

## El Pueblo Mágico The Magical Community

By Kris D. Gutiérrez & Jacqueline Hotchkiss

### Where the Playful Imagination and Rich Learning Come Together

Every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, students at Alicia Sánchez Elementary School eagerly meet their CU amigas/os in the school library that is transformed into the magical world of *El Pueblo Mágico*. But the excitement is not one-sided. When CU students are trading accounts of their weekend activities and course readings, they can often be heard sharing stories about the children with whom they work and play at *El Pueblo* Fifth Dimension after-school club. The traditional barriers of age, educational experience, social class, and language differences are “re-mediated” as ensembles of CU students and children take shape across the semester, as these new friends collaborate on a range of technology, science, and language-rich activities.



CU Students and children collaboratively create an AgentSheets game.

In this program, children in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade work with the assistance of university undergraduate and graduate students. Together, they engage in meaningful and complex learning activity that uses play, imagination, technology, and rich problem-solving and language tools all oriented toward STEM-related learning. For example, a visitor to *El Pueblo* would see CU students and children learning together in a technology-rich environment to develop computational thinking skills, new media practices such as digital storytelling, as well as opportunities to participate in gaming activities such as chess and in social media practices designed for youth. With regular access to the expertise and mentorship of CU student partners, children engage in long-term projects in which they have opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, investigate scientific and health-related topics, and gain expertise as designers in cyber environments. Currently, the program enrolls approximately 120-150 children, while also serving as the practicum site for approximately 50

undergraduates each semester.

*El Pueblo Mágico* is an innovative educational environment designed to open up access to rich forms of learning at the undergraduate and elementary school level. This dynamic enterprise is best understood as a “change laboratory” in which adults can experiment with new ways of teaching and learning, as children learn and participate with new media tools. A longstanding and favorite practice of all participants, both young and old, involves writing to a mythical cyber wizard, *El Maga*, in which children detail what they have learned, problems encountered, and a range of personal anecdotes about their own lives. Such rich literacy activities extend children’s language, reading, and writing capabilities.

Often, participating in and accomplishing these practices involves using both Spanish and English, as Spanish is one of the home languages for many of the children in the after-school program. In this learning environment where meaning-making and learning are privileged, students are encouraged to draw on their full linguistic toolkits to build new knowledge that will have value in school, at home, and in the communities in which they reside. In Gutiérrez’s work, using expansive linguistic toolkits to learn is referred to as *hybrid language practices*. At *El Pueblo Mágico*, hybrid language practices and new media practices support robust forms of learning that are made possible when children are encouraged to use a range of tools to make meaning of the world around them.

*El Pueblo Mágico* was developed in the Fall of 2010 by Professor **Kris Gutiérrez**, the Inaugural Provosts Chair and Professor of Learning Sciences and

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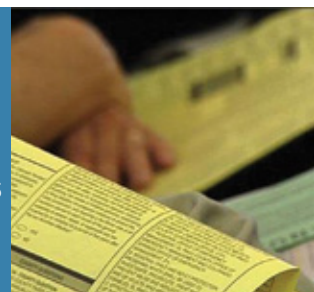
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## Message from the Dean



*Our faculty are committed to research that makes a difference. As a result, they are highly competitive by the standards of a major research university and at the same time bring great depth, expertise, and heart to their teaching and service.*

In my role as dean, I am often heard touting the accomplishments of our remarkable faculty to donors, legislators, and prospective students. Because it is my job to say such things, one might wonder if my claims are exaggerated or if I focus on the achievements of a few as if they were achieved by many. A little comparative data might help to make the case that honors and accolades are widely shared across faculty in all of our programs. Equally important, these world-class researchers – who study critically important problems of practice – are immersed in teaching and community outreach, so our students and school partners benefit directly from their expertise.

Ten of the School of Education's faculty have been named Fellows of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). This high honor is awarded to senior scholars for "exceptional scientific or scholarly contributions to educational research." With a total tenure-track faculty of only 33, this places CU Boulder second only to Stanford in the *proportion* of its faculty who have received this distinguished recognition.\*

Selection as an AERA Fellow is based on the candidate's sustained record of publication, the significance of these scholarly contributions, and other awards and honors. To offer just a few examples, Professor **Kathy Escamilla** is a Fellow

known across the country for her important research on biliteracy, which recognizes children's first language as a resource and builds toward proficient literacy in two languages. Professor and Fellow **Greg Camilli** has made extensive contributions to technical research in statistics and measurement but also to research on test bias and to various policy issues such as affirmative action in law school admissions and the effects of early education interventions. Professor and Fellow **Rubén Donato** is an educational historian who more than any other historian in the country has studied the educational histories of Mexican Americans, a minority group often overlooked in histories of the civil rights movement and the fight for equal schools. Professor **Margaret Eisenhart**, also a Fellow, is an internationally renowned anthropologist and ethnographer now importantly focused on introducing girls to career options in STEM fields.

At the same time that our senior faculty are confirmed to be world-class, our newer faculty were recruited because they showed great promise and already their achievements signal the quality and importance of their work. When **Erin Furtak** went to the White House to receive her Presidential Early Career Award, she was one of 96 young scientists to receive this distinction, but only one of two science *education* researchers in

this exceptional group. **Derek Briggs**, visible to the public because of his validity challenge to the *LA Times* story that ranked teachers based on test scores, won the 2012 Provost award for "a series of related publications that has made a significant impact on the field" and has just been named editor of *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*. CU awards fewer than a dozen Provost prizes each year campus-wide, and in the past 3 years, **Susan Jurow**, **Michele Moses**, and **Valerie Otero** have also won this award recognizing their ground-breaking research articles.

Our faculty are committed to research that makes a difference. As a result, they are highly competitive by the standards of a major research university and at the same time bring great depth, expertise, and heart to their teaching and service. I see it not as my job, but rather my honor to be singing their praises. ■

*Lorrie Shepard, Dean and Distinguished Professor  
Lorrie.Shepard@colorado.edu*

\*In absolute numbers only 11 other institutions have more AERA Fellows than CU Boulder: Stanford (26), Teachers College (18), University of Pennsylvania (14), Harvard (13), UCLA (13), University of Wisconsin (13), Vanderbilt (13), Arizona State (12), UC Berkeley (12), University of Michigan (12), and University of Minnesota (11). Vanderbilt also has the third best proportion of faculty recognized as Fellows, with 25% compared to CU Boulder's 30%.

## EL PUEBLO MÁGICO CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Literacy at CU Boulder's School of Education. Prior to coming to CU Boulder, Professor Gutiérrez designed and directed *Las Redes*, the prototype of *El Pueblo*. *Las Redes* became one of UCLA's longest standing University-

School partnerships and the context for the preparation of many future teachers. Like *Las Redes*, *El Pueblo* provides the context for novice teachers to implement new theories of learning and productive practices that support and extend children's learning. This link between theory and practice is supported by this *design experiment's*

structure and goal: to provide future teachers with new tools and sense-making opportunities in order to build and sustain robust teaching practices.

Toward this end, undergraduate novice teachers simultaneously enroll in an undergraduate Learning Sciences course (EDUC 4411) and a practicum, *El Pueblo Mágico*, designed around the very theories and practices the prospective teachers are learning in their university course. With extensive support from course and site instructors, undergraduate students develop new ways of thinking about teaching and learning, particularly with youth from low-income and non-dominant communities. In short, undergraduate students who participate in the program learn rich theories

of learning through their coursework and have opportunities to make deep connections between theory and practice through their semester-long participation as partners with the children at *El Pueblo Mágico*.

*El Pueblo Mágico* leverages the support of grants from the National Science Foundation and funds from the School of Education, awards from the Chancellor STEM Initiative, CU Outreach, and the CU Learning Assistant Program, as well as the efforts of an interdisciplinary team of CU-Boulder faculty and graduate students. Program partners include Computer Science Professors **Gerhard Fisher** and **Alexander Reppening**, designer of AgentSheets Incorporated. Program staff members also are currently collaborating with **Nicole Pinkard** of DePaul University to



## In the \$1 Million Challenge to Support CU Teach Every Dollar Counts... Twice!

As you have read in this newsletter before, CU Teach is a nationally recognized program that recruits promising undergraduate students majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) into K-12 teacher education. Early efforts are paying off: CU Boulder has nearly doubled the number of students graduating with a bachelor's degree in a STEM field and a teaching certificate, and almost two-thirds of the program's graduates are teaching in Colorado – many of whom are working in under-resourced schools in Denver and the Front Range.

Just as CU Boulder is a nationally recognized leader in transforming STEM Education, national experts from the School of Education, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the College of Engineering work collaboratively to make CU Teach such an effective program. Professors **Valerie Otero** of the School of Education and **Mike Klymkowsky** of the Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology department serve as Co-Directors. Master teachers **Julie Andrew**, **Kim Bunning**, and **Emily Weller** (all veteran K-12 teachers) collaborate with full-time teachers in local districts to mentor future teachers and bring state of the art science and math into the schools. Other highly involved scholars from the School of Education include **Erin Furtak**, **Vicki Hand**, and **Laslo Vass**.

bring the iRemix social network to *El Pueblo Mágico*. Current staff members include: **Kris Gutiérrez** (Principal Investigator); **Michelle Drummond**, **Jackie Hotchkiss**, and **Sara Staley** (site coordinators); and **Susan Jurow**, **Andrea Bien**, and **George Ortiz** (instructional team).

Professor Gutiérrez and the project team believe that *El Pueblo Mágico* can serve as a prototypical model of outreach efforts that leverage the expertise of the university and community to improve the learning experiences of underserved youth toward new futures in school, universities, and beyond. The team is exploring opportunities to scale-up the program across schools in the Boulder Valley and other Colorado school districts and even across the CU system (including Colorado Springs and Denver).

In recognition of the importance of this interdisciplinary program, the **National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI)** will generously match dollar-for-dollar all contributions to CU Teach up to \$1 million. *But the matching gift opportunity window is closing on December 31, 2012.*

Given the direct impact on today's students, CU Teach is a meaningful way for alumni to give back to the School of Education. Indeed, the **Class of 1961** has been inspired to do just that.

When each CU graduating class prepares to celebrate its 50th reunion – in addition to the elaborate planning of traditional gatherings and an emotionally charged walk into Folsom Field wearing cap and gown to graduate again – the reunion committee selects a campus-wide project that needs financial support. The class of 1961 chose to support CU Teach as a project with impact and reach, and has contributed almost \$14,000 – bringing the total value of their gift to nearly \$28,000 with matching funds from NMSI.

**Gary Gisle** (Mktg '61), a reunion committee member, was so taken with the success of CU Teach that he is leading the charge to ask his class to continue supporting the program this year. He recently said, "Providing talented teachers for our grandchildren and great grandchildren is a living legacy that we

The dual goal of improving the educational circumstances of all youth, while increasing the opportunities for novice teachers to become thoughtful, well-prepared teachers is a 21st Century goal that all institutions of higher education should strive to achieve. From this perspective, *El Pueblo Mágico* is more than an after school/university course effort; rather, it is designed to build sustainable partnerships between school communities and the university in ways that increase access to rigorous and meaningful learning for children and their future teachers. ■

*Kris D. Gutiérrez is Professor of Learning Sciences and Literacy at the CU School of Education. Jacqueline Hotchkiss is a doctoral student in Educational Psychology & Learning Sciences.*

should all be proud to support – especially when some of the best teachers are fellow Buffs!"

We couldn't agree more...

To date the matching gift total is nearly \$600,000. Please consider joining the laudable efforts of the Class of 1961 toward the \$1 million challenge, and helping the next generation of teachers with a gift to CU Teach.

Contact **Margot Neufeld**, Senior Director of Development at (303) 541-1475 or at [margot.neufeld@cufund.org](mailto:margot.neufeld@cufund.org) to make a gift today, or mail a donation using the enclosed postage-paid envelope. And if possible, consider asking your employer to match your gift, effectively quadrupling your contribution! ■



### dream big

Turn your dream of leaving a legacy gift into a reality by naming the University of Colorado Foundation as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), 403(b), insurance policy or commercial annuity.

### leave a legacy

Your dreams can support people, places and programs across the university and what's near and dear to your heart.

### contact us

To learn more about how your IRA can fund your legacy dream, contact **Margot Neufeld at 303.541.1475 or [margot.neufeld@cufund.org](mailto:margot.neufeld@cufund.org).**



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# HEADLINES



Erin Furtak

## Erin Furtak Receives Presidential Early Career Award

Assistant Professor Erin Furtak was one of four CU Boulder faculty members and 96 researchers nationwide to be named as recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). The PECASE awards are the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers. Awardees are selected for their pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology and their commitment to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education or community outreach.

Dr. Furtak was honored for developing new tools to support high school teachers in building the content knowledge and teaching skills needed to understand student perceptions regarding natural selection. She is working on-site with teachers at three high schools in Jefferson County over the course of four years to help them learn to use the tools to adapt instruction in order to meet students' needs and enhance their learning.

The White House cited Dr. Furtak "for innovative research on how professional development focused on learning progressions increases teacher knowledge and student achievement, and for working with schools and teachers to implement such professional development in diverse settings." Her PECASE award is funded by the National Science Foundation.

"We could not be more pleased to have these four talented people join our growing ranks of young faculty at CU Boulder who have been named PECASE award winners by the White House," said CU Boulder Vice Chancellor for Research Stein Sture. "These are the kind of exceptional young faculty members we strive to attract, and the types of individuals who we know will make a difference in the world through their high-caliber teaching, research and outreach."

"Discoveries in science and technology not only strengthen our economy, they inspire us as a people," President Barack Obama said. "The impressive accomplishments of today's awardees so early in their careers promise even greater advances in the years ahead." ■

(Excerpted from <http://www.cualum.org/2012/07/23/pecase-awards-2012/>)

## CU Boulder to Host 11th International Conference of the Learning Sciences

CU Boulder has won a bid to host the *International Conference of the Learning Sciences* (ICLS) June 23-27, 2014. ICLS is one of two major conferences in the learning sciences, a field of scholars that includes cognitive scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and content experts in a wide range of disciplines.

The conference theme, "Learning and Becoming in Practice," will highlight the ways that learning is intertwined with identity, that is, how learning always entails becoming a certain kind of person. Keynotes and sessions will focus on three kinds of practices in which people learn: the practices of disciplines; everyday cultural practices in communities; and the practices of

designing and making things.

The Coordinating Committee includes several CU faculty: **Susan Jurow** and **Bill Penuel** (co-chairs), **Kris Gutiérrez**, **Vicki Hand**, **Kevin O'Connor**, and **Joe Polman**.

**Bill Penuel** notes that CU's campus-wide support for the conference was key to winning the bid: "The in-kind support from the Provost, as well as the School of Education, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Institute of Cognitive Science and the Department of Computer Science, the Institute for Integrating STEM Education speaks of the broad support for learning sciences research at CU." ■

## Inquiry Hub (NSF) Connects Research and Practice in Math & Science Education

Professor Bill Penuel is a co-Principal Investigator in a \$2.5 million dollar award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the *Inquiry Hub*, an innovative platform for helping teachers customize and adapt reform curricula in mathematics and science. As part of the new project, which is being led by Tamara Sumner, Associate Professor of Cognitive and Computer Science and Engineering at CU, a team of CU researchers and

software developers will work in partnership with district leaders and teachers to design tools that can help teachers implement teaching practices consistent with the new Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and with the Next Generation Science Standards. A key aim is to develop a scalable, sustainable model of digital curriculum development that can support districts in transforming teaching and learning at scale. ■

## Affirmative Action Under Fire

### Quantifying Influences in the Defeat of Colorado's Amendment 46

By Amy Farley,  
Matthew Gaertner,  
and Michele Moses

**Amy Farley** is a PhD candidate in Educational Foundations, Policy, and Practice. Her research broadly focuses on educational policy analysis, and how policies and reform efforts affect low-income students, students of color, and other traditionally underserved populations. Her dissertation research specifically examines the disproportionate impact of ballot initiatives on minority groups. Ms. Farley was awarded a Strategic Data Partner fellowship through Harvard University and the Colorado Legacy Foundation for 2012-2014.



**Matthew Gaertner** is a Research Scientist in the Psychometric & Research Services division at Pearson, and an affiliate of Pearson's Center for College and Career Success.



He earned a Ph.D. in Research and Evaluation Methodology from the CU Boulder School of Education, where he was named

the 2011 Outstanding Doctoral Graduate. His methodological interests include multilevel models, categorical data analysis, and Item Response Theory. Substantively, his research focuses on the effects of educational policy reforms on student access, persistence, and achievement. Dr. Gaertner's research on affirmative action has been recognized by numerous professional organizations.

**Michele S. Moses** is Professor of Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice at the University of Colorado Boulder. She specializes in philosophy and education policy studies, with particular expertise in higher education policy issues related to race, class, and gender, such as affirmative action and equal opportunity policies. Dr. Moses received the 2009 AERA Early Career Award for her contributions to education research that integrate philosophical foundations with both legal frameworks and empirical approaches.



In June of 1965, speaking to the graduates of Howard University, President Lyndon B. Johnson passionately argued for equal opportunity: “*You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and justly believe that you have been completely fair*” (Johnson, 1966).

These words continue to define the terms of the affirmative action debate today. In fact, in the 2003 *Grutter* decision, Justice O'Connor argued that “Twenty-five years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today.” In response to the court's claim that affirmative action would soon be rendered “unnecessary,” Prudence Carter (2009) argued that “a postracial nation is not one that remains segregated... [and that] we now have to ask whether the powerful impact of both accumulated and contemporaneous disadvantages will keep many poor racial and ethnic minorities wedged at the bottom of the U.S. opportunity structure” (p. 290). Although Carter – and many other scholars – argue that systems of oppression and inequality more than necessitate equal opportunity programs on the basis of race, opponents have long held that affirmative action policies exacerbate inequalities and unfairly discriminate.

Last spring, the urgency of this debate was amplified when the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Fisher v University of Texas*, the first case regarding the use of affirmative action in higher education since the 2003 rulings in *Gratz and Grutter* confirmed the constitutionality of admissions policies that facilitate racial diversity. Largely perceived as a threat to this ruling, *Fisher* marks a major milestone in a 50-year debate regarding affirmative action and opportunity – a debate that has been largely fought in the courts and at the ballot box. We feel strongly that as the *Fisher* case quickly approaches, it is critical that the research community engage in the conversation surrounding affirmative action policies and politics.

#### Colorado Context – Affirmative Action Affirmed at the Ballot Box

In 2008, Colorado voters struck down

an anti-affirmative action ballot initiative – one that has passed in every other state where it has been presented to voters. Following that election, we wanted to explore the defeat in Colorado and associated trends in voting behavior, public opinion, and access to information regarding affirmative action. We also sought to use the election as a vehicle for exploring the larger context of affirmative action and the use of direct democracy to make decisions about divisive social policy issues.

To that end, we gathered quantitative data via a survey administered to a stratified random sample of Coloradans who voted in the 2008 election. The survey includes questions on:

- voting behaviors*, including (i) how respondents voted on Amendment 46 and the presidential election, (ii) political party affiliation, (iii) whether respondents voted no “straight down the ballot,” and (iv) their interpretation of a “yes” vote on Amendment 46;
- influences of various campaign activities and public media*;
- demographic information*;
- attitudes toward affirmative action*, for which we employed a “latent trait” approach to survey design – using a battery of survey items to estimate individuals’ attitudes toward affirmative action.<sup>1</sup>

Exploratory analyses suggest that our sample of voters was generally representative of the population of registered voters in Colorado with respect to gender, race, party affiliation, and geographic location.

Using this data, we explored (a) general patterns in voter attitudes and the distribution of Amendment 46 votes, including an analysis of confusion surrounding the intent of the amendment; (b) factors that predict voting behavior and significantly influenced the vote; and (c) qualitative responses where respondents describe the text of the initiative in their own words.

**General Patterns in Voter Attitudes, Voting Behavior, and Voter Confusion.** In total, attitudes toward affirmative action were strongly related to political

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Investigating the Defeat of Colorado's Amendment 46  
An Analysis of the Trends and Principal Factors Influencing Voter Behaviors

## EYE ON RESEARCH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

partisanship and demographic variables: Democrats had significantly more positive attitudes than Republicans, and women and people of color had more positive attitudes than men and white respondents. On the contrary, the relationship between affirmative action attitudes and voting behavior is not as strong as one would expect, given that Amendment 46 should be, in theory, a focused referendum on attitudes toward affirmative action. The difference between those who voted “yes” and those who voted “no” is less than one half the difference between Democrats and Republicans. This suggests that voting behaviors may be driven by factors other than attitudes toward affirmative action.

In fact, if Amendment 46 were a genuine reflection of voters’ attitudes toward affirmative action, we would expect to find a monotonic relationship between voting behaviors and attitudes for all respondents. And yet, this is not what we found: Many respondents with positive attitudes toward affirmative action reported voting to *eliminate* affirmative action policies in Colorado. In fact, the majority of voters reported they believed a “yes” vote was in *favor* of affirmative action, when it would really eliminate equal opportunity programs in public education, contracting, and employment. Regardless of whether or not these voters intended to support affirmative action, more than half of the sample was confused about the meaning of the amendment.

**Statistical Models of Voting Behavior:** To estimate the extent to which the potentially confusing language of the initiative influenced the outcome of the vote, we modeled the probability of a “yes” vote on a battery of independent variables, including attitudes toward affirmative action, confusion over initiative intent, and additional covariates – college education, consultation of information/media and formal voting recommendations, and the influence of campaign activities.

Results from these analyses suggest that confusion exerts a powerful influence on voting behavior: Holding all other variables constant, someone who is confused about the intent of Amendment 46 is nearly 4.5 times more likely to vote “yes” than someone who is not confused.

There is also evidence of a powerful interaction between attitudes and confusion, suggesting that the effects of confusion are magnified for individuals with positive attitudes toward affirmative action. This interaction effect illustrates a critical finding: Not only was confusion widespread, it was also directional. Voters with positive attitudes toward affirmative action were more likely to be confused, and they were also much more likely to vote “yes” once confused.<sup>2</sup>

**Open-ended Response Analysis.** Results from the analysis of the open-ended responses further underscore this central point: Alarming few voters could accurately explain the consequences of the passage of Amendment 46. In addition, our analyses suggest that although the initiative text explicitly prohibits both discrimination and preferences, voters seem to connect more deeply with the concept of discrimination – which is perhaps not surprising given the similarity between the initiative text and the Civil Rights Act. Finally, a large group of voters specifically cited the initiative’s impact on a protected group of citizens *not* included under Amendment 46 (e.g., on the basis of socioeconomic status, age, or sexual orientation); this seems to suggest some citizens mistakenly conflate these “civil rights initiatives” with broader anti-discrimination laws and policies that constitute a significant part of the political discourse (e.g., marriage equality laws).

### Voter Confusion – Intentional or an Artifact of the Initiative Process?

Prior to the 2008 election, reports of voter fraud and deception surrounding Amendment 46 garnered significant attention in the national media. In just one example, the *New York Times* ran an article recounting the experience of a 78-year-old African-American woman who claimed she was tricked into signing the initiative’s petition (Frosh, 2008). A formal fraud challenge was also brought before the Colorado courts, which further claimed that signature gatherers had deceived voters signing petitions by misrepresenting the potential impact of the legislation (Ballotpedia, n.d.). The prevalence of similar complaints in other states considering anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives suggests that something undesirable, and potentially deceitful, is transpiring in the political machinery known as the ballot process

(Associated Press, 2008; Michigan Civil Rights Commission, 2006).

Responding to claims of voter fraud and allegations that proponents of Amendment 46 intentionally misled voters in order to garner signatures, Vincent Carroll, a staff writer for the *Rocky Mountain News*, argued that it is “a sad state of affairs when people must fight a ballot initiative by admitting they were bamboozled by simple English” (April 4, 2008). While we disagree with the disrespectful tenor of Mr. Carroll’s representation of Colorado voters, we do agree with one point: It is, in fact, a sad state of affairs when voters are “bamboozled.”

According to our analyses, voter behavior was driven by two primary, interacting factors: voter attitudes and the language of the initiative.

Holding affirmative action attitudes and demographic covariates constant, those who misunderstood the intent of Amendment 46 were considerably more likely to vote “yes.” Our results therefore substantiate claims of voter confusion, a longstanding point of contention between both opponents and supporters of anti-affirmative action initiatives.

As affirmative action in higher education once again moves to the forefront of public debate with *Fisher v. University of Texas*, it is all the more important to gain clarity about the policy and the discussion surrounding it. At a minimum, these findings suggest the need for clarity in ballot initiative text. However, they also caution against the unrestricted use of ballot initiatives to make education policy decisions, especially those that affect underrepresented students in particular. In moving forward, we urge voters and policymakers to consider the implications of education ballot initiatives – and any potential prohibition of affirmative action – on democracy, equal opportunity, and justice. Only if voters are able to cast a meaningful vote – that is, they know what they are voting for and understand the likely effects – can the results of ballot initiative elections reflect accurately the interests of the people. ■

<sup>1</sup> Exploring these attitudes with stand-alone survey items (e.g., asking directly if participants support affirmative action) oversimplifies a complex question, and tends to yield unstable and sample-dependent results.

<sup>2</sup> While confusion could have caused voters with negative attitudes toward affirmative action to inadvertently vote “no” on 46 (thus artificially inflating the tally of “no” votes in the 2008 election), our analyses suggest that the majority of voters who were confused had positive feelings toward affirmative action.

# Elders and Youth Share Experiences and Ideas

## In the Intergenerational Reading Project



Professor **Anne DiPardo**'s work with intergenerational literacy programs has taught her that when elders and adolescents are afforded opportunities to engage around ideas and stories, connection, discovery, and wonderment often ensue. With funding from a CU Outreach grant, Anne is working with graduate student **Mike Wenk** and Instructor **Donna Begley** on a project that connects Centaurus High School students studying their local community with residents at a local assisted living facility.

This work supports the needs of teachers as well as our teacher-education students. As the Centaurus 9th grade Language Arts team designs a new nonfiction reading and writing curriculum keyed to revised state standards, CU faculty and students will enjoy opportunities to participate in planning conversations and help with implementation. The project team will assist in generating ideas, gathering community resources, and coordinating activities between the 9th grade classrooms and a reading circle at the nearby Legacy Assisted-Living Facility. In the coming months, the team will read aloud to elders some of the same works that the young people are reading, and the groups will exchange responses and reflections both digitally and in periodic face-to-face meetings.

This project provides opportunities for 9th graders to learn about their

local context, connect with long-time residents, and find ways to make their voices heard in discussions around city planning. For the elders, it offers opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations about the history and current state of the community, and to ponder questions and issues in relationship with young people. Our CU pre-service teachers will hone their ability to give useful written and oral feedback on drafts of the students' writing as well as witnessing first-hand a dynamic process of standards-based lesson planning.

Ninth grade students who participated in a similar project last year spoke of how their interaction with elders added to their understanding of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. One student said, "It made it fun, because it wasn't just a book you would read and do a test on. There was more to it." After a field trip to the assisted-living facility to discuss the book with elders, another student stated, "If you asked me what the highlight of my day was, I would say being with the elderly people and learning about their lives and experiences." This year, Anne, Mike, and Donna are witnessing once again the power of the written word to stimulate conversation and forge relationships around shared engagement in experiences and ideas. ■

## Gloria Ladson-Billings Delivers Keynote

Each year, the School of Education, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Graduate School jointly host *The Best Should Teach Awards & Lecture*, where CU Boulder faculty, public school teachers, and lead graduate teachers are honored. Once every three years, the School of Education chooses the speaker for the Ira and Ineva Baldwin Lecture. This August, we were thrilled to feature **Gloria Ladson-Billings**, Professor of Urban Education as well as Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In her keynote address, "*Getting Serious About Education: Cultivating Culturally Relevant Teachers for New Century Students*", Dr. Ladson-Billings connected the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy to the mindsets of "new century students" who are adept in constantly-evolving

technologies and bring an impassioned interest in critical thinking and innovation.

First, teachers must *support student learning* by holding a goal of mastery for every student, rather than sheer coverage of the curriculum. Second, teachers need to *develop cultural competence* in both their students and themselves by being "firmly grounded in his or her culture of origin and fluent in at least one other culture." Third, it is critical that teachers *encourage sociopolitical consciousness* by engaging students "directly in the social and civic concerns of their schools, communities, localities, nations, and the world."

From the School of Education, Professor **Kris Gutiérrez** was recognized with a Gold Award for exemplary faculty teaching, and doctoral candidate **Sara Staley** received a Silver Award as an outstanding Lead Graduate Teacher in the Social Sciences. ■



Gloria Ladson-Billings



## Over 200 Attend *The Literacy Squared® Summer Institute*

Dr. Kathy Escamilla (Principal Investigator) and her team hosted the Literacy Squared® Summer Institute, June 27-29, 2012 in Estes Park, Colorado. Over 200 educators, administrators, and researchers from 12 states attended the institute in order to re-conceptualize instruction for emerging bilingual students using the Literacy Squared® program model for biliteracy. ■



Kristen Davidson, Ken Howe, Jarrod Hanson, David Meens, Michele Moses, and Adam York discuss the civic aims of integration at a Philosophy of Education Café.

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

# Bringing Intelligent Action to Education Research and Practice

by Kristen Davidson

*Quantitative and qualitative inquiries should inform each other and likewise engage with the insights offered by the humanities.*

In recognition of his contributions to philosophy of education, Professor Ken Howe has been elected president of the Philosophy of Education Society (PES) for the term March 2013-14. Being selected for this position is the highest honor for a philosopher of education in the country.



Ken Howe

Professor Howe will advance a theme of “Philosophy, Education, and Non-Ideal Theory” as a focus for inquiry and dialogue within PES. As opposed to philosophical thought that begins from an idealized conception of justice with the aim of informing action, non-ideal theory uses an interrogation of actual conditions to inform theories of justice and democracy. For example, Elizabeth Anderson (2010) examines the conditions of segregation in contemporary society and argues that a defensible conception of democracy entails social integration.

Professor Howe’s interest in non-ideal theory stems from his pragmatist orientation in philosophy, which has roots in the work of John Dewey. Dewey and other pragmatists emphasize that social research cannot be disconnected from the humanities. Rather than claiming to provide a “value-free” measure of human activity from the outside-looking-in, social research is in fact a process *within* human action. For one, the very concepts used in research – such as “achievement” and “disability” – have meanings and value to a certain group of people in a certain context. And two, the processes and outcomes of investigation have important social consequences. Therefore, as Howe explains, social research is *value-laden*.



John Dewey

Indeed, the field of philosophy of science has long invalidated the distinction between facts and values along with the tenet of positivism that there is an objective state of conditions “out there” that can be approximated. Yet the contemporary paradigm of “scientific educational research” has turned toward an emphasis on empirical research methods with the aim to do just that, while marginalizing the role of the humanities. To this end, Professor Howe’s work in bringing the insights from the collapse of positivism in philosophical thought to education research has had a profound impact.

In *Closing Methodological Divides: Toward Democratic Educational Research*, Howe contests what had until then been a deep division among education researchers: that at their core, quantitative and qualitative methods have different epistemological bases that cannot be reconciled. He shows that because quantitative methods cannot be based in a positivist project that is false at its base, quantitative and qualitative lines of inquiry can fruitfully work together within a more comprehensive, pragmatic framework. As each approach serves different and valuable purposes, quantitative and qualitative inquiries should inform each other and likewise engage with the insights offered by the humanities.

Howe’s work has gone beyond methodological issues, arguing that the relationship of education research and practice with the public cannot be ignored. Once it is acknowledged that research and practice are value-laden, the next step is to recognize that they must include (or at least represent) the perspectives of all stakeholders. This inclusive approach entails a *participatory* conception of democracy that involves dialogue and deliberation. Howe’s analyses and arguments on this topic exemplify the integration of evidence-based policy and practice with democracy, diversity and social justice that are at the heart of the School of Education.

Graduate students in the School of Education can learn more about how philosophy can inform their work through several courses offered by Professor Howe and Professor Michele Moses: *Ethics in Educational Research*, *Philosophical Issues in Educational Research*, *Philosophy of Education*, and *Theoretical Issues in Education Policy*, as well as relevant courses offered by the philosophy department. Professors Howe and Moses also meet biweekly with interested graduate students in a Philosophy of Education Café to engage in thoughtful discussion of readings chosen by the group.

Dewey explains that reflective thought is characterized by a careful weighing of evidence as well as a consideration of the consequences of any hypotheses that are developed. In other words, before taking action, one must fully consider the potential consequences of that action in light of the evidence. This type of deliberation leads to what Dewey calls *intelligent action*. For leading us in this direction, the School of Education is grateful for the influential thought of Ken Howe. ■



# Welcome New Faculty

## education • views



**Bridget Dalton** is Associate Professor of Literacy Studies. Dr. Dalton focuses on the design and study of scaffolded digital literacy environments to improve students' reading, composing, and engagement. Informed by a universal design perspective, she pursues two lines of research: (1) The role of enhanced e-text on students' comprehension and vocabulary learning; and (2) How students compose with multimodal tools and media.

Previously, Dr. Dalton taught at Vanderbilt University and the University of Guam. She has published numerous articles and chapters

on technology, literacy, and struggling readers. Dr. Dalton is currently on the review board of *Reading Research Quarterly* and *Language Arts*. She has served as co-editor of the International Reading Association's peer-reviewed journal, *Reading Online*, and received the association's award for research on computers and reading. She is also co-author of the award-winning software program, *Thinking Reader*.

Dr. Dalton earned her EdD in reading, language, and learning disabilities at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



**Enrique López** is Assistant Professor of Science Education. Dr. López's research agenda investigates two broad questions: 1) What psychological, cultural, and sociological constructs can be used to create learning environments to improve achievement in chemistry, particularly among students of color?; and 2) What social and policy conditions support and encourage students' engagement with science?

Dr. López's current work is based in a new line of research that

explores cognitive processes and study behaviors that contribute to key outcomes in science. At CU Boulder, he will be establishing side-by-side working relationships with chemistry teachers in ethnically diverse local schools in order to ground his research in practical contexts.

Dr. López earned his Master's of Science in Chemistry from California State University, Fresno and his PhD in Educational Psychology, with a focus in Science Education, from Stanford University.



**Andrew Maul** is Assistant Professor of Research and Evaluation Methodology. His scholarship focuses on the intersection of technical, conceptual, and applied issues in quantitative research in the social sciences, and particularly in psychometrics. His research explores the logic of measurement, the connections between metrology and psychometrics, and the semantics of foundational concepts such as validity, cause-and-effect, constructs, latent variables, and psychological attributes.

Dr. Maul's dissertation research explored technical and conceptual issues in the measurement of nontraditional models of intelligence. He spent the last three years as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oslo, Norway, where he worked with national and international educational assessment systems and collaborated with scholars interested in the philosophy of measurement.

Dr. Maul earned his B.A. in psychology and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Education from UC Berkeley.



**Joe Polman** is Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Educational Psychology and Learning Sciences. His research focuses on the design of learning environments to foster disciplinary thinking in science and history as well as positive identity development. He is currently working on a research project aimed at developing and refining learning environments that involve young people in authentic data journalism focused on science and technology topics of their choice.

Dr. Polman has published research articles in the *American Educational Research Journal*, *The Journal of the Learning*

*Sciences, Cognition and Instruction*, and *Science Education*, and a book with Teachers College Press. His collaborative work has received over \$5 million in grant funding from diverse sources. He is an Executive Editor of *Cognition and Instruction*, and serves on the editorial board of *Journal of the Learning Sciences* and *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*.

Dr. Polman earned his B.A. in Comparative Literature from Brown University, and Ph.D. in the Learning Sciences from Northwestern University.



**Edd V. Taylor** is Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education. His research examines the relationships between youths' everyday cultural practices and mathematical thinking in order to address issues of equity in mathematics education. He has used multiple methods to examine mathematics in church giving and store purchasing, and the role of social supports and artifacts in the development of mathematical ideas.

Dr. Taylor's research has appeared in the *Journal of Learning Sciences*; *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*; *Mind, Culture,*

*and Activity*; and the *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*. He currently serves on the board of the Jean Piaget Society, has served as co-chair of the Equity Task Force for the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators, and as a member of the publication committee for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

Dr. Taylor earned his BA in Psychology, and his MA and Ph.D. in Cognition and Development from UC Berkeley.



**Emily C. Weller** is a Master Teacher in the CU Teach program. Trained as an ichthyologist, Ms. Weller began her career working on federally funded projects to improve the management of playa wetlands in the southwest and to expand water quality criteria in the Platte River basin.

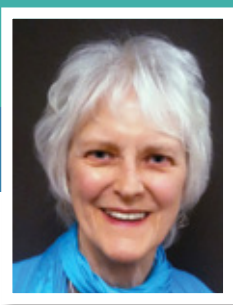
Ms. Weller went on to become an elementary classroom teacher. She received several awards, including a Toyota Tapestry Grant,

a Public Education and Business Coalition award, and a Mikkelson Scholarship to attend a summer institute at the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. She has since worked with America's Choice/Pearson to improve science instruction in turn-around schools.

Ms. Weller earned her BA in Biology from Adelphi University and her MS in Forest Zoology from the State University of New York College of Forestry, where she was the first woman in the graduate school.

# Alumni Profiles

## Beverly Parsons, PhD



Beverly Parsons, PhD

Dr. Beverly Parsons, graduate of the Research and Evaluation Methodology program in the School of Education, was recently elected 2014 President of the American Evaluation Association (AEA). During her three-year tenure as president-elect, president, and immediate past president, Dr. Parsons aims to lead AEA in both “bringing a systems-oriented approach to evaluation and ensuring that evaluation is relevant to the public good.”

Studying and using theories of system change is a passion and theme of Dr. Parsons’s career. For the past 20 years, she has been Executive Director of InSites, a Colorado-based non-profit research, evaluation, and planning organization.

Dr. Parsons works especially with multi-year, multi-site initiatives focused on changes within and/or among education, health, and social services systems at state and local levels. She is currently the principal investigator of a

National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to build the capacity of evaluators of NSF education programs in the use of a systems thinking perspective.

As a renowned evaluator, Dr. Parsons has worked with organizations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), the Danforth Foundation, the University of British Columbia’s medical school, networks of school-university partnerships, the National Science Foundation, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy. She was the primary author of the WKKF’s guide, *Designing Initiative Evaluation: A Systems-Oriented Framework for Evaluating Social Change Efforts*, which addresses application of complex adaptive systems theory to evaluation of large-scale initiatives.

Dr. Parsons also has served as a consultant to the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Center for the Study of

Social Policy. She has consulted on student assessment policy with the national government in South Africa and conducted evaluations in China, Japan, and Europe.

Earlier in her career, Dr. Parsons worked at the Education Commission of the States (ECS), where she led ECS’s largest systems change initiative—focused from schoolhouse to state-house—in partnership with Ted Sizer and his Coalition of Essential Schools. (ECS is a national interstate compact that works with governors, legislators, and state education leaders.)

Dr. Parsons reflected on the strong influence that the School of Education has had on her career. As she explained, “The combination of research methods with **Gene Glass**, measurement with **Ken Hopkins** (Emeritus), and evaluation with **Blaine Worthen** (Emeritus) provided the foundation for everything I’ve done.” ■

## Brie Moon, MA

Brie (Jackson) Moon, a 2001 graduate of the Master’s Plus program in Elementary Education, was recognized as the Dr. Dale Gasser Employee of the Year for the Fountain Fort Carson School District. This award is given to the teacher that “has a powerful and positive impression on others” by demonstrating commitments to student learning, collaboration with colleagues, and professional growth.

Ms. Moon has taught second grade for three years at Weikel Elementary School in Colorado Springs, a school named after a local hero who lost his life serving in Iraq. She previously taught for two years at Patriot Elementary in the district. As described by the Weikel Elementary principal, “Ms. Moon has established a reputation as a distinguished teacher that understands our military community, the needs of our diverse student population, and the action steps necessary to reach desired results.”

Ms. Moon explains that building relationships with students and colleagues has been central to her success. As she notes, “The Master’s Plus program at CU was instrumental in preparing me for a career in teaching. I learned not only how to effectively instruct in order to reach maximum student achievement, but more importantly, professors like **Dan Liston** showed me the importance of building relationships with students that capture hearts, positively affect lives, and create lifelong learners.”

Indeed, Ms. Moon’s colleagues attest that she has been instrumental in

building community in a school that has only been open for three years. Ms. Moon exemplifies a commitment to continuous professional development, responsiveness to student needs, and leadership among colleagues in instructional innovation.

An important part of Ms. Moon’s success is her deep understanding of military families. Prior to joining Fountain Fort Carson District 8, she taught for six years on military bases in Germany and in North Carolina. She is married to Morgan Moon, a former Air Force C-130 pilot. They live in Colorado Springs with their two children, Sullivan (8) and Sophia (5).

Ms. Moon credits her education at CU for preparing her to understand the communities with which she works. “I appreciate the attention that the School of Education places on working with diverse populations. Having an understanding of a multitude of family backgrounds and cultures has truly helped my ability to connect with the students I’ve served in military communities around the world with diverse student populations.” ■



Brie Moon, MA

## KUDOS Current news of faculty, students and alumni

### FACULTY

**Derek Briggs** has been named *Editor of Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*. Dr. Briggs also won the 2012 Provost's award for "a series of related publications that has made a significant impact on the field."

**Elizabeth Dutro** has been invited to present her work, "Children as Everyday Documentarians in High-Poverty Literacy Classrooms," in the session, *Conversations with Former Promising Research Award Winners*, at the National Council of Teachers of English.

**Kathy Escamilla** is principal investigator for a \$280,844 Department of Education grant to the BUENO Center for Multicultural Education. The project focuses on language and biliteracy development in partnership with Godsman Elementary School in Denver.

**Erin Furtak** is co-principal investigator for a \$196,672 National Science Foundation grant for a project that integrates research and education by characterizing student discussions and testing how changes in pedagogy impact productivity of these discussions.

**Kris Gutiérrez** received a Gold Award for excellence in teaching at *The Best Should Teach Awards & Lecture*.

**Vicki Hand** was awarded a grant by the Spencer Foundation for her study entitled, "Understanding Teacher Noticing for Equitable Mathematics Instruction." This research is also partially supported by a grant from WISE (Women Investing in the School of Education).

**Bill Penuel** is co-principal investigator (with Cynthia Coburn of UC Berkeley) of a \$585,216 William T. Grant Foundation grant to examine model partnerships of research and practice over the next two years: the Strategic Educational Research Partnership (SERP) in San Francisco and the Middle-School Mathematics and the Institutional Setting of Teaching (MIST) in Fort Worth and Jefferson County, Kentucky.

**Joe Polman** is principal investigator of a \$550,000 National Science Foundation grant to investigate the potential of learning environments that involve high school students in data journalism. This collaborative project with University of Missouri-St. Louis and Saint Louis University will examine the science and data literacy fostered when students use cyberlearning

technologies to create and publish "infographics" related to science and technology topics of their choice.

**Lorrie Shepard** was recognized by the CU-Boulder Alumni Association with the Robert Stearns Award for extraordinary achievement across research, teaching, mentoring, service, and outreach.

**Kevin Welner** participated in a National Press Club "Newsmakers" event broadcast live on CSPAN (available at [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org)). The event focused on the new book that he edited with Gary Miron, *Exploring the School Choice Universe*.

**Jennie Whitcomb** was invited to teach a graduate seminar on Research Genres in Teacher Education at the University of Oslo, where she served as advisor to an international comparative study examining coherence in methods courses in teacher education programs in the US, Norway, Finland, and Chile.

### STUDENTS

**Erin Allaman** received a 2012-2013 Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship, which provides one semester of full support during the academic year.

**Kate Allison** was selected as a Google Campus Ambassador, and is working with instructors to integrate collaborative technologies into classroom learning.

**Subini Annamma** was awarded an AERA Minority Fellowship in Education Research for 2012-13 to support completion of her dissertation, *Unstable ground: Perspectives on Race, Gender and Disability in the School to Prison Pipeline*.

**Becky Beucher** received the Dorothy Martin Doctoral Student Award for research and service that positively impacts women.

**Julie Graves** is Program Evaluator at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, and the Project Director of the Strategic Plan for LGBT Health in Colorado. See the full report at <http://www.coprevent.org/search?q=lgbt#!/2012/06/first-ever-colorado-lgbt-plan-aims-to.html>

**Jarrod Hanson** was awarded an NAEd/Spencer Foundation Fellowship for 2012-13 to support completion of his dissertation, *In Defense of a Deliberative Democratic Civics Education*.

**Bethy Leonardi** was selected for the LGBTQ Alumni Scholarship for her "excellence in academic work and contributions to the LGBTQ and allied community on campus."

**Christina Paguyo** was awarded an AERA Minority Fellowship in Education Research for 2012-13 to support completion of her dissertation, *A Cultural-Historical Analysis of Diversity and Race in Higher Education*.

**Sara Staley** received a Silver Award for her work as a Lead Graduate Teacher in the Social Sciences at *The Best Should Teach Awards & Lecture*. She also received a Beverly Sears Student Grant to support her research.

**Holly Yettick** received a 2012-13 Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship, which provides one semester of full support during the academic year.

### ALUMNI

**Magda Chia**, PhD (EECD, 2012) is Director of Support for Underrepresented Students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, leading efforts to ensure the assessment system is designed to serve the needs of all students.

**Patrick DeWalt**, PhD (EECD, 2009) was selected as the 2012 University of South Florida Faculty recipient of the LGBT Pride award for his contributions to the LGBT community.

**Ben Domingue**, PhD (REM, 2012) is Research Associate at CU's Institute of Behavioral Sciences, and is involved in education research projects with Wyoming, Denver Public Schools, and ICFES (the national education evaluation agency in Colombia).

**Ellic Fullbeck**, PhD (EFPP, 2012) was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, where she conducts research on the effectiveness of merit-based incentives on teacher retention and teaches courses in Education Finance Policy and Race in American Schools.

**Darrell Jackson**, PhD (EFPP, 2012) is Visiting Professor at the University of Wyoming Law School, where he uses critical race theory and legal analysis to research issues of access and retention for historically marginalized communities in higher education.

**Xaé Alicia Reyes**, PhD (1994) received the 2012 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award for outstanding service in furthering the goals of diversity and social equality. ■



## NEPC Hosts Fellows Research Panels

The National Education Policy Center (NEPC), led by Director **Kevin Welner**, Publications Director **Alex Molnar**, Managing Director **Bill Mathis**, and Senior Researcher **Gene Glass**, hosted its sixth annual Fellows Research Panels. In attendance at the University Memorial Center (UMC) were scholars, students, policymakers, board members, local educators, and members of the public.

In the morning panel, Professor **Ken Howe** and PhD student **David Meens** presented their upcoming NEPC policy brief, *NCLB, Democratic Governance, and Democratic Education*, in which they contrast features of current accountability policies with the democratic aims of education, and Professor **Tina Trujillo** of UC Berkeley (who is also an alumnus of CU Boulder's EFPP Master's program) presented her NEPC policy brief with co-author **Michelle Renée**, *Learning from Experience to Develop Equitable, Democratic School Turnarounds*, in which they examine



the disproportionate impacts of turnaround status on underserved students. The panelists spoke with each other and with the audience on how policies could better engage communities and improve education for all students through the democratic system. They stressed the importance of developing the knowledge and

skills demanded by current reforms while also preparing students for citizenship in a multicultural society.

In the afternoon panel, Professors **Adrienne Dixson** of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and **Kristen Buras** of Georgia State University presented their research on a panel called, *Casting a Skeptical Eye on New Orleans Reform*. The authors presented evidence of the severe disempowerment of New Orleans communities as private and for-profit organizations have largely taken over the city's public school system in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. ■

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Lorrie A. Shepard, Dean

Kristen Davidson  
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[kristen.davidson@colorado.edu](mailto:kristen.davidson@colorado.edu).