Miske Witt and Associates, Inc. on a UNICEF-funded project to review standards of educational quality in seven countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Dianne L. Hall Mark, BS ’79 (physical education), was named dean of the Spadoni College of Education at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, S.C. Previously, Mark was dean of the College of Professional Studies at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and a professor and the associate dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Central Michigan University.

The staff and students of Grand Blanc School District in Grand Blanc, Mich. paid tribute to the late Lillian G. Mason, MA ’54 (elementary education), in December during a special ceremony outside the elementary school named for her in 2003. Mason, who died in August 2009 at age 83, was a devoted educator who served on the district’s Board of Education for 36 years, including 18 as president.

Gretchen (Sanford) Neisler, Ph.D. ’09 (higher education), teaching certificate ’98 (agriscience), is now serving as associate provost for strategic planning at Albion College in Albion, Mich. Sanford held several positions at MSU including, most

First-year Teachers Win Grants

First-year teachers Alison Keller and Matt Robydek, who graduated as elementary education majors in 2008, each wrote and successfully secured grants to create new learning experiences for their students.

Keller, who works as a technology facilitator at Lyon School in Glenview, Ill., purchased SMART Tables for each of the school district’s three primary schools with $20,000 from the Glenview Education Foundation. The tables feature an interactive touch surface and activities that promote collaboration and problem-solving skills.

Robydek received a grant from the Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan to implement an author study with his fifth-graders in Oxford, Mich. Robydek, who used the $500 to purchase books, sought additional resources when he noticed many students were lacking critical reading comprehension strategies.

PHOTO OF LILLIAN MASON PROVIDED BY THE FLINT JOURNAL

1st Lt. Nate Cave, (far left) BS ’07 (athletic training), was selected for the U.S. Army aviation program in April 2008 and is now serving as a Blackhawk pilot on a tour of duty in Iraq.
recently, assistant director of the Global Institute for Higher Education and project director of the Pre-service Teacher Education Program (Pre-step) in Pakistan.

**Sungworn Ngudgratoke**, Ph.D. ’09 (measurement and quantitative methods) received a bronze medal from the Office of National Research Council of Thailand for research on the quality of Thai science teachers he conducted while at MSU. He was the only education researcher honored by the council in 2009. Ngudgratoke is now an assistant professor teaching educational measurement and instrument development courses at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in the Nonthaburi province.


**Connie Tingson-Gatuz**, MA ’95, Ph.D. ’09 (higher, adult and lifelong education), received the 2010 Henry Gee Outstanding Mentoring Award from the NASPA Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community for impacting the student affairs profession through her support of others. Tingson-Gatuz is vice president for student affairs at Madonna University in Livonia, Mich.

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**Alumni Reunion Days**

If you received a degree from the College of Education in 1960 or before, you are invited to join Dean Carole Ames for a special breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m. June 4 at Erickson Hall. The college welcomes graduates back to campus for a 50-year reunion each year in conjunction with MSU Alumni Reunion Days. Come, re-connect with friends and share your memories. To register, visit www.msualum.com/reunion or call (877) 678-2586. Questions? Call (517) 355-1787.

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**Kinesiology Graduate Competes in Olympic Bobsled Competition**

Already an accomplished athlete, Michelle “Mickie” Rzepka traded towering heights for lightning speeds a few years ago. The former MSU pole vaulter’s venture into bobsledding soon led to top World Cup finishes—and a place on the world’s biggest stage.

Rzepka, a 2005 kinesiology graduate, took sixth place in the 2010 Olympic games in Vancouver. She competed as a brakeman for driver Shauna Rohbock, who won the Silver Medal in Torino.

“My dream as a girl was to be an Olympian,” Rzepka said. “You want to win and be on the podium, but I’ll take this experience with me forever. The competition was intense.”

Although Rzepka was unable to medal, she is able to say she represented Michigan State, Novi—her hometown—and America proudly throughout her time in Vancouver. Rzepka and Rohbock also posted start times within the top-four during all four heats.

“This is a new track, with speeds we’ve never seen before. All the drivers struggled,” Rzepka said. “But I’m happy that North America was represented well.”

U.S. teammates Erin Pac and Elana Meyers took home the bronze medal, just behind sleds from Canada earning the gold and silver.

While at MSU, Rzepka was an All-American and Big-10 indoor and outdoor pole vault champion. She joined the U.S. World Cup bobsledding team as a rookie in 2007, and finished in the top-10 in seven of eight World Cup races before heading to the Olympics.

> compiled by Nicole Geary, MSU Athletic Communications and the Associated Press

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www.msuspartans.com/sports/c-track/spec-rel/022410aag.html
www.nbcolympics.com/athletes/athlete=10881
During the final months of World War II, a far-sighted and significant piece of federal legislation was passed: The GI Bill of Rights. It was a dream come true for returning GIs and for our nation.

Idealistic and patriotic young men and women had joined the armed forces after growing up in the long depression, and many were not aware of their potential. While in uniform, they were trained to fly airplanes, command tanks, drive ships and secure, along with our allies, freedom for Europe, Asia and the Americas. They became confident with a can-do attitude that had proven its mettle in the crucible of history, and they wanted the opportunity for further education, to establish a career and to raise a family in a newly energized America.

America’s land-grant colleges and universities were, by purpose and commitment, the ideal institutions for the returning GIs. Michigan State College, as one example, was blessed with a president, John Hannah, who had a vision of his institution’s role and future. As peace returned, he marshaled all of the resources on the campus along the banks of East Lansing’s Red Cedar River. He knew what was to come, and he was right.

The flood of mature students necessitated a profound change at MSC. The new students were older, and they were goal-oriented, no-nonsense veterans who knew the difference between theory and practice, between talk and action, between success and failure. In many cases, the veterans were interested in graduate and professional education that had been postponed by the draft or their decision to step up and go to war.

President Hannah, with uncommon foresight and an uncanny ability to seize the moment, quickly converted MSC to a year-round operation. He also expanded the graduate program (particularly the College of Education, in anticipation of the predictable need for teachers), and he ramped up both continuing education and international education so students could be better prepared to accept responsibility in America’s new role as an international leader.

The College of Education’s walls were on the very edge of the Red Cedar, and it was this riverside college that was to play a formative role in the life of Philip Gannon. He was to become the founding president of Lansing Community College (just three miles downstream, on the banks of the Grand River) and a distinguished alumnus of both Albion College and Michigan State University.

When the war ended, U.S. Navy pilot Philip Gannon took a post as a science teacher in the Battle Creek, Mich. public school system. He was married and trying to decide whether to return to Duke University to continue graduate studies in biology or to enter the University of Michigan or Michigan State College to pursue a graduate degree in educational administration. Going to graduate school was going to be a financial challenge, even with the help of the GI Bill.

There was no affordable married housing at Duke or UM, but John Hannah and MSC said, “Welcome, veterans! We have affordable married housing in our barracks apartments.” Philip and Lois Gannon did the arithmetic, smiled at $29 a month for rent and utilities, and joined the Spartan family.

“The perfect runway”

Gannon’s memory of graduate study focuses on how well he was prepared for his career as president of Lansing Community College. Although there was a set core of basic courses dealing with leadership, budget and learning theory, there also was a large block of credit for independent study and research. An enterprising graduate student had to convince a faculty member to provide a guiding and protective wing. Fortunately for Gannon, the kindness and willingness of several professors, and the university’s initiation of this bold but ancient Socratic teaching method, made graduate school at MSC intellectually stimulating and the perfect runway from which to launch his professional career.

Several professors stand out in the memory of LCC’s founding president, including Carl Gross, Clyde Campbell, Wilbur Brookover, William Roe and John Useem.

Gross always pushed Gannon to take a philosophical position and defend it orally. One seminar had five students...
meet with Gross and top MSU administrators for lunch every other week. For two terms they engaged in no-holds-barred, dialogue-as-equals discussions about educational theory and its application.

Campbell set up a program in which Gannon regularly rode north with him to Belding, Mich., where Campbell was teaching an off-campus class. Campbell “picked a subject each week for me, and I would present it on the way up and defend it on the way home, finally summarizing my position with a short paper.”

Brookover arranged for Gannon to work with him in a local school district to develop a questionnaire, administer a random sample of it, test it for validity, analyze the returns and present it to the local school administration. Gannon recalls, “I quickly recognized the difference between theory and practice when I had to actually deliver a product that could help a school system. Results were my final grade.”

Useem allowed Gannon to undertake individual study under his guidance on topics in sociology and anthropology. Useem’s questions challenged the young Navy pilot’s understanding of society and culture, and fed Gannon’s childhood fascination with the ways various cultures solve problems and educate their young.

**“An irrevocable turn”**

Philip Gannon’s life took an irrevocable turn when he was working as a staff research assistant and graduate student in the Extension Urban Center on the Michigan State campus. Located in the new Kellogg Center, the Extension Urban Center conducted studies of all kinds for Michigan’s urban areas that paralleled the university’s land-grant service to farmers and agribusinesses. In 1956, the center was contacted by Lansing School District to determine the feasibility of establishing a technical college in downtown Lansing that could train employees for local businesses, the State Highway Department and local Oldsmobile factories. Gannon was selected by Lansing School District to conduct the feasibility study, and educational history has unfolded ever since along the banks of the Red Cedar and Grand rivers. During

If President John Hannah had not opened MSC’s door to returning veterans, and if he had not been quietly supportive of Philip Gannon and Lansing Community College, the confluence of the Red Cedar and Grand rivers might never have been paralleled by a confluence of practical educational ideas.
the early months after the founding of Lansing Community College in 1957, Gannon periodically called upon President Hannah for advice or a helping hand. Hannah never hesitated to give help, and over the years MSU always was a firm friend.

In 1957, the National Defense Education Act was passed. It emphasized science, mathematics and post-secondary technical education. Michigan also desired its junior colleges to become more comprehensive. These suggestions and principles were part of Gannon’s feasibility study that was accepted by the Lansing Board of Education. The board appointed Gannon to establish and lead the new college, and he further developed ideas, principles and objectives that were to become an integral part of LCC. For example:

- The college would operate year-round, day and evening, six days a week.
- Learning would be the constant and time the variable whenever possible.
- Mastery of subject matter would be primary, and breadth of material would be secondary.
- Programs would be of equal excellence and of varying difficulty.
- “Community” in “community college” would be defined as local, state, national and international.
- Self-paced instruction would be used wherever appropriate.
- The use of technology would be emphasized wherever it enhanced learning or efficiency of operation.

If President John Hannah had not opened MSC’s door to returning veterans, and if he had not been quietly supportive of Gannon and Lansing Community College, the confluence of the Red Cedar and Grand rivers might never have been paralleled by a confluence of practical educational ideas. This confluence spawned a community college that today educates and trains over 30,000 students per year just three blocks from our State Capitol.

“<full pucker ride>”

President Gannon retired from LCC in 1989 after leading and serving the “baby” he had birthed 32 years earlier. From 1989–1994 he did consulting work in the United Arab Emirates, Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam and Hungary. He and Lois, now married for 59 years, still are fit and active, and they revel in their summers at Long Lake near Traverse City, Mich., while providing leadership on various committees in their Shell Point Retirement Community during winters in Fort Myers, Fla.

For the past five years, the now 87-year-old Navy pilot spent his summer days in a hangar as he built a Challenger II airplane. Still exhibiting his “can-do” attitude, he flew The Spirit of Shell Point this past July. His flight from the tiny Thompsonville, Mich. airport paralleled his career. It was full of bumps and surprises, and shifting winds kept him fully alert, fully focused.

His description of his landing summarizes well his 32 years of leadership and service:

“I made my downwind run, turned left and started my descent. All was going satisfactorily until I neared the runway. Then a gust of wind hit me. I pulled the nose up, hit the throttle, bounced to a hard landing and stopped. I blinked, thanked God for taking care of old fools, and taxied to the hangar after what they say in the old Navy was a ‘full pucker’ ride.”

Retired Lansing Community College president Philip Gannon after his July 31, 2009 inaugural flight of the experimental aircraft he had built in the previous five years.

Retired Lansing Community College president Philip Gannon after his July 31, 2009 inaugural flight of the experimental aircraft he had built in the previous five years.
Alumni Association Honors Two Outstanding Graduates

**Distinguished Alumni Award**

Three-time MSU graduate Deborah Loewenberg Ball has undoubtedly become one of the most influential scholars in education, a force for transforming mathematics teaching and improving how the nation prepares teachers.

Now dean of the University of Michigan School of Education, Ball began her pioneering work on the mathematical knowledge needed for effective teaching (MKT) as a graduate student and then faculty member in the MSU College of Education. She has drawn on 13 years of experience as an elementary teacher in East Lansing and over $25 million in funded research to develop new understandings about math instruction to enhance student learning. Her work calls her to university classrooms and top-level panels and commissions for defining policy and standards. Known for building consensus, especially among educators and mathematicians, Ball was the first education trustee at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute. She also recently chaired the subgroup on teaching for the Presidential National Mathematics Advisory Panel.

Driven by a deep respect for the teaching profession, Ball contributes significantly to the national debate about restructuring teacher education and reflects those efforts through program changes now underway at UM. She has provided exemplary leadership and service to students as dean for the Presidential National Mathematics Advisory Panel.

Johnston Memorial Award for best article published in an AERA journal. She was elected to the prestigious National Academy of Education in 2007 and, in 2008, received the Louise Hay Award for Contributions to Mathematics Education.

Through her many accomplishments, Ball credits her commitment to K–12 schools, and her capacity to innovate and challenge, to MSU. She earned her bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from the College of Education and, when seated among fellow UM leaders in their robes and hoods for commencement, she wears her Spartan green.

**Outstanding Alumni K–12 Teacher Award**

A 1998 graduate of the MSU teacher preparation program, Greta McHaney-Trice has evolved from an enthusiastic teacher intern into a model educator who, as one nominator noted, “teaches wherever she goes.”

Second-graders at Forest View Elementary School in Lansing, Mich. are now the primary beneficiaries of McHaney-Trice’s powerful classroom methods, which rely on students’ questions and interests as a road map and grow out of a concern for engaging all learners. She also fostered parent involvement and high academic performance at Averill Elementary in Lansing School District during the first nine years of her career, starting in 1999.

McHaney-Trice, who received a master’s degree in curriculum and teaching from MSU in 2004, has opened her heart and her classroom to create learning experiences for many others along the way. Faculty members gladly send prospective teachers to observe her in action for the field component of their courses. Never too busy to serve her alma mater, McHaney-Trice is a committed teacher educator who has inspired teacher candidates to acquire higher standards and ambitions. She is also enthusiastic about professional development opportunities through research, and recently collaborated on a poetry teaching project with assistant professor Janine Certo.

McHaney-Trice’s commitment to diversity and social justice is evident through the many learning communities with which she associates. She is a planning co-chair for the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, a national panel focused on improving education for children from poor, minority and immigrant families. She also embraces diverse perspectives as a leader of LATTICE (Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-cultural Education) and has welcomed international scholars into her classroom. Said fellow LATTICE leaders: “We are always amazed by her ability to shine, even on cloudy days.”
Renowned educational assessment expert Rick Stiggins says he built his career on the basis of doctoral study in MSU’s College of Education. Now he hopes to help his alma mater become the nation’s leader on improving teacher training in assessment.

Stiggins, who received his Ph.D. in educational psychology in 1972, established the Rick Stiggins Endowment in Classroom Assessment at MSU to identify the barriers preventing pre-service programs from producing educators who can effectively use day-to-day assessment strategies with their students.

The U.S. has become overly obsessed with major standardized tests as a benchmark for achievement, Stiggins said. “It’s okay to think about accountability testing,” he said. “But unless teachers understand how to carry out productive day-to-day evaluations of student learning, then assessment will not reach its potential as a school improvement tool.”

The new endowment pays for faculty research, field testing and conferences, including a two-day seminar in Erickson Hall last January that was attended by representatives from seven education institutions across the country.

“Stiggins’ gift will enable the creation of a national, perhaps even international, network of teacher and principal educators who are invested and experienced in preparing teachers and administrators to use the range of assessments available to them,” said Suzanne Wilson, chairperson of the MSU Department of Teacher Education.

“The network will allow professionals to share research, best practices and curriculum that support the development of assessment literacy and expertise among all educators.”

Stiggins, who created the successful Portland, Oregon–based Assessment Training Institute for educators believes the MSU College of Education has the commitment and potential needed to generate widespread changes—starting with its own top-ranked teacher education program.

“MSU is, by reputation and reality, an international center for innovative thinking about teacher preparation,” he said. “It’s a high-powered place—and a place I love.”

A career comes full circle

Stiggins recalls working with great faculty members, including Lee Shulman, Robert Ebel and Joe Byers, who allowed him to create a doctoral study program that was rich with hands-on learning opportunities and tailored to his interests in measurement and evaluation.

His MSU experience provided the knowledge and skills he needed to serve as director of test development at ACT in Iowa City and later director of research and development in performance and classroom assessment at the Northwest Regional Educational...
Laboratory in Portland.

Stiggins soon turned his attention to classroom assessment exclusively and, in 1990, he and his wife Nancy Bridgef ord created the Assessment Training Institute (ATI) to support educators as they face the challenges of day-to-day assessment. The typical teacher spends a quarter to a third of their time involved in grading, testing and other assessment activities.

At ATI, Stiggins and his colleagues developed professional development experiences needed to fill chronic gaps in ‘assessment literacy’ among teachers and school administrators.

And the profitable business eventually gave him the means to give back. ATI is now owned by Pearson.

“This is a big thank you,” Stiggins said of his decision to invest in MSU, where his commitment to improving teacher practices will continue—and grow.

“Our dream is to create a consortium of institutions that want to collaborate in providing high-quality assessment training for their teacher candidates. But we have a lot to learn.”

You are cordially invited to select an educator to receive recognition at the College of Education capstone event. The Crystal Apple dinner on Friday, October 29, 2010 at the Kellogg Center will provide a forum for our donors to honor the accomplishments of educators whose excellence, commitment and passion represent the very best in education.

The College of Education Crystal Apple Award is a way to honor an educator, selected by a donor or group of donors, as being representative of excellence and commitment. The opportunity to select a recipient of the Crystal Apple Award is a benefit to donors of the College of Education Leadership Circle. The Leadership Circle is distinctive to the College of Education and is made up of individuals who are dedicated to supporting the efforts of the college through annual gifts of $1,500 or more. Groups of donors whose gifts total $1,500 are also able to honor an educator with this prestigious recognition. Undesignated gifts made in honor of these outstanding educators are designated for the Excellence Fund of the College of Education, which provides scholarship assistance to worthy students.

Teachers, professors, administrators and counselors—currently or previously employed in a learning community, from preschool through the university level—are eligible to receive the award. This is your personal statement; honorees need not be affiliated with Michigan State University.

The keynote speaker for the 2010 Crystal Apple Award dinner is Michigan’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mike Flanagan. Flanagan was appointed to his position by the State Board of Education in 2005. He directs the Michigan Department of Education; chairs the State Board of Education; and advises the State Board of Education, the governor and the state Legislature regarding public education in Michigan.

To honor the career of an outstanding educator, or to request additional information about the Crystal Apple Award, contact the development office at (517) 432-1983.
EDUCATORS RECEIVE RED-CARPET TREATMENT AT CRYSTAL APPLE AWARDS

The College of Education honored 21 professionals for outstanding careers in education during the 2009 Crystal Apple Awards. The event, held Nov. 20 at the Kellogg Center, featured an elegant dinner, a keynote address from MSU professor of economics Charles L. Ballard and tributes to each distinguished recipient.

The Crystal Apple Awards were established as a way for donors to recognize educators who played a significant role in their lives and who represent a commitment to the teaching profession. The opportunity to select a recipient is a benefit to donors in the College of Education Leadership Circle.

The 2010 Crystal Apple Awards will be held on Friday, Oct. 29. If you are interested in selecting a recipient, contact Julie Bird, assistant director of development, at (517) 432-1983 or birdjuli@msu.edu.

And the Winners are...

EDUCATORS RECEIVE RED-CARPET TREATMENT AT CRYSTAL APPLE AWARDS
Margaret Baldwin  
Principal, Colt Elementary School,  
Waverly Community Schools, Lansing, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: Ann Austin-Beck & John Beck

Marvin H. Bartell  
Executive director, Associated Colleges of the Chicago Area, Elmwood Park, Ill.  
NOMINATORS: John & Beth Haubenstricker

Maenette K. P. Benham  
Dean, Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii.  
NOMINATOR: The Richard Lee Featherstone Society

Lana Weiss Brown  
MSU Chicago Cohort Coordinator, Chicago, Ill.  
NOMINATOR: Cassandra Book

Deborah de Laski-Smith  
Interim dean, Graduate School and College of Health and Human Services, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich.  
NOMINATOR: Elaine M. Tripi

Lillian G. Demas  
Principal, International Academy of Macomb, Chippewa Valley Schools, Clinton Township, Mich.  
NOMINATOR: Barbara & Jim Markle

Gail M. Dummer  
Professor emerita, Department of Kinesiology, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.  
NOMINATOR: Janet Wessel

Worsie L. Gregory  
Director of magnet schools and programs, Lansing School District, Lansing, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: Fred & Janet Tinning

Don Hellison  
Professor of educational psychology and kinesiology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.  
NOMINATOR: Dan Gould

Sa'id Mahjoory  
NOMINATORS: Shahriar Ghoddusi & Shamsodkhit Shams

Jeri Mifflin  
Principal, Bennett Woods Elementary School, Okemos, Mich.  
NOMINATOR: Donna Forrest-Pressley

Ingrid Munck  
Professor emerita, Faculty of Education, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.  
NOMINATORS: Jack & Sharon Schwille

Karin Allor Pfeiffer  
Assistant professor, Department of Kinesiology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: Henry & Betty Montoye

William J. Price  
Professor of educational leadership, Department of Leadership and Counseling, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich.  
NOMINATOR: Jaclynn C. Tracy

Alysia D. Roehrig  
Assistant professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, College of Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla.  
NOMINATOR: Donna Forrest-Pressley

Harriet B. Rotter  
Attorney-at-law and counselor, former 12th grade teacher, Berkley High School, Berkley, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: Patricia Widmayer, Lawrence Widmayer & Lawrence Glazer

Amy L. Smitter  
Director of institutional development, Campus Compact, Boston, Mass.  
NOMINATOR: Jacquelyn Taylor

Carol P. Thorsen  
Paraprofessional and director, Okemos Special Needs Day Camp, Okemos Public Schools, Okemos, Mich.  

Christopher A. Wigent  
Superintendent, Wayne County RESA, Wayne, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: William & Karen Mayes

Carmelita K. Williams  
Professor emerita, Norfolk State University, Virginia Beach, Va.  
NOMINATOR: Patricia A. Edwards

Laurie Zittel  
Professor and director of graduate studies, adapted physical activity, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Ill.  
NOMINATOR: Janet Wessel

Harriet B. Rotter  
Attorney-at-law and counselor, former 12th grade teacher, Berkley High School, Berkley, Mich.  
NOMINATORS: Patricia Widmayer, Lawrence Widmayer & Lawrence Glazer

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Professor and director of graduate studies, adapted physical activity, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Ill.  
NOMINATOR: Janet Wessel
Teacher Leaders Need Training, Support

Melinda M. Mangin
Assistant Professor, K–12 Educational Administration

Across the nation, from large urban centers to small rural districts, many schools have turned to instructional teacher leader roles as a means to improve teaching and learning. To assist their teacher colleagues, instructional teacher leaders conduct professional development workshops, co-plan and model lessons, observe teaching and provide feedback, collect and analyze data, facilitate dialogue and reflective critique, and promote shared practices among peers. Performing this role requires extensive content knowledge as well as unique procedural knowledge—the ability to be both an authoritative expert and a trustworthy peer. Although these roles have expanded nationwide, few educational programs have been developed to meet the training needs of instructional teacher leaders. As such, many instructional teacher leaders are forced to “make it up as they go along,” a high-risk strategy when student learning is at stake.

The perception of instructional teacher leadership as a useful school improvement strategy is reflected in various large-scale reform efforts. Recently, instructional teacher leader roles have received support from federal initiatives including Reading First and the Math Science Partnership; private foundations, such as the Small Schools Coaches Collaborative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; comprehensive school reform models, such as America’s Choice and Success for All; and professional organizations, such as the National Staff Development Council. Each of these initiatives incorporates teacher leadership as a means to increase teachers’ and students’ opportunities to learn.

Present-day instructional teacher leader roles mark a departure from the teacher leader initiatives of the 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, positions such as master, lead and mentor teacher were seen as a way to decentralize authority, include teachers in shared decision making, improve morale, enhance teachers’ work and tap into previously underused resources. Despite the possible benefits, those positions were criticized for focusing on individual job enhancement rather than on collective improvement and for directing teachers’ energy toward managerial tasks instead of instruction. New roles for teacher leaders continue to tap teachers as an underused resource but focus more intentionally on collective instructional improvement.

Instructional teacher leaders face many challenges. They must be able to identify and address teachers’ learning needs with appropriate content knowledge. Teacher leaders must build trust with their teacher colleagues while simultaneously working to break down norms of teacher autonomy. They must negotiate the design and enactment of their role with school administrators who may not fully understand the aims of teacher leadership. These challenges are made more difficult by the lack of educational resources for instructional teacher leaders. While professional associations provide some assistance, universities have been uneven in their development of formal programs of study for aspiring and practicing instructional teacher leaders.

One of the key barriers to developing educational programs for teacher leaders is the historic divide between departments of teacher and administrator education. Traditionally, these have been viewed as distinct disciplines. Despite this disciplinary divide, some state departments of education have created teacher leader endorsements that are dependent, in part, upon completion of graduate level coursework in teacher leadership (e.g., Illinois, Louisiana and Georgia). In those states, institutions of higher education have been motivated to collaborate across departments to develop programs of study that provide the content and leadership knowledge necessary for effective instructional teacher leadership.

Even in the absence of teacher leader endorsements, the growth of instructional teacher leader roles necessitates greater collaboration between departments of teacher and administrator education. Not only would interdepartmental collaboration facilitate the development of high quality learning opportunities for instructional teacher leaders, it also reflects the kind of professionalism we encourage in K–12 schools.

“...many instructional teacher leaders are forced to “make it up as they go along,” a high-risk strategy when student learning is at stake.”

Melinda M. Mangin is the co-author, with Sara Ray Stoelinga, of Examining Effective Teacher Leadership: A Case Study Approach, published in January 2010 by Teachers College Press.
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