College of Education Gets $3 Million to Prepare Principals for Large Urban School Districts

The University of Texas at Austin College of Education’s Principalship Program has received a $3 million grant to develop urban secondary level school leaders who are trained to address the unique challenges of inner city school management.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the grant, which extends over five years and allows for the creation of the University of Texas Collaborative Urban Leadership Project (UTCULP). The UTCULP will partner with four high-needs urban Texas school districts that are serving around 14 percent of all Texas students living in poverty.

“We've already begun an urban leadership development program with Austin ISD,” says Dr. Michelle Young, UTCULP principal investigator and executive director for the University Council for Educational Administration. “This grant lets us extend the work we've started in Austin as well as begin similar programs with the school districts of Houston, Dallas and Harlandale.”

In addition to funding program planning and development, grant money also will be used for student scholarships and mentor stipends.

“Right now, principals in urban schools are staying in that job around three years before leaving,” says Young. “Obviously, there's an urgent need to address this problem of retention. The UTCULP is going to give us a chance to go to the source and ask the school districts about the problems they face and get feedback regarding solutions. We’ll examine the districts, create a curriculum and game plan tailored to their needs and then equip newly trained principals with information and skills that will help them thrive in an urban school district.”

Don’t Miss Out on the Celebration!

We’re Still Celebrating 125 Years of changing the world and we want you to join us! College of Education graduates are part of a family with a long and distinguished history. Since 1883, College of Education alumni have been making a difference in the world, whether it’s as a teacher in Lubbock, a policy maker in Washington, D.C., or a university leader in China. Our college prepares future leaders in fields as varied as counseling, principalship, curriculum development, sports management, coaching and health education—our graduates touch many lives and shape numerous fields of endeavor.

Whatever your profession and wherever you find yourself, if you’re a College of Education graduate, we’d love to hear your story! Check out the inspiring updates we’ve gotten so far and add yours to the list. See who's contributed from your class at our 125 Celebration website: www.edb.utexas.edu/education/alumni/125celebration/

We are at the halfway mark in a year of celebration, and so far:

- Over 1,500 alumni and friends have supported the College of Education with a contribution
- Over 150 alumni have responded and shared how they are changing their world

If you feel the pride in our college that we feel in you, please consider supporting our top-ranked students, nationally renowned faculty and award-winning research. Whether it’s a gift of $100 or a gift of $5,000, your generosity helps us continue to do great things. To find out more about the work that’s being done in the College of Education, read this newsletter and visit us at www.edb.utexas.edu/education/.

To take action and support a college that’s ranked third in the nation among public universities, turn to the back of this newsletter and fill out the contribution form. Don’t be left out of the celebration!
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Say What?
Bias against languages other than English hurts students, says scholar

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE a pop quiz. You'll need to read the following Ukrainian phrases, pronounce them aloud correctly, then write each phrase in English. And to keep it interesting, pretend I'm giving you these instructions in Ukrainian.

Govorit' povil'nishe?

Ya ne rozumiu.

Zalyšte mene u spokoji!

If you couldn't do this exercise, you obviously have a learning disability.

“When students who have limited English language proficiency fall behind in school or score poorly on important tests, teachers may assume they have learning disabilities,” says Dr. Alba Ortiz, professor of special education in The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education. “In reality, the students’ performance may reflect that they’re being assessed in a language they don’t understand or speak. Young children, of six, seven or eight years of age, are being asked to do a difficult, if not impossible task—learn English and at the same time learn subject content in a language they don't yet know. That's something that would challenge an educated adult.”

The term “English language learners” (ELLs) refers to students whose English language skills are so limited that they need the support of special language programs, such as bilingual education or English as a second language classes. Currently, there are about five million English language learners in the U.S., and in Texas, ELLs represent about 14 percent of the total student population.

According to Ortiz, there are many reasons why English language learners face steep challenges in school—everything from public sentiment against teaching them in their native language to a failure to offer a sufficient amount of time to become proficient in English before language support is withdrawn. Referrals to special education programs represent yet one more obstacle to their academic achievement.

An underlying reason that English language learners are referred to special education, states Ortiz, is that they share a number of characteristics with individuals who have learning disabilities. Like someone with a learning disability, an English language learner being taught in English may demonstrate poor comprehension, distractibility and low academic performance. Although these traits in ELLs reflect their limited knowledge of English rather than a disability, distinguishing the two groups is a complex task for educators who lack expertise in the education of English language learners.

“I dislike it when someone refers to the 'ills of bilingual education' because much of what English language learners need is the same as what all children require if they are to receive a good education. It's just that English language learners need instruction in their native language, along with a strong English as a second language program.

“Research shows that following a few basic principles can lay the foundation for a successful bilingual education program. Student academic achievement improves when there’s a focus on prevention of failure, early intervention for struggling learners, well-trained school staff and administrators, and native language instruction. Solid skills in one's first language are necessary for a strong grasp of a second language, and the goal is for students to become fully proficient in English.”

“There is a fundamental misunderstanding in this country about bilingual education and a fairly significant bias against languages other than English.”

—Dr. Alba Ortiz

Ortiz also stresses that it’s important to remember that “bilingual education” is not synonymous with English-language instruction for Spanish speakers. The languages involved in any bilingual education program are determined by geographic location and demographics. Around the country one can find bilingual education in French-English, Portuguese-English, Mandarin-English and dozens of other languages.

“There is a fundamental misunderstanding in this country about bilingual education,” says Ortiz, “and a fairly significant bias against languages other than English. This gets in the way of people understanding what a student who is learning a new language needs.”
From Japan With Love  by Angela Curtis

**ONCE A YEAR JUST** isn’t enough for Fumiko Tamura’s favorite birthday gift.

This annual gift isn’t one Tamura receives but one she gives—to The University of Texas at Austin.

“I’m trying to give every year on my birthday, December 12, and, if possible, between it,” says Tamura, who turns 83 this year.

Tamura’s fondness for The University of Texas at Austin dates back to 1984, when she enrolled as a graduate student in linguistics. By then she had already taught English for 20 years at Tokyo’s Jyosai University. She earned her doctorate at UT Austin in 1989 and returned to her native Japan to again teach English. She is still teaching, but it’s now to seniors at a Tokyo cultural center.

Tamura describes her time at Texas as the best of her life. Before starting her graduate studies she paid a visit to the University, talking to her future professors and strolling around campus. She saw friendly people who welcomed everyone, a pattern that continued throughout her years on campus.

“When you are away from home, sometimes you feel helpless, you need someone to talk to, you need someone to care for you, and UT is a place where you can get all that,” she says. “I owe what I am to UT—to the faculty especially,” she says.

Those influential faculty members included education professor John Bordie. On Tamura’s Commencement Day in 1989, she told Bordie what he had meant to her. He responded with one last lesson.

“I said, ‘I don’t know how to repay your kindness,’” Tamura recalls. “He said, ‘Don’t repay me, but give to those who need help.’ I remembered his words.”

She not only remembered them—she decided to live them. In addition to her regular outright gifts to the university, Tamura has included UT Austin in her will, creating an endowment for a graduate fellowship in foreign language education in the College of Education. She wants to help future English teachers who need financial assistance.

Tamura’s own career as a linguist began at age five as a neighbor of some not-so-nice English speaking children.

“The first English I learned was ‘It’s mine’ when they tried to take my toys away,” she says. “Also ‘Drop dead’ and ‘Go jump in a lake.’”

From a young age, Tamura wanted to visit other countries, but World War II delayed her plans. Being a young person in wartime Japan wasn’t easy. Tamura remembers going without food because of rationing. She enrolled in medical school to follow in her father’s footsteps but had to leave when her house was burned down during an air raid.

Throughout it all, her desire for education was a constant. After her stint in medical school, she decided she wanted to see that justice was done. She enrolled in law school but became disillusioned and transferred her major to English, receiving scholarships throughout her nine years of undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

English was the right fit. She sees language as a uniting force.

“English now is sort of the universal language,” Tamura says. “People should know the universal language. They should know the outside world more.”

But what makes The University of Texas at Austin a good place for learning about the world? When choosing an institution to support, Tamura investigated several universities—Texas stood out both academically and culturally.

“I believe that Texas probably is the best place for learning the language and learning about America, too,” she says.

They’re Teachers, They’re Students—And They’re Journalists!

A GROUP OF BILINGUAL education teachers getting their master’s degree at The University of Texas at Austin had an opportunity this spring to expand their horizons and give journalism a try.

In addition to teaching in Austin Independent School District (AISD) and attending graduate school, the students took on the role of columnist and wrote for *Ahora Sí*, a Spanish language publication produced by the *Austin American-Statesman*.

The graduate students are part of Proyecto Maestria, a collaborative program between the College of Education’s Department of Curriculum and Instruction and AISD. Students admitted to Proyecto Maestria have a chance to get in-depth knowledge about the education of linguistically and culturally diverse student populations, obtain advanced teaching skills and learn research techniques that will enhance their prospects for professional advancement. The AISD teachers who are part of the small, elite group complete the program while also teaching full-time.

“Elizabeth Villarreal-Perales, who is clinical supervisor and project director of the Proyecto Maestria grant, knows the *Ahora Sí* editor and asked if our students could contribute by writing a column that addresses Latino parents’ questions and concerns,” said Dr. Deborah Palmer, assistant professor and Proyecto Maestria program director. “Our students have written about a little of everything—how to handle the transition from elementary to middle school, consequences of too many absences or tardies, reasons to enroll your child in bilingual programs, what the PTA is and how to get involved in it and what to do if your child cries when you drop her off at school.”

To read one of the columns written by a Proyecto Maestria student, go to www.ahorasi.com/cuenta-anecdotas-a-tu-hijo/. To learn more about the program, please visit www.edb.utexas.edu/education/department/ci/programs/bbe/collaboratives/proyectomaestria/.
Autism on the Mind
Surprising region of brain may hold answers to autism, says neuroscientist

IN MARCH, OXFORD NEUROLOGIST Lady Susan Greenfield announced in the House of Lords, and in an interview with the United Kingdom’s Daily Mail, that she thinks social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace can “rewire” children’s brains and cause autism. This led countless panicked parents to ask at what age they should unglue their kids from computers to keep them from “catching” autism. Baroness Greenfield’s contribution rounds out an extensive list of suggested autism causes that includes vaccines, genetic errors, abnormal bowels, being an older mom when the child is conceived, being an older father when the child is conceived, air pollution, viral infections, too much TV watching and “bad parenting.”

Dr. Greg Allen, a neuroscientist in The University of Texas at Austin’s College of Education, can’t announce just yet that he has an airtight answer, but he’s on a promising track.

Since current data indicate around 1 in 150 children is diagnosed with autism, there’s a real sense of urgency for scientists in the quest for autism’s roots. “With autism, right now we’re faced with many questions and relatively few answers,” said Allen, who joined the Department of Educational Psychology last fall. “There are scientists trying to develop the best tools for diagnosing autism and there are others working on the best intervention methods, and then you have those, like me, who are trying to figure out what underlies the behaviors and symptoms of autism.

An abundance of inconclusive study findings and contradictory information has made it difficult for parents who want definitive answers from credible sources. Over the past 20 years or so, the cerebellum has consistently been found to be a site of brain abnormality in people with autism. Because of that, my approach involves using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to investigate the ways in which the cerebellum of a person with autism differs from that of a non-autistic person, and then to examine how that pathology contributes to the symptoms and behaviors of autism.”

According to Allen, the traditional view in the scientific community has been that the sole function of the cerebellum is to coordinate movement. However, over the past 10 or 15 years, scientists have reevaluated the cerebellum’s role and some have suggested that this neuron-rich region at the base of the brain also seems to affect cognition, emotion and the sensory domain.

During graduate school at UC San Diego, Allen began to do functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) brain scans, looking closely at the role of the cerebellum in attention. During an fMRI scan, the MRI signal changes when there’s a change in task, so Allen hoped that examining fMRI scans of autistic and non-autistic individuals’ brains would offer some insight into the role the cerebellum plays in the execution of attention tasks, as well as the role abnormal cerebellar functioning might play in autism.

That study laid the groundwork for follow-up investigations in which Allen showed that in autistic individuals, cerebellar activation is abnormally low during tasks involving attention and abnormally high during simple motor tasks.

“Understanding the connections within the cerebellum and between it and the rest of the brain may be a key piece to the puzzle of how abnormality in the cerebellum affects behavior and the symptoms of autism,” said Allen. “That’s the tip of the iceberg.”

Allen, who is the only researcher in Austin doing MRI scans to study autism, has received a $750,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health that will allow him to begin brain scans in April. He currently is actively recruiting high-functioning, autistic 18- to 26-year-olds for the project.

Former “Strongest Woman in the World” Inducted Into National Fitness Hall of Fame

DR. JAN TODD, who set more than 60 national and world records in women’s power lifting and was listed in the Guinness World Records for over a decade, has been inducted into the National Fitness Hall of Fame. Todd is the Roy J. McLean Fellow in Sport History at The University of Texas at Austin and co-director of the H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports, a repository for the largest physical culture collection in the world.

“When I began lifting weights in the early 1970s, there were few women who trained with barbells in the U.S.,” says Todd, who was dubbed “the strongest woman in the world” by many media outlets and athletes during her power lifting days. “And there were almost no other women who were interested in enhancing their strength and building muscle through training. After some of the media coverage I received—in Sports Illustrated, in People magazine and on television shows like Johnny Carson’s Tonight Show—I got letters and phone calls from all sorts of people. Track and field coaches, university athletes and women interested in power lifting wrote thanking me for not being afraid to lift in men’s contests and for speaking out on behalf of women.”

In addition to her international reputation as a pioneering female athlete, advocate, role model and scholar, Todd published best-selling books on fitness and weight training. With husband Dr. Terry Todd, who is a faculty member at The University of Texas at Austin and a former U.S. men’s power lifting champion, she wrote Lift Your Way to Youthful Fitness. The book was the first to argue that weight training could offset the aging process and the first to introduce to Americans the idea of organizing a personal fitness program by using the concept of periodization.

She has written over 100 articles on the history of exercise, strength and conditioning for academic and popular magazines and published Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful, a well-reviewed academic book on the history of women’s exercise. In 1990, she and husband Terry established a leading journal in the field of exercise studies called Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture.
Alcohol Advertising Targets Hispanic Students

Alcohol advertising is heavier around schools with 20 percent or more Hispanic students than near schools with a smaller Hispanic population, according to a new study from The University of Texas at Austin’s College of Education and the University of Florida’s College of Medicine.

Dr. Keryn Pasch, an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, wanted to determine if the number and content of alcohol-related advertisements within 1,500 feet of a school varied according to the ethnicity of the students at the school. Her study findings show that youth attending schools with 20 percent or more Hispanic students see an average of seven times more alcohol ads each day than students at schools with a smaller Hispanic population.

According to previous studies, Hispanic students are at higher risk for alcohol use than either white or African American youth,” said Pasch. “Exposure to alcohol advertising has been shown to increase alcohol use and intention to use alcohol, and marketers are aggressively capitalizing on the rapidly growing Hispanic population, targeting their marketing efforts at this group. Given these facts, I think it’s critical to determine if alcohol advertising around schools is related to the ethnicity of the students and, if it is, to take steps to reduce the exposure of high-risk groups to this negative influence.”

In Pasch’s study, of the 27 schools with 20 percent or more Hispanic students, each had around 29 alcohol ads in the immediate vicinity, in contrast to an average of four alcohol ads near schools with less than 20 percent Hispanic students.

Alcohol ads also were more likely to be on bars and liquor stores near the schools with a higher concentration of Hispanic students.

The study indicated that alcohol ad themes also varied according to the ethnicity of a school’s student population. Schools with 20 percent or more Hispanic students had more alcohol advertisements that employed Hispanic culture as a theme, and ads near these schools were five to 12 times more likely to use cartoons and animals than ads near schools with fewer Hispanic students.

“Alcohol advertising around schools with 20 percent or more Hispanic students used the culture of the community significantly more,” said Dr. Kelli Komro, principal investigator for the study and associate professor of epidemiology in the College of Medicine at the University of Florida. “Those ads employed visual elements like logos of local sports teams, Spanish words and symbols of Hispanic culture such as Mexico’s national colors. This may build brand recognition early on, putting youth at even greater risk for early onset and long-term alcohol use. Previous studies have shown that Hispanic youth are at higher risk for starting to use alcohol at a young age and for high-risk alcohol use.”

According to Pasch, the alcohol ads also were more likely to feature cartoons and animals. Past research has shown that youth tend to remember a product that is associated with these images and are more likely to use that product—in this instance, alcohol.

“Communities need to press for restrictions prohibiting alcohol advertising around schools,” added Pasch, “with special attention to the targeting of ethnic minorities by alcohol advertisers.”

Join the Conversation and Connect With the College of Education Online!
You can find the college on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/pages/Austin-TX/The-College-of-Education-at-The-University-of-Texas-at-Austin/62537731971?ref=nf>
and follow us on Twitter at: http://twitter.com/ut_coe.
$1.5 Million Will Help Create Tech-Savvy Teachers

PHILANTHROPISTS and long-time Texas education supporters John H. and Elizabeth “Libba” Shatto Massey have donated $1.5 million to The University of Texas at Austin’s College of Education to create the Elizabeth Shatto Massey Endowed Chair in Education.

Funds from the permanent endowment will be used to engage a nationally prominent scholar whose research and instruction will advance first-rate, innovative technology use in teacher education and to sponsor education conferences and visiting scholars.

The endowment also may be used to support research fellowships for doctoral students who work with the Chair holder.

“Libba and John Massey have been benefactors and friends of the College of Education and supported our work for so many years now,” said Manuel J. Justiz, dean of the College of Education. “This latest donation addresses a core priority in the college, which is to be leaders in innovation and research-driven teacher education. The Masseys have a keen grasp of the field of education and are insightful and future-oriented. They understand the importance of educating teachers who can seamlessly incorporate technology in their classrooms.”

The Masseys also have established the Elizabeth Shatto Massey Scholarship in Education and the Hill Bank & Trust Endowed Educational Scholarship Fund in the College of Education. These academic scholarships were created to benefit Colorado County youth who are preparing for a career in teaching.

Elizabeth Massey, a College of Education graduate and former public school teacher, is a longtime member of the College of Education’s Education Foundation Advisory Council and served as chair for three years. She is chair-elect of the Development Board of The University of Texas at Austin, a member of the Executive Committee of the University of Texas System’s Chancellor’s Council and co-chair of The University of Texas at Austin’s Campaign for Texas. She also is a member of the Texas Exes Board of Directors. The Elizabeth Shatto Massey Award for Excellence in Teacher Education, administered by the Texas Exes, recognizes exceptional University of Texas at Austin faculty who are engaged in teacher preparation. Mrs. Massey recently completed nine years of service as a trustee of Highland Park Independent School District.

“We envision that this endowment will help the college continue to investigate education policies, curriculum and technologies that combine to produce superior education outcomes,” said John Massey. “Libba and I believe in public education and feel there is no more important investment than in teachers and students. It is absolutely crucial that youth receive an education that allows them to enter the adult workforce and thrive in a 21st century economy. We want to help The University of Texas at Austin’s College of Education lead that effort.”

U.S. News & World Report magazine ranks the College of Education third nationally among public universities and seventh overall. The college is ranked number one nationally among public universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate programs and second in research expenditures among public universities. The College of Education is the highest ranked school or college at The University of Texas at Austin for the second year in a row.