

THE CONNECTION

The Evergreen State
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The M.Ed. math students with faculty member Anita Lenges

Education Programs at Evergreen Consolidated

First cohort of M.Ed. Students to graduate this summer

As you may have noticed, the name of this newsletter has changed. We are no longer *The MiT Connection* but *The Teacher Education Programs Connection* (or simply *The Connection*, for brevity's sake). The reason for the change? As of fall 2009, Evergreen's MiT and M.Ed. programs have officially been combined into a single department.

"It makes sense to have all of Evergreen's education programs under one umbrella," said Sherry Walton, who is the director of both programs and of the new department.

The configuration of education programs at Evergreen has changed considerably in recent years. The MiT program, which has been training teachers for more than twenty years, used to exist independently of other education programs. The Evergreen Center for Educational Improvement, formerly under the leadership of Magda Costantino, regrettably closed in 2008 due to state-mandated budget cuts, but continues to offer professional development to practicing teachers as the Professional Outreach & Development Program. And in

fall of 2008, the M.Ed. program was created.

Sherry Walton and Magda Costantino had been pitching the idea of having a Master of Education program at Evergreen for some time. They believed that Evergreen should provide continuing education for certified teachers. Although the administration agreed that it was a good idea, there was never any money available for the project.

Then, in early 2008, Governor Christine Gregoire's education plan identified high demand fields in which the state needs more teachers, including math, science, English as a Second Language, and special education. As money became available, Walton and Costantino took this opportunity to launch the M.Ed. program, which offers masters degrees and endorsements in two fields: Math and English Language Learners.

"The ESL endorsement is in place to meet the needs of a growing linguistically diverse K-12 student population in the state of Washington, as well as nationwide," said Grace Huerta, one of the M.Ed. faculty who works with the ELL teachers. "Educators

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

who are effectively trained to teach English language learners can help close the academic achievement gaps and increase graduation rates among ELLs," said Huerta.

Whereas the MiT program is meant to train new teachers and results in certification, the M.Ed. program is intended to provide continuing education to practicing classroom teachers who wish to add an endorsement in math or ELL. The program also attracts a variety of other students, such as community college professors and undergraduates who wish to gain an ELL endorsement before entering a teacher certification program.

As with all programs at Evergreen, the M.Ed. program is built on a commitment to diversity, educational equality, and social justice. "The core of the M.Ed. program is the idea of ensuring that you can meet the learning needs of the most vulnerable students," said Dr.

Walton.

"Evergreen provided me the opportunity to work with educators who are authentically committed to providing equitable educational opportunities for a community of English language learners who are often voiceless and have few advocates," said Huerta.



The first cohort of M.Ed. students with ELL endorsements

Central to the program is the exploration of ways that students can thrive in school. Teachers learn about research on the brain and learning, the impact of language acquisition, and students' cultural contexts.

"These folks make a big difference for kids," said Anita Lenges, one of the M.Ed. faculty who works with the math students.

Asked about why she thinks we need more, better math teachers, Lenges said: "We need math teachers who have a deep conceptual understanding of the math so they can effectively respond to students' thinking and mathematical needs. We need people who understand how to support students in developing rich knowledge. We need people who know that everyone can learn math. We need people who are committed to disrupting systems of oppression to provide access."

"I offer my sincerest congratulations to our first M.Ed. cohort," added Huerta, "who are well prepared to research best practices and teach students in high need content areas."

And with the first cohort of M.Ed. students graduating this summer, we'll have twenty-four more teachers to meet these needs.

MiT TACOMA

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Education Programs' Online Campaign

In an age of increasing internet usage, the Teacher Education Programs at Evergreen have begun to reach out to alumni and prospective students using YouTube. New videos will be created each quarter to show the impact of Evergreen's teacher preparation programs on teachers, students and the community.

It is our hope that by seeing the program through the lens of those who have experienced it, prospective students will catch a glimpse of what to expect from the MiT and M.Ed. programs.

Videos are currently posted which include interviews with alumni on why they chose the MiT program at Evergreen, as well as the effects they've seen in schools from their education in the program.

Other videos which are currently being edited are interviews with faculty, actual MiT classroom footage, and an online information session for prospective students. We hope to make information regarding the program more accessible to students who are conducting searches for teacher education programs online.

Videos have been filmed and edited by our graduate assistants and are available for viewing from the MiT website:

www.evergreen.edu/mit

Math Masters Paper Titles:

Exploring How Complex Instruction Affects Student Persistence on Complex Problems

- *Marilyn Gilman*

High School Teacher Becoming a Warm Demander Using Home Visits and Community Classroom Building

- *Kurt Salvatori*

Building Confidence of Fifth Grade Mathematics Students Using Strategies of Complex Instruction

- *Judith Carter*

Writing Group Pen Pal Letters to Improve Written Explanations of Mathematical Reasoning

- *Debi Hops*

Using Structured Cooperative Learning to Increase Student Academic Engagement in Mathematics

- *Marian Lemon*

You're Not the Boss of Me: Teachers' Negotiations of Mathematical Authority

- *Jon Corcoran*

Opening the Door: Helping Students in Special Education Get Access to Higher Math with the Graphic Calculator

- *Gordon Kenny*

Pairing Metacognition with Student Journal to Increase Achievement in Fractions

- *Raymond Gutierrez*

What Impact Does Group Work Have on Student Effort on Complex Mathematics Problems?

- *Cindy James*

"I Think I Can" Becoming the Little Engine That Could: Students' Self-

efficacy in Mathematics

- *Heidi Haynes*



ELL Masters Paper Titles:

Developing Reading Fluency Among Elementary ELLs

- *Laura McIver*

Implementing Cooperative Learning in the ESL Classroom

- *Anne-Marie Vu Quoc*

Mainstream Classrooms and the English Language Learner

- *Danielle Adams*

Teaching Reading Is Hard Work: A Look At Teaching Reading To First Graders

- *Sherry O'Connor*

Using ELL Literacy Strategies With the Visually Impaired

- *Leah O'Bryan*

Cooperative Learning and Its Effect on ELL Motivation and Engagement

- *Charly Bridges*

Acquiring English Takes Time: Assessing Second Grade ELL Language Proficiency

- *Carol Richardson*

The Use of Rubrics to Improve Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Among English Language Learners

- *Beth Johnson*

Using Math Manipulatives to Increase Math Skills and English Language Development

- *Victoria Hansen*

Higher Order Thinking Skills For English Language Learners

- *Chris Donato*

Implementing the Sheltered Instruction

- *Daphne Patterson*

Using the Rewards Program to Assess English Language Learners in the Special Education Classroom

- *Lisa Lamoreaux*

Using a Curriculum-based Reading Program to Develop Language and Literacy Skills For English Language Learners

- *Ineke Berhito*

We Shall Overcome: Using Theater Arts With English Language Learners

- *Tony Donato*

Walk-Out and Rally at the Capitol in Response to Budget Cuts



On Friday, February 5th, walk-outs were held on college campuses across Washington to protest proposed cuts to the state education budget. One such walk-out was held at Evergreen, and a number of first-year MiT students participated by respectfully walking out of their Friday seminars.

The walk-out was organized by the Washington Student Association, which Evergreen is a member of, and the Olympia Coalition for a Fair Budget.

"Being a part of the walk-out was a way to take collective action and make plans for the future," said Kefi Andersen, a first-year student who participated in the walk-out. "As a future teacher, I think it is important that access to education should not be based on economic status."

"I felt that my attendance was important because we need people to speak out about the importance of education, healthcare, and other social programs in this state," said Kelsey Sutich.

Although most students agreed that budget issues are crucial, for both themselves and their future students, they differed in what actions they deemed appropriate and effective. There were also many students who chose not to participate in the

walk-out.

"I felt that it was more important for me to be in class preparing to teach those who will be affected by the budget cuts," said Reyna Jasmer, a year-one student who chose not to walk out.

Shortly after 11:30 a.m., the scheduled time for the walk-

out, fire alarms were pulled in Seminar II and the library building. The



evacuation of these buildings undermined the choice of students who had decided not to participate.

"I felt that I made my decision not to attend, and that my decision was still in support of finding better ways [to deal with revenue issues] than budget cuts," said Reyna. "It made me angry when someone forced my decision for me. That being said, it gave me a new perspective on my own privilege of being able to choose when many others don't."

"Although the fire alarms were pulled, I am glad it gave the professors the opportunity to participate in the event," said Kefi.

Most of the students who participated in the walk-out at Evergreen also made their opposition to budget

cuts heard at the pro-revenue rally at the Capitol on February 15th.

"Budget issues are important because they reflect our society's priorities," said Joshua Farris, who attended both the on-campus walk-out and the rally at the Capitol. "And they are more and more a reflection of greed, corruption, and destruction."

It's estimated that more than 6,000 people attended the pro-revenue rally.

"While the walk-out and rally were fairly small gestures in the big picture, they were an opportunity for me to add my voice to a larger group of people who are saying the same things," said Kelsey.

"That when we make sweeping cuts to education to deal with short-term revenue problems, we are damaging the future of our state in a way that will create a greater need for social programs and government spending in the future."

As of this writing, the precise cuts to the education and social services budgets have yet to be determined by the legislature.





Second Years Practice Interviewing

On Monday, February 8th, the second-year MiT students had a chance to hone their interview skills by participating in a mock interview day. Each of the second year students “interviewed” with a panel of school officials, usually consisting of principals and human resource managers.

The panel members tried to replicate what it will be like for the MiT students when they interview for jobs later this year. The students all did a great job and seemed well prepared, one panel member commented.

While the current economic climate is making it more difficult to find jobs that it may have been in the past, the human re-

source managers commented that it was a buyer’s market for them. They are hiring better qualified teachers than ever before.

“The idea of going out and getting a job can be overwhelming at times,” said second-year MiT student Ryan Saunders when asked about the prospect of going out on real interviews. “It is exciting but also nerve-wracking.”

For some of the cohort, interviewing for jobs in the area will mean competing against other classmates. “It’s tough to think of myself as a competitor against my fellow cohort members for jobs, but that’s what we are,” said Jennifer Chaney, whose endorsement is in elementary education.

“I’m optimistic, but pragmatic,” Richard Patrick Taggesell said. “It’s a lot more difficult than it has been in the past, but there are jobs out there.”

When asked if he had any advice for first-year MiT students, who will also be entering the job market in a year or so, second-year Luke Skillen shared this piece of advice: “Continue self-reflection. It’s a skill that not a lot of people have.”

Two MiT Students Find Their Places in the World with Jobs Abroad

Two lucky second-year MiT students have secured teaching positions at international schools. Katy Bingham and Rachel Coulter attended a job fair in San Francisco and were hired on the spot.

“One of my lifelong goals is to live, work, and experience another culture somewhere outside the U.S.,” said Katy.

“The fact that this life-goal is coming to fruition fills me with joy!”

Katy and Rachel both signed up with Search Associates, an online search program for international schools and some private schools in North America. In February they attended a job fair in San Francisco. There they met with representatives from numerous interna-

tional schools, but primarily from the Middle East, Asia, and South America, and attended information sessions, workshops, and interviews.

“I felt excited and exhausted after attending all the workshops—it was as if I had traveled around the world in the span of 6 – 7 hours,” said Katy.

“The fair was intense!” said Rachel.

“We got into San Francisco on a Thursday, and as of Friday morning were attending information sessions and setting up interviews with schools.”

The grueling process worked out in the end though, because both Katy and Rachel came away with jobs. Katy will be teaching middle school drama in Turkey, and Rachel will be teaching middle school math in Kuwait.

“I don’t think I would have picked Kuwait as a dream place to go, prior to the fair in San Francisco, but the school climate seems like a fantastic fit,” said

Rachel. “After doing so much research on the needs of beginning teachers to feel efficacious in their first years in the field, I was very specific about what type of environment I hoped to enter, and this school provides opportunities to collaborate and mentor right in tune with what the research says I will need.”

Katy is similarly excited. “Half the staff are from Turkey, and the other half are from other parts of the world.”

Both are looking forward to the experience immensely.

“It made me very thankful for the content and structure of MiT!” said Rachel.



Katy Bingham



Rachel Coulter



On Wednesday, February 24th, 2010, the MiT Graduate Student Association (GSA) sponsored a workshop called Building Resiliency: Working with Children Exposed to Traumatic Stress. Laura Porter, the director of Washington State's Family Policy Council, presented the workshop and provided information on recent research findings on traumatic

Building Resiliency Workshop Held

childhood experience, neurobiological development, and resiliency.

Porter also facilitated discussion within the workshop on ways to promote resiliency and community partnerships. The workshop was an open event, and attendees included MiT and M.Ed. students,

Evergreen staff, Evergreen undergraduates, representatives from community organizations, and many others.

The idea for the workshop was proposed by Vida Long, a second-year MiT student, who worked with the GSA to organize the event. Vida worked to bring this workshop to Evergreen because she felt strongly

that schools should be places where students can "be the best person they can be, and feel safe, welcomed, and find a place where they belong."

She saw it as an opportunity to provide future educators and other community members with new research that will support them in creating that type of environment.

"Every person here has an opportunity to create better accommodations for traumatized people," shared presenter Laura Porter. "There should be room in every environment for people who struggle. We need everybody's minds attuned to figuring out what accommodation should look like. We don't know yet. But I hope they take away a commitment to figuring that out."

MiT Winter and Spring 2010 Practicum Placements

| North Thurston: | Tenino: | Tumwater: | Olympia: |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| North Thurston High School | Tenino High School | Tumwater High School | Capital High School |
| River Ridge High School | | Tumwater Middle School | Olympia High School |
| Timberline High School | Tacoma: | | Marshall Middle School |
| Aspire Middle School | Lincoln High School | Shelton: | Garfield Elementary |
| Chinook Middle School | Meeker Middle School | Shelton High | Hansen Elementary |
| Nisqually Middle School | Gray Middle School | Oakland Bay Junior High | Madison Elementary |
| Chambers Prairie Elementary | | Evergreen Elementary | |
| Evergreen Forest Elementary | Renton: | Pioneer Elementary | Clover Park: |
| Mountain View Elementary | Renton High School | | Clover Park High School |



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Kelly Foster MIT '95
Fifth Grade teacher, Park Lodge Elementary



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MiT Alum Braves the Freezing Alaskan Bush

While we in Washington snuggled in for an unusually mild winter break, MiT alumna Nicolle Gilsdorf was busy fending off the -33 degree weather in Fairbanks, Alaska. She began work there with a grant that helps Alaskan teachers in the bush (the portion of Alaska that is not connected to North America's system of roadways) connect math to the Alaskan culture of their students.

The grant is funded by a program called Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) that provides a number of modules for students in



second through sixth grade, as well as a summer math institute for teachers. Nicolle has been flying from her home in Fairbanks to bush communities, where she works with teach-

ers, students, principals, and communities to implement these programs on site.

Funding for MCC came from the U.S. Department of Education and is open to a limited number of school districts in Alaska. The program also works in conjunction with University of Alaska at Fairbanks to provide credit for teachers taking part in the MCC courses.

We are proud to see our alumni reaching out to some of the most remote parts of the country and working to bring equitable educational opportunities to all students.

Keep Connected!

Help us stay connected by updating your current contact information with Loren Petty. We will keep you posted on news, career and educational opportunities, and much more! Please send us your stories and experiences from the field, and let us know what you're up to!

Email pettyl@evergreen.edu



Principal Randy Weeks Dons Tutu & Tiara

"It's okay to be silly for a good cause," said Randy Weeks, principal of Mountain View Elementary in Olympia and MiT alum. He told students he would wear a tutu and tiara for an entire day if they raised more than \$3,000 for the school's annual "Jump Rope for Heart, Hoops for Heart" fundraiser. They exceeded the amount by \$500, and Weeks kept his word.

Photo reprinted with permission from *The Olympian*.

Dreams of a Graduation Visit from President Obama Inspired by MiT Alum

MiT alumna Audrey Sharp's visual communications class at Mariner High School has placed its bid to bring President Barack Obama to serve as their commencement speaker. As part of President Obama's Race to the Top reforms, the Department of Education has created a competition called the Commencement Challenge. They now have the difficult job of choosing six finalists from videos representing schools across the nation.



Mariner High School students have produced a video showing why Mariner represents an institution of academic excellence. The video, which must be under two minutes in length, displays the diversity, passion, and artistic ability of the students of Mariner.

The students who created the video credit Sharp with teaching them the skills needed to create this video and the confidence to move forward in the challenge. As we can see, MiT alumni are teaching students to aspire to greatness and encouraging them out onto the national stage. Will President Obama be the speaker at Mariner's graduation? Videos were due March 15th and we should be seeing the six finalists on the White House webpage in the near future.

Audrey's students' submission can be found on YouTube by searching for "Mariner High School Race to the Top Commencement Challenge."

**Put your knowledge and experience to work
where they're most needed.**

Become a teacher.



**Eugene Bradshaw, Army Command Sgt. Major (Ret.)
7th & 8th Grade Special Education teacher
Lochburn Middle School, Lakewood**

Sgt. Major Bradshaw earned his Master in Teaching degree from The Evergreen State College in 2006. "Once I retired, I wanted to go into teaching. In Evergreen's MiT program, your values and experiences are shared and respected. It's an exceptional education!"

Evergreen's nationally recognized Master in Teaching program leads to teacher certification and a master's degree.

**"In transitioning from military to civilian life,
it was great to start at Evergreen."**

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