Organizing for New Futures in Denver

Transforming a food desert to a model of urban sustainability

The landscape of the Westwood neighborhood in Denver is changing. Squash, tomatoes, chiles, spinach, and melons are popping up in backyards. Family members are tending their gardens and harvesting their own fresh food. And community leaders are working side-by-side with them in transforming their neighborhood from its designation as a food desert – a term used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to classify densely populated, low-income areas that lack access to healthy foods – to a model of urban sustainability.

This shift is the result of the coordinated efforts of LiveWell Colorado, Councilman Paul López, Mayor Michael Hancock and his Denver Seeds Initiative, and in no small part, the non-profit Re:Vision International.

Re:Vision is committed to on-the-ground work in and with the community to improve access to healthy food. Its co-founders, Eric...
A draft “Educator Licensing” bill has been circulating in Colorado. It would allow a person to obtain an initial transitional teaching license by holding a bachelor’s degree, passing a background check, and demonstrating professional competencies on a state-approved assessment. Even if Colorado does not see a bill this session, this debate will remain with us into the coming year.

Because this newsletter is supported in part by state funds, I may not use it to express a position for or against possible legislation. However, our alumni have an interest in teacher licensure, and the debate about whether a content bachelor’s degree alone is sufficient to enter the teaching profession is increasingly of interest nationally. Therefore, I provide brief summaries of arguments for and against this controversial teacher licensing idea.

Frederick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute makes the case against teacher preparation in “Tear Down This Wall: The Case for a Radical Overhaul of Teacher Certification.” Hess argues there is no agreed-upon set of essential skills a teacher must have and that certification does not weed out unsuitable applicants. “Certification dissuades potentially effective teachers. Energetic, talented individuals will have many attractive alternatives and may be the least willing to endure the hoops and hurdles of certification.” Hess expects removing preparation requirements will make the field more competitive. He suggests, “Under competitive certification, little would change in high-performing districts where administrators have a raft of fully trained candidates.” But in “troubled districts filled with long-term substitutes and under-qualified teachers,” it will be a relief to choose from this new larger pool of applicants.

In contrast, Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University makes the case for increasing rather than decreasing the level of preparation for beginning teachers. The U.S. has been losing ground in international comparisons while “other nations like Finland, the Netherlands, Singapore, Korea, China, New Zealand and Australia have been making intensive and sustained investments in teaching.” There is no question, both alternative and university-based teacher preparation programs vary widely in quality. But effective preparation of both types has been shown to increase the effectiveness of novice teachers and to increase the likelihood of staying on the job, both of which are proven to increase student achievement. The solution isn’t to de-professionalize teaching but rather to strengthen preparation quality. In particular, effective teacher preparation involves supervised clinical experiences integrated with strong pedagogical training.

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

1Available at: http://www2.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/learn/preparingteachersconference/hess.html
2“Teacher Education and the American Future.” Available at: http://jte.sagepub.com/content/61/1-2/35.short
Kornacki and Joseph Teipel, and their team of community connectors led by Patricia Grado – called promotoras – are focused on “empowering local actions that lead to global sustainability” (revisioninternational.org).

Re:Vision’s model for developing a more robust food system in Westwood relies on the work of promotoras, a group of committed residents, and emerging community leaders who are helping their neighborhood to grow their own food and take control of their health. The work leading up to a bountiful harvest is intense. Together, the families and promotoras design the gardens to flourish in small, often not ideal spaces. They transport compost to backyards and set up automated watering systems, teaching the residents to weed vigilantly.

But, as the promotoras report, this hard work is more than worth it in terms of improving the neighborhood and the health of its residents. As one family participant explained, “This project gave us the benefit of saving and eating vegetables 100% healthy.”

Starting with just seven families in 2009, the number of backyard garden participants has grown to 200 as of this year. The work that Re:Vision is doing with its small team of promotoras is just one part of the efforts in Denver to re-organize its unevenly developed food system and to grow its economy.

Inspired by the efforts of Re:Vision International and others, Educational Psychology & Learning Sciences Professors Susan Jurow and Kevin O’Connor, with doctoral candidate Molly Shea, MBA, created the Learning in the Food Movement project to study how people work together to create better futures for themselves and their communities.

As Professor Jurow explains, “This project is not just about food. We see it as a way to challenge researchers to think about learning differently. Learning isn’t only about what’s going on inside your head. It’s also about actively organizing relationships – among people, communities, technologies, and institutions.”

Developing Denver’s food system is a complex issue involving many stakeholders. So Jurow and O’Connor’s project is necessarily interdisciplinary, including faculty and graduate students from the School of Education, the College of Engineering and Applied Science, and Leeds School of Business. These relationships are designed to enhance how faculty and students are learning to conduct responsible research with communities.

The Learning in the Food Movement project, funded by CU-Boulder’s Office for University Outreach, WISE (Women Investing in the School of Education), and Denver Seeds, re-conceptualizes learning in a distributed network aimed at increasing opportunities for the residents of the city’s most vulnerable communities. The success of these collaborative efforts depends less on any one organization’s vision and more on how the entire system, stretched across Westwood, Denver, and CU-Boulder, functions as a whole.
Room 231 in the School of Education has become known as the Literacy Classroom. While the room continually hosts various education classes, it is especially designed for teaching and learning literacy.

Built-in bookcases feature twenty years of award-winning children’s literature behind glass doors. Soft lighting, a hand-carved table, and a wicker ‘reading chair’ set in the corner provide an aesthetically appealing space to introduce high-quality literature that grounds a literacy curriculum. Groups of students work collaboratively at tables and share evidence-based teaching methods on whiteboards throughout the room. And a Smartboard, along with several i-Pads and students’ own devices, allow current and prospective teachers to integrate technology with newly learned instructional practices.

The literacy classroom was envisioned and created by Dean Shepard, Shelby Wolf, Bridget Dalton, Donna Begley, and Sara McDonald. As Professor Dalton explains, “The space is designed to engage students in learning how to be a literacy teacher in an environment that reflects a literacy classroom, facilitates flexible grouping, celebrates the role of literature, and integrates technology.”

Paula Garvey Klein (EDUC, ’69), a member of Women Investing in the School of Education (WISE) and the School of Education Development Advisory Board and newly retired elementary school teacher and literacy instructor, is spearheading a fundraising effort to support the development and completion of the classroom. In addition to construction costs, there is a continuing need for multicultural literature and a variety of technological resources to reflect today's learning environments.

We ask School of Education alumni and friends to please help us meet an initial goal of $50,000 for the Literacy Classroom, with the hope of expanding this fundraising to support planned math and science classrooms.

To give a gift of any amount, please contact Margot Neufeld: margot.neufeld@cufund.org or at 303.541.1475, or donate directly to the Dean’s Annual Fund or WISE Fund at http://www.cufund.org/SchoolofEducation.
To effect the widespread adoption of evidence-based practices (EBPs), change is unlikely to occur one teacher—or even one school—at a time. Rather, researchers must strategically and systematically scale up implementation of EBPs in collaboration with district partners, not as an afterthought, but from the onset of their planning. For innovations to take hold in a district, they must meet the district’s needs and be responsive to local contextual factors. Researchers must view “teachers’ instructional practices as situated in the institutional settings of the schools and districts in which they work” (Cobb & Smith, 2008, p. 1).

Defining Scaling Up

Scaling up generally refers to the process by which researchers and educators initially try out interventions on a small scale, validate them, and then implement them more widely in real-world conditions (Odom, 2009). Researchers studying scale-up efforts commonly consider what it takes to expand and sustain an intervention in real-world settings (Fixsen & Blasé, 2009). Scaling up requires depth, sustainability, spread, and a shift in ownership (Coburn, 2003). To be successful, scaled-up reforms must bring about deep and lasting change that goes beyond surface structures or procedures. This transformation is consequential and sustainable over time, exists after leaders in the original schools or districts leave, and spreads to additional schools.

Coburn (2003) noted that sustainability might be the most significant challenge to scaling up. Typically, after researchers depart and funding has ended, implementation wanes (Cohen & Ball, 2007; Penuel, Fishman, Cheng, & Sibelli, 2011; Vaughn, Klingner, & Hughes, 2000). Even schools that have been able to implement reforms successfully find that sustaining them is difficult when they confront competing priorities, changing demands, and teacher and administrator turnover (Fogelman, Fishman, & Krajcik, 2006). This difficulty in sustaining new practices may occur because researchers have not sufficiently attended to local contextual features or laid a foundation for transferring ownership of the initiative to teachers and to the district (Elmore, 1996). Scaling up must involve more than the spread of surface-level aspects of a new approach. It also requires the proliferation of the beliefs, norms, and principles underlying the approach. To be truly “at scale,” ownership of the practice must shift so that others no longer perceive it to be an externally driven initiative that outsiders control.

The Role of Research Funding Agencies

Research funding agencies may be partially responsible for the problem of scale because they have not adequately accounted for the complexities of work in schools. Typically,
funding agencies such as the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) have tested the effectiveness of interventions by using large-scale randomized controlled trials designed to evaluate the broad efficacy of intact, fully validated innovations. A principal research question in these studies, as noted in IES (2011), was whether an intervention worked “under different school and population conditions (e.g., urban vs. rural districts; with vs. without high proportions of English learners)” (p. 57). The intent was to determine whether the intervention was effective in spite of variations in context and population instead of looking for ways to account for these variations and build them into the research design. IES did not promote adapting or adjusting an intervention to fit new circumstances or studying the local context and the additional supports that might promote implementation. However, the funding culture may be changing with a promising 2012 IES call for research proposals that acknowledges the need to account for variations in context and population.

Another feature of IES-style scale-up evaluations has been that they have required researchers to implement them under so-called typical conditions. For example, IES (2011) included the following:

Scale-up evaluations require that the intervention be implemented under conditions of routine practice. That is, the intervention should be implemented in the school or other authentic education setting as it would be if the school or entity had purchased and implemented the intervention on its own without any involvement in a research study... For scale-up evaluations, the primary question of interest is, “Does the intervention produce a net positive increase in student learning and achievement relative to the comparison group under typical conditions?” (p. 56; italics in original).

Yet typical conditions have repeatedly been inadequate for supporting the sustained implementation of new interventions (e.g., Hitchcock, Dimino, Kurki, Wilkins, & Gersten, 2001). This approach appears to presume that teachers need only adhere to a developer’s directions with fidelity to reap the benefits of the program. However, as Cobb and Smith (2008) emphasized, it is not that simple; instructional practices are “complex, demanding, uncertain, and not reducible to predictable routines” (p. 5).

We propose drawing from implementation science as “the missing link that connects research outcomes to the delivery of effective practices” (Bacon et al., 2011, p. 46) by addressing adoption decisions, capacity building, training, technical assistance, consumer participation and satisfaction, and long-term impact. Instead of focusing only on whether an intervention is effective under typical practice conditions, we suggest that researchers ask questions such as the following:

- Under what conditions and with whom does the EBP work?
- What is necessary to support teachers’ implementation of the EBP?
- What is necessary to enhance districts’ capacity to support teachers’ implementation of an EBP under different ecological and population conditions?

Researchers and practitioners must work together to identify and examine the support structures that help to bring about sustained use of an intervention (Cobb & Smith, 2008; Penuel et al., 2011). Instead of focusing exclusively on whether a particular innovation is effective, investigators should strive to determine how to make the program work within a particular context (Bryk, 2009). Such research will likely require mixed methods that complement quantitative data with rich qualitative data that capture important contextual variables that influence successful scaling up (Klingner & Boardman, 2011).}


Access the full article at: http://ecr.metapress.com/content/20372r4295072r3fr.
EECD PhD Student to Accompany Astronomers aboard NASA’s SOFIA Airborne Observatory

Adriana Alvarez, a first-year PhD student and Miramontes Fellow in the Educational Equity & Cultural Diversity (EECD) program, will complete two flights aboard NASA’s Stratospheric Observatory For Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) in June. SOFIA is a modified 747 with an infrared telescope that flies into the stratosphere to collect data for research projects such as the formation of molecules, stars, and planets, the composition of comets, planetary atmospheres, and rings, and the effects of black holes, to name just a few.

As an elementary teacher in El Paso, Texas, Ms. Alvarez was selected with middle school science teacher Mariela Muñoz to assist astronomers with research while on the missions and return to share their experiences with schools and communities. Ms. Alvarez and Ms. Muñoz are planning outreach projects with K-12 students in Texas, México, and Colorado.

Ms. Alvarez notes, “To be able to bring this experience back to the schools is the most valuable piece of this opportunity.”

REM Leads Editorship of *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*

Derek Briggs, Associate Professor and Chair of Research & Evaluation Methodology (REM), was chosen for a three-year term as Editor-in-Chief of *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice* (EM:IP). REM Professors Andy Maul and Greg Camilli will serve as Associate Editors, and REM alumnus Ben Domingue will serve as Visuals Editor. EECD Professor Willy Solano-Flores will serve on the Editorial Board.

*EM:IP* is one of the two flagship journals of the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). Its primary purpose is to promote a better understanding of educational measurement and to encourage reasoned debate on current issues of practical importance to educators and the public (http://ncme.org/publications/emip/).

Professor Briggs hopes to see *EM:IP* continue to publish high-quality work that will be timely, relevant and informative: “The journal has a tradition in which experts in educational measurement serve as their own worst critics, vigilant about the potential for tests and assessments being misused, and hopeful about the prospects for using these tools as a way to gain insights into teaching and learning. That’s a torch I’m honored to carry.”

Adriana Alvarez, EECD PhD Student
Memoirs Course Offers Humanities Approach to Literacy

William McGinley’s Memoir course last fall provided the opportunity for students to examine the above essential questions through a humanities-based approach to the creative reading and writing of narratives.

As Professor McGinley explains, “Narrative is a way to make sense of our lives. We are all involved in improvising and composing our own lives through the moment-to-moment stories we tell about ourselves every day. The function of narrative is to formulate a life story that allows us to make sense of our past, organize our present, and imagine our future.”

Just as can be palpably felt by Megan Gomes’s poem (featured on this page) and other students’ memoirs in the class anthology, reflecting on life experiences is central to understanding and creating our current selves. Bill Campbell reflects, “This class allowed me – forced me – to write more about my life, to better see what stories are touchstones in my life narrative, and to realize many of these touchstones remain waiting for me to uncover them.”

Professor McGinley co-taught the memoirs course with Casey Middle School teachers Val Wheeler and Kathryn Singey. Together, instructors and students studied the theoretical foundations of narrative through readings across philosophy, sociology, psychology, and education. Teacher licensure candidates experienced instructional methods through the class itself, and Education Minor and other students noted a powerful influence on their own professional trajectories.

Professor McGinley found the course to be a meaningful and authentic way to engage students in literacy studies: “The fundamental fact of literature, the arts, creative writing, is human feeling. So participating in a class where people are in these visceral places of sharing their experiences – because our lives were the subject of the class – was insightful and fulfilling in ways that students then expressed through their writing.” The School of Education will continue to offer the memoirs course in future semesters.

Who am I?  
Where do I come from?  
What might I become?  
What am I called to do?

on a street whose name i can’t remember  
by megan gomes

god grant me the serenity  
to accept the things i cannot change,  
the courage to change the things i can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.

this is my memory of you and the frame that hung on your bedroom wall  
next to the blueprints for your house  
and the memorabilia of your achievements  
and the money in your sock drawer

and the socks without matches and the beds without sheets and the children without a father and it was never our house and they were never our achievements and we never saw any money and now all my socks have matches and perhaps this is knowing the difference.
CU Teach Partners with IBM and Bear Creek Elementary in Two Outreach Initiatives

The CU Teach Student Organization has begun outreach initiatives with IBM and Bear Creek Elementary School to engage Boulder County K-12 students in science and math.

IBM Partnership

CU Teach and IBM are together engaging local K-12 students in “human-centered design” experiments, in which students design and create functional objects for others’ use. For IBM’s Innovation Academy, to be attended by elementary and middle school students from St. Vrain Valley School District this summer, CU Teach students are developing and leading lessons that make students’ scientific and mathematical reasoning a visible part of the experiential learning process.

CU Teach students also led an activity for hundreds of students from across the state during IBM’s e-Week in which kids learned chemistry concepts while tie-dying t-shirts. CU Teach and IBM plan to continue the e-Week collaboration in future years.

Bear Creek Elementary School Partnership

In collaboration with CU-Boulder Chemistry & Biochemistry Professor Deborah Wuttke, CU Teach recently hosted an Exploratorium at Bear Creek Elementary. Fifteen CU Teach students designed and led several activities that engaged first through fifth grade students in learning about chemistry. CU Teach will continue to host an annual Exploratorium at Bear Creek.

Caleb Ulliman, Director of the CU Teach Student Organization, notes that getting kids excited about science is why he joined the CU Teach program. “I love science, so if I can pass that on to these students, then that’s my ultimate goal,” he said. “I didn’t realize what an impact I could make on these kids as a teacher until I joined CU Teach.”
Upon graduating from the Educational Equity & Cultural Diversity (EECD) doctoral program at CU-Boulder in 2004, Reynaldo Reyes joined the faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he continues to serve as Associate Professor. His assistantship with the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) while a student at CU-Boulder continues to meaningfully inform his research, teaching, and outreach.

Professor Reyes recently published a highly praised book based on his dissertation (co-chaired by Professors Leonard Baca and Kathy Escamilla), Learning the Possible: Mexican American Students Moving from the Margins of Life to New Ways of Being. The book traces the experiences of five CAMP students as they navigated pathways from adversity to academic accomplishment in higher education, while constructing new identities as successful students.

Expanding upon his work in graduate school, Professor Reyes continues to study how communities of practice influence the identity development of students who are marginalized in various settings. He is currently working with English Learners in an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program in a local middle school, as well as examining how Latino student identities relate to an interest in STEM education. As a Fulbright Scholar, he recently returned from a study of the identity development of English teachers at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

In addition to his grandparents who moved from México to pursue migrant farm work in the U.S., and his parents who transitioned in their own lives to provide better opportunities for him, Professor Reyes credits the faculty and students at CU-Boulder as central to his own research identity and development as a scholar.

Professor Reyes reflects, “The people that I was able to work with at CU had the biggest impact on who I have become as a scholar. The different roles that they played in guiding me, sharing the wisdom needed to complete the PhD, and providing opportunities to participate in community outreach, field experiences, networking, and conferences were all invaluable to my work in advancing opportunities for students that live in marginalized situations.”
FACULTY

Lorenso Aragon was honored as the School Leader/Administrator of the Year by the Colorado Association for Bilingual Education (CABE).

Leonard Baca received the Colorado Association for Bilingual Education's (CABE) Lifetime Achievement Award.

Rubén Donato was elected to a three-year term as Council Member-at-Large for the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Kris Gutiérrez was reappointed by President Obama as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences.

Ben Kirshner, with co-PI Rod Watts, convened representatives from seven community-based youth organizing groups in Capetown, South Africa to share organizing strategies and learn about the history of anti-apartheid mobilization.

Janette Klingner was honored with the 2013 Distinguished Researcher Award by the AERA Special Education Research SIG for her contributions to research, policy, and practice.

STUDENTS

Sarah Berger has been awarded a Knowles Teaching Fellowship for her promise as a Secondary Science Teacher.

Kristi Jackson and Pat Bazeley published the 2nd edition of Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo, which includes new techniques for literature reviews, multimedia, mixed methods, social media, data displays, and team research.

Ben Van Dusen was elected to a 2-year term as the inaugural graduate student member of the Physics Education Research Leadership Organization Council (PERLOC).

ALUMNI

Diana Blau, MA (2012, C&I-Literacy) is a 2nd grade teacher leader in DPS, where she actively plans and delivers professional development.

Ed Cannava, PhD (1998, Music) is a music education instructor at Metro State, Executive Secretary for the CO Bandmasters Association, Director of the Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars, and Chief Judge for the Friendship Cup Marching Band Show Series.

Ben Domingue, PhD (2012, REM) received the AERA Division D Outstanding Quantitative Dissertation Award. An article based on his dissertation will appear in Psychometrika.

Elle (Hilke) Dominski, MA (C&I) is pursuing a PhD in Education at Univ. of Nottingham, UK.

Rebecca Drick (2011, C&I-Literacy) is teaching English in Suwon, South Korea.

Derek John Eldredge (2012, Music Education) graduated from the Navy School of Music, training for one of the Marine Corps' bands.

Katie Gallagher, MA (2011, C&I-Literacy) is a middle school Physical and Health Education teacher in BVSD. She serves as the secondary district level teacher leader and is a yoga instructor for The Wellness Initiative.

Malory Goetz (2009, C&I-Literacy) completed her MA in School Library at UCD. She is the teacher librarian at the International School of Panama in Panama City, where she created a comprehensive library program.

Abby Kelleher (2010, Music Education) is teaching Choir, Drama, and Piano at Erie Middle School, where she has doubled the choral program enrollment. One of her choirs performed at her wedding in summer 2012.

Mark Lewis, PhD (2010, C&I-Literacy), Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at Loyola, received the 2012 Early Career Reviewer's Award from the Bilingual Research Journal.

Anastasia Maines, MA (2011, C&I-Science) is pursuing a graduate degree in Ecology and is engaging middle school and college students in her research on an invasive plant.

Shawna Morin (2007, Elementary) is teaching a combined K/1st/2nd grade at an international school in Brasov, Romania.

Jaime Passchier, MA (2012, C&I- Math/Science) is a Master Teacher for Homestake Peak School of Expeditionary Learning in Avon, where she leads professional development and coaching as well as the Adventure Program.

Dana Ripperton, MA (2012, EFPP) is an Education Coordinator with BridgeEnglish in Denver, where she leads academic advising, curriculum development, and teacher support.

M. G. Saldivar, PhD (2012, EPLS) is an NSF-funded post-doctoral researcher at the Learning Systems Institute at Florida State University, focusing on STEM teachers’ use of digital resources for teaching and assessment.

Graham Slater, MA (2012, EFPP) is pursuing a PhD in Education, Culture, and Society at the University of Utah.

Amy Smith (2011, C&I-Math) is teaching secondary math at Escuela Bella Vista, an international school in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Darcy Walters, MA (2011, EECD) is a Special Education teacher at Denver Green School, where she serves as Special Education Chair and RTI Coordinator.

Pete Welter (2011, C&I-Math) has co-founded The Cooperatory, fostering and mentoring entrepreneurship with teens.

Ashley Winder (2011, Elementary) is a kindergarten teacher in Kailua-Kona, where she developed a math and reading tutoring program for the Hawai’i State Assessment.

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Emeritus Myrle Hemenway passed away on January 27, 2013 in Lenexa, Kansas. From 1966 to 1985, he was known as a mentor and trusted friend to students and colleagues in the School of Education. Dr. Hemenway was deeply committed to education and service, remaining active in these areas well into his 90s.
The tenth annual Teachers of Color and Allies (TOCA) Summit will be held on October 22nd, 2013 in the University Memorial Center. This daylong event gathers education students, educators of color and allies to provide collegial support, opportunities for networking and mentoring, and insights into best practices in education.

Over 300 participants gather for a morning keynote, lunchtime address, and breakout sessions related to the conference theme. Past keynote speakers have included Dr. Jeff Duncan-Andrade (2012), Consuelo Costillo Kickbush (2011), Gary Howard (2010), Dr. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2009), Dr. Jabari Mahiri (2008), and Jonathan Kozol (2007).

For more information, please visit cutocas.weebly.com.

The TOCA Summit is invite only. If you are an educator of color or ally interested in attending, please contact your district representative listed on cutocas.weebly.com. If you are not affiliated with a participating district, contact Collinus Hutt, Director of Diversity Recruitment and Retention, at collinus.hutt@colorado.edu or 303.735.0241.