

# RESEARCH INNOVATION

Research in Georgia State University's College of Education · Fall 2012

## Lederberg and Easterbrooks to Lead \$10 Million Research Project To Improve Reading in Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Susan Easterbrooks

College of Education Professors Amy Lederberg and Susan Easterbrooks have been awarded a \$10 million grant to create the first national research center aimed at dramatically improving reading for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The grant from the National Center for Special Education Research of the Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, will have a major impact on curriculum development for and assessment of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. It will fund a team of researchers whose work will lead to a better understanding of the way students who are deaf and hard of hearing learn, and the creation of intervention models that can be replicated in schools nationwide.

“The center’s goals are two-fold,” Easterbrooks said. “We want to identify both child and instructional factors that affect reading growth and develop individualized interventions that are specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing struggling readers.”

The grant will provide funding to create the National Research and Development Center for Literacy and Deafness, the first of its kind to focus on children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The researchers will conduct a five-year interdisciplinary study to determine how deaf or hard of hearing children learn to read and to develop interventions focused on improving reading outcomes from kindergarten to second grade. In addition to engaging in research and curriculum development, the center will provide national leadership activities for professionals interested in improving the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.



Amy Lederberg

## Dean’s Message

This year, members of the faculty in the College of Education have made significant additions to our portfolio of funded research. We proudly introduce two new Institute of Education Sciences national centers and one new National Institute of Child Health and Human Development learning disabilities innovation hub. These awards add to our funded projects in literacy for students with moderate to severe disabilities, students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and students within the juvenile justice system. They contribute to the growing recognition of our research and innovation in various aspects of literacy.

Faculty also received significant new funding for existing projects: The Network for Enhancing Teacher-Quality, our program for professional development schools featured by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; the After-School All-Stars program, which provides academic and enrichment programming for over 2,500 middle school students; and the Quality Instruction for English Learners project, which provides school-based professional development targeting instruction for English Learners in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

These funded projects allow us to continue to expend resources for funded and unfunded scholarship and research initiatives and to expand the infrastructure in the college’s Education Research Bureau, which supports our research endeavors.

In addition to our research success, we are proud to announce two newly endowed professorships – the Mary and Kenneth Matheny Endowed Professorship in Counseling and Psychological Services and the Vesta O. Jones Endowed Professorship in Early Childhood Education/Development. We thank our generous advocates and contributors that help assure the ongoing quality work of the college.

**Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.**  
Interim Dean and Regents’ Professor

## College of Education Training Awards

### David Houchins and Kris Varjas

Project Leaders in Exceptionalities  
Alternative and Delinquency-Related  
Environments through Research  
and Scholarship  
U.S. Department of Education

**\$1.25 million**

Project Leaders prepares full-time doctoral students to study and improve academic and mental health services for students with mild disabilities in alternative schools and the professionals who serve them.

### Sherry Howard

Best Practices Training Initiative  
Georgia's Bright from the Start program

**\$1.3 million**

Best Practices designs and delivers training modules for assistant teachers across Georgia.

### Peggy Gallagher

Project SCEIs  
Babies Can't Wait program

**\$400,425**

Project SCEIs is a collaborative effort of Georgia's colleges and universities dedicated to the training needs and professional development of Georgia's early intervention personnel.

## Greenberg Awarded \$10 Million Grant to Research and Advance Adult Literacy



Daphne Greenberg

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the College of Education a five-year, \$10 million grant to establish a new national research center that will support research focusing on ways to improve adult literacy in the United States.

The grant from the Institute of Educational Sciences allows Georgia State to establish the Center for the Study of Adult Literacy, where researchers will study the underlying cognitive and motivational issues of adults who struggle with reading.

The primary focus of the center is on adults reading at the third to eighth grade levels, examining impediments to reading and developing and evaluating a reading intervention to improve literacy.

“Compared to many areas in education, adult literacy has had comparatively little funding and little rigorous research,” said Daphne Greenberg, associate professor of educational psychology and special education, and principal investigator of the project. “There is a need to understand the reading related strengths and weaknesses of adults who have difficulty with reading, and how to best help them increase their reading abilities.”

According to the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy, about 43 percent of adults in the United States read at basic or below basic levels of literacy. About 44 percent of adults who read at below basic levels have incomes below the national poverty threshold. Greenberg noted that low adult literacy can translate into poor intergenerational transfer of literacy from adults to youth.



Julie Washington



Nicole Patton-Terry

## Washington and Patton-Terry Receive \$2.6 Million Grant To Create Innovation Hub on Learning Disabilities, Literacy and African American Students

College of Education Professors Julie Washington and Nicole Patton-Terry have received a four-year, \$2.6 million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to develop one of four national Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs – epicenters of research on learning disabilities.

Washington and Patton-Terry will focus on African American students in first through fifth grades, and conduct research in metro-Atlanta area school systems to differentiate between those children who have learning disabilities and those for whom language variation and socioeconomic status play a large role in learning to read and write.

“Our goal in applying for this grant was to address an issue that we knew people weren't really addressing in this population of students,” Washington said. “The students

are not always identified as learning disabled – they're usually talked about as being 'struggling readers.' We want to take on the learning disability issue, but also another issue that people let influence how they address this issue, and that's poverty. We want to figure out which issues are true poverty issues and which issues are true learning disability issues.”

Washington and Patton-Terry will be teaming with co-principal investigator Mark Seidenberg, the Hildale and Donald O. Hebb Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty to identify different subgroups of students with reading problems and collect data on why they struggle with different literacy skills.

## College of Education Faculty Awarded \$1.9 Million Grant To Support English for Speakers of Other Languages Teachers in Urban Schools

Three College of Education faculty members are working to offer on-site training and mentorship to support students in the college's Urban Accelerated Certification and Master's Program and other teachers in their first years of their careers, thanks to a five-year, \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Early Childhood Education faculty members Diane Truscott, Nancy Schafer and Laura May received the grant for the Quality Instruction for English Learners project, which prepares teachers to serve English language learners through site-based development, professional learning opportunities and mentoring.

"One key activity of the grant is to develop a Professional Learning Site with DeKalb County Schools to help bridge theory and practice for preservice and inservice teachers," said Schafer, project director and co-principal investigator for the project. "This grant will allow us to better support first-year teachers as they transition from apprentice to teacher of record."

The teacher professional development program will focus on literacy and language development with an infusion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities. These include summer workshops, new curriculum, technology for language acquisition and online professional learning communities.

## College of Education Faculty Receive \$2.1 Million Grant to Support STEM Teachers in Urban Schools

Three faculty members in the College of Education's Department of Early Childhood Education have received a \$2.1 million grant to train and support teachers dedicated to teaching science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects in high-need urban schools.

Associate Professor Diane Truscott and Assistant Professors Nancy Schafer and Brian Williams received the funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Transition to Teaching program for their "Teaching Teachers Together: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Success" program, which will recruit teachers into the college's Urban Accelerated Certification and Master's Program.

"Our focus is to build on what we've already learned from our previous grant experiences in high-need urban schools and to increase the number of highly qualified teachers who commit to teaching in those schools," said Truscott, principal investigator for the grant. "We have a commitment in the program to support children in schools who are culturally and linguistically diverse, and now we're trying also to emphasize science and mathematics content."

Participants in the grant program will conduct their field experiences in Atlanta Public Schools classrooms with mentor teachers, and will have the opportunity to



Diane Truscott

attend professional development seminars, classes and science summer camps that Truscott, Schafer and Williams are developing at a professional learning site.

By the end of the five-year grant, the researchers hope to have a better understanding of what teachers need in order to teach STEM subjects effectively and have curriculum for math and science classes that can be used as a model for summer camps, after-school programs and general classroom instruction.

# \$12.3 million\*

The College of Education has been awarded federal and state dollars to support current research, training and service learning projects. This funding spans the college's six departments and five centers, and has an impact on the work our students, faculty and staff are accomplishing in the metro-Atlanta area and beyond.

\*Federal and state grant funding fiscal year 2012.

## International Awards

Amy Seely Flint, Mona Matthews  
and Peggy Albers  
*Georgia State University*

Renee Nathanson  
*Stellenbosch University*

Project Partnerships Achieve Literacy  
(PAL) *South Africa*

Grand Challenge for Development grant  
from the U.S. Agency for International  
Development, World Vision and the  
Australian Agency for International  
Development

# \$300,000

Project PAL South Africa is an international project that includes literacy researchers, teacher educators and classroom teachers from different countries sharing research-based practices for literacy development and technology use in diverse classrooms.

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## After-School All-Stars Receives \$3.8 Million in Grant Funding, In-Kind Services to Continue Programs in Local Schools

The College of Education's After-School All-Stars Atlanta program received a one-year, \$950,000 grant from the Georgia Department of Human Services to continue its programs in local schools.

After-School All-Stars Atlanta, which provides comprehensive after-school programs for at-risk students, also received \$2.85 million in in-kind services from the Atlanta Public School System, bringing the total grant award to \$3.8 million.

The program has 15 independent after-school sites, 11 of which are in urban

middle schools. The remaining programs are in three of Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed's Centers of Hope and at the City of Refuge, which offers transitional housing for homeless women with children. Teachers who are recruited from within their home schools offer homework assistance, tutoring and enrichment programs to students who attend.

Walt Thompson, College of Education associate dean for graduate studies and research and After-School All-Stars Atlanta executive director, said grant funding is a

crucial part of offering after-school programs to children in Atlanta.

"This grant represents the fifth year of substantial funding from the Georgia Department of Human Services," said Thompson, who is also a Regents' Professor in the college's Department of Kinesiology and Health. "This funding, along with other grants and gifts, will enable almost 2,500 students to participate in a comprehensive after-school program every day of the school year and during the summer."

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## NET-Q Project Receives \$2 Million in Funding to Continue its Programs

The College of Education's Network for Enhancing Teacher Quality (NET-Q) project has received \$2 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education to continue its programs in the 2012-2013 school year.

The NET-Q project is a collection of programs, partnerships, initiatives and incentives designed to prepare teachers for the demands of teaching in critical fields in high-need schools. The College of Education has partnered with six metro-Atlanta school districts, 23 rural districts in south and west Georgia, four Georgia colleges, Georgia Public Broadcasting and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in its efforts to train, support and retain quality teachers.

This funding for NET-Q will allow the College of Education to expand its teacher

residency program, which includes a full year in schools, working under the supervision of master teachers and Georgia State University faculty. As residents complete the program, they go on to teach in critical fields in high-need schools in rural and urban communities.

"Through NET-Q's residency component, we have recruited military veterans, mathematicians, scientists, health professionals and many other career-changers who are highly knowledgeable in their content areas, mature professionals and passionate about becoming successful educators who can make a difference in students' lives," said Gwen Benson, College of Education associate dean for school, community and international partnerships and NET-Q's principal investigator.

The College of Education will also continue its Cross Career Learning Communities – groups of teachers and administrators who meet regularly to discuss everything from achievement data and lesson plans to student work samples and professional dilemmas.



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