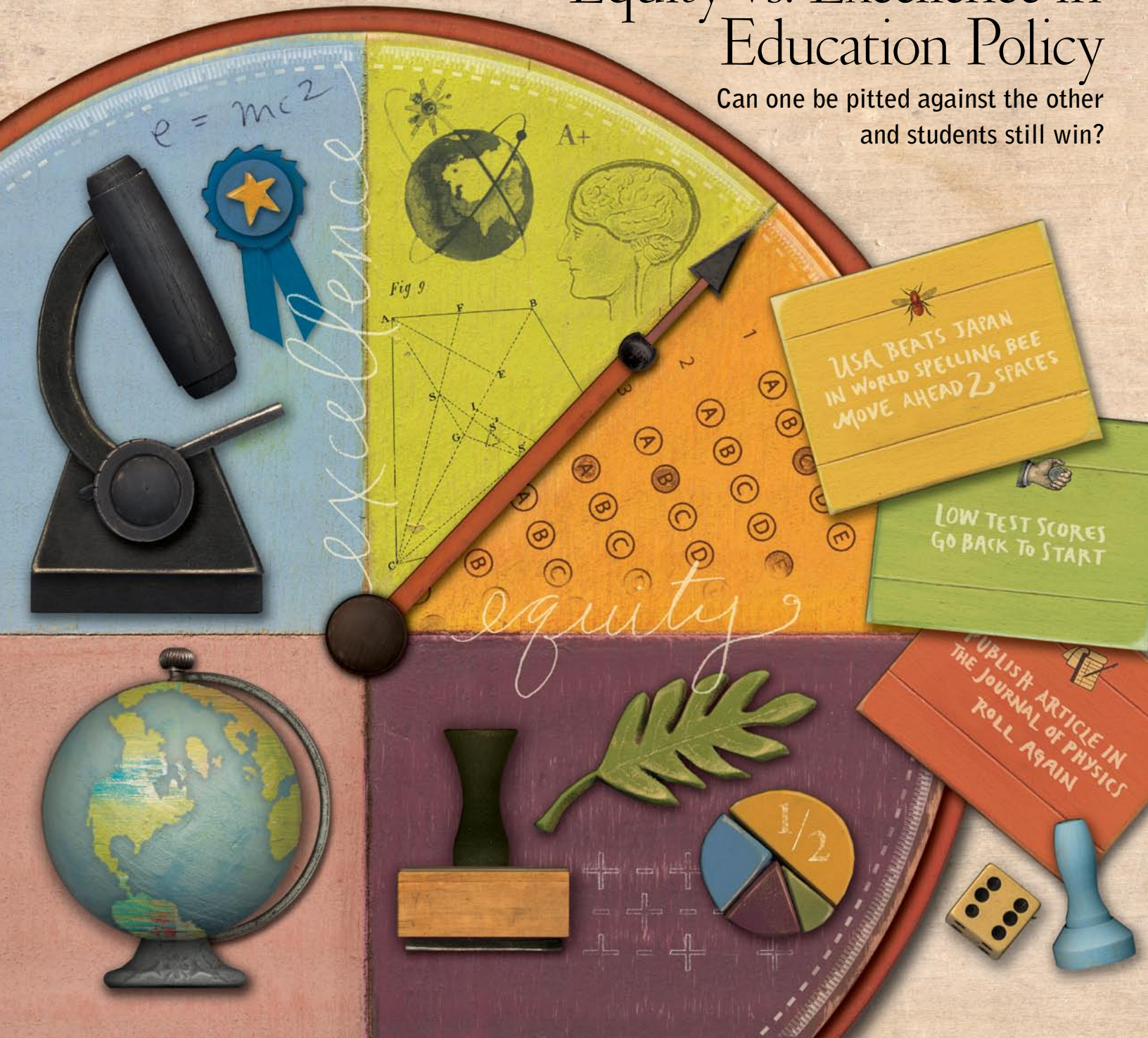


PEABODY

reflector

Equity vs. Excellence in Education Policy

Can one be pitted against the other
and students still win?





PEABODY PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

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In 2008, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College will offer a full summer of short-term professional development programs building on the college's experience and reputation for training administrators and senior practitioners.

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2008 Summer Institutes

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<i>Independent School Leadership</i>	June 23–27
<i>Academic Library Leadership</i>	July 6–10
<i>Charter School Leadership</i>	July 13–17
<i>Montessori School Leadership</i>	July 18–20
<i>The Power of Human Resource Development: Creating an Architecture for Success</i>	July 21–25
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On the cover: Illustration by Amanda Warren.
Read more about the issue of equity vs. excellence in education policy beginning on p.16.

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PEABODY
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DAN LOFTIN

Perhaps it is because the 2008 election campaign got off to an early start, or perhaps it is because world events seem more urgent, but it feels as though, even more than usual, our attention continually turns toward Washington. This is true even of *THE REFLECTOR*, which in this issue takes a close look at long-term trends in federal education policy and profiles several of the college's alumni who live and work in our nation's capital.

D.C. is my most frequent travel destination, literally and figuratively, thanks to my roles on the National Science Board and National Math Panel. As an academician, though, I confess that I have never been entirely comfortable walking the "corridors of power." It helps me to recast the metaphor; I prefer to think of them as avenues of opportunity.

Earlier this fall I made a presentation to the National Science Board that spoke indirectly to this theme of opportunity. The NSB oversees the National Science Foundation, and I shared with the board some of the data gathered through the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth, which I co-direct with David Lubinski. I tried to indicate the remarkable achievements and innovations that follow when we identify exceptional talent early on and then cultivate that talent through enhanced educational opportunities. I went on to suggest that if the U.S. wants to foster innovation in science, technology, engineering and math, we need a national plan supported by strong research evidence.

As this issue's cover story details, the tension between emphasizing equity (meaning equality of educational opportunity) and excellence (offering a public education of the highest quality) has challenged policymakers for half a century. It is hard to do both. But it is also imperative that we do both.

The solution, I think, may be to keep this idea of opportunity in the foreground of our thinking about education. We need an education policy that reframes fundamental questions positively. Rather than focusing exclusively (and punitively) on whether we have left someone behind, perhaps we should give more weight to considering how we can better enable both the few and the many to keep moving forward.

CAMILLA BENBOW

Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development

NCLB and Accountability

FOR ALL ITS DOWNTURNS AND unintended outcomes, NCLB may yet prove a boon to change and accountability in education. The pressure to "teach to the test," while taking its toll on electives and critical thinking, may force a return to the time-revered approach known as *cognitive interpretation*.

Cognitive interpretation, aka *concept development*, has its roots in Wertheimer's Gestalt psychology. Properly applied, it can help resolve the claim that teachers spend far too much time, and put far too much emphasis, on retention at the expense of understanding. Less time to teach prompts us to seek "the greatest bang for the buck." Due diligence requires us to find ways to make learning yield greater insights in the least amount of time.

Time is of the essence under NCLB pressures. Applying a formula does not necessarily demonstrate understanding, but reconfiguring the problem does. Students are better served understanding the relationships of parts to wholes than simply memorizing formulas or mathematical processes. This kind of holistic investigation leads to a fuller comprehension, including corresponding implications inherent in the problem.

For all its importance and usefulness, memory is more restrictive than understanding. Under existing constraints, teachers in all subjects must put a premium on efficiency. At Ottawa

University where I teach, methodology classes rate students at least in part on how efficiently they can deliver a lesson aimed at cognitive interpretation. Time on task has become a critical commodity. Positive learning outcomes can be achieved if we all strive to teach efficiently as well as effectively. As a recent *REFLECTOR* respondent put it: "The real issue is adaptation and revision."

This is the challenge all teacher training institutes must presently face.

ROBERT F. SCHAMBIER, EDD '85
Phoenix, Ariz.

AS A GRADUATE OF PEABODY College and working as a teacher educator, I read your article on NCLB with great interest. I found the viewpoints of the Peabody faculty to have a balanced approach as to the advantages and disadvantages of the law. I have one point of dispute as to Andrew Porter's contention about eliminating the gap between low achieving and high achieving students.

According to your article, Porter contends that "today, the achievement gap between underserved children and children of privilege stands at a full standard deviation, which in raw terms means that vast numbers of kids are undereducated. Closing that gap by one standard deviation would, for example, bring a child at the 50th percentile up to the 84th percentile, a phenomenal gain. Porter contends that such a jump can happen if America improves the quality of teaching."

Perhaps Andrew Porter lives in Lake Wobegon where "the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average." It is impossible to bring up all students' standard scores; using standard deviation as a measure of progress is not appropriate. He should have been suggesting that the goal should be having no difference in the aggregate scores for low income and high income students. There will always be 50% of the students who are "below average."

Perhaps the article did not reflect Porter's ideas accurately. I hope you will forward this e-mail to him. I am interested in knowing what he thinks and if others may have also noticed his explanation using these faulty statistics. I think Dr. Ray Norris, who was my stats professor, would concur.

NANCY S. LORY, EDD '83
Keene, N.H.

In the absence of Prof. Andrew Porter, now dean of the School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, THE REFLECTOR asked David Cordray, professor of public policy and professor of psychology, who specializes in quantitative methods, to respond.

BY SAYING THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT gap is a full standard deviation, Porter is casting the raw test score difference in terms of a commonly used standardized metric. So, that part is fine.

His interpretation of what it would mean to close the gap is a bit esoteric, but it is correct. The

“bell curve” can be divided into percentiles that can then be used in conjunction with the idea of a standard deviation. We know that one standard deviation above the mean (the 50th percentile) of the bell curve includes 84 percent of the population. We commonly use this as a way of communicating the degree of improvement in scores. To talk about improvement, you need a benchmark. Porter used the 50th percentile as this benchmark. It is a statistical convenience. He is not implying that all the children are above the mean (the Lake Wobegon effect); that is an entirely different idea.

The main point that Porter was making is that the gap is very large. We need to improve the quality of education for poor children in order to close the gap. This is a difficult task (the gap has been wide for decades) that needs immediate, sustained, and comprehensive attention. The efforts also need to be rigorously assessed to assure parents, teachers and policy-makers that the efforts (e.g., improved professional development for teachers) are working as they are supposed to work. Our ExpERT predoctoral training program is designed to train education scientists to conduct such tests.

It is unfortunate that Porter used a statistical discussion that seems, on the surface, to be similar to the Lake Wobegon story. This confuses the main point of his argument...the gap is too big.

I'M WRITING TO COMPLIMENT you on the most recent edition of REFLECTOR. While I always enjoy keeping up with the latest in research, news and policy issues around campus, this issue spotlighting NCLB is of particular interest. My colleagues and I are starting our third year in a research project focusing on teacher quality, specifically as it relates to teacher preparation of new teachers for special education and at-risk learners. As you know, teacher quality is a major component of NCLB.

Thank you,

SUSAN M. SMARTT, BS'71, MED'83
Nashville, Tenn.

Alternative Certification

YOUR DEBATE, “THE BEST WAY to assure teacher quality” overlooks one important point—our expectations for teachers are absurd.

NBC television, with all of its money and talent, cannot produce a program from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., five days a week, nine months a year, and maintain interest. Often they cannot produce a program one hour a week and keep high ratings.

Yet we give teachers a boring textbook and expect them to do what NBC cannot do. Perhaps we should be debating these absurd expectations. Perhaps we need to examine the lack of reality in our university teaching. How can we prepare our university students to function in the real world when our universities are like isolated academic monasteries?

THOMAS L. REID, MA'62
Tucson, Ariz.

More on the Ed.D. Debate

LIKE PREVIOUS ALUMNI, I want to echo their concerns and pleas for continuation of the Ed.D. program as is. My Ed.D. in 1963 and Distinguished Alumna award in 1986 attest to my work as a result of my degree. My research generated world wide distribution and is a perfect example of the relationship between research and practice. My choice of research was the result of my observations as a teacher for years prior to my degree. By all means keep the result portion and emphasize the validity of practice components. My career as professor at the University of Texas and my teaching in 23 different countries attest to the value of my research. Please, no changes in Ed.D.

NATALIE BARRAGA, EDD'63
Austin, Texas

Campus Conundrum?

ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE the photo inside the back cover [of the Summer 2007 issue] is of dogwoods near West Hall? When I saw it, it was just so familiar to me. It has been several more than 30 years since I lived in East Hall, but I would just swear that photo was taken from the East Hall perspective. Maybe this is just a test for us old folks.

Yes, it is a beautiful campus, very beautiful.

KATHY BENNY, BA'71, MA'74
Cockeysville, Md.

The Editor admits she has no sense of direction. You are absolutely correct.



High school students learned about Law, War and Terror as part of Vanderbilt Summer Academy.

Summer Programs Abound at Peabody

Just as the campus overflowed with people 50 years ago during the summer months, this summer Peabody was filled with eager learners, from middle schoolers and teenagers to teachers and administrators coming to campus for professional development. Three programs in particular show the breadth of offerings held on campus this summer: Vanderbilt Summer Academy (VSA), the Summer Scholar Identity Institute and Peabody Professional Institutes.

Vanderbilt Summer Academy (VSA)

Finding fun and interesting activities for a couple of kids during the long days of summer can be a challenge, but what if you have 300 of the brightest students from across the country? A few light courses in nanotechnology and sending the students on medical rounds did the trick at Vanderbilt Summer Academy (VSA).

VSA, just one of several offerings from Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth, is geared toward academically gifted rising 8th through 12th graders who qualify

for the program through their scores on the SAT or ACT.

Three hundred and six students from 24 states, including Hawaii and California, and a student from Shanghai, China, learned from leading academics in disciplines such as anthropology, astronomy, biomedical engineering, law and history.

“The students engaged in advanced course work with the help of our wonderful faculty, who gave their time to engage these middle and high school students as if they were at the college level,” Elizabeth Schoenfeld, Programs for Talented Youth director, said.

Letters are always welcome in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style or clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, Peabody Reflector, VU Station B #357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or email reflector@vanderbilt.edu.



STEVE GREEN

Vanderbilt Summer Academy students visit a “clean room” in the Nanoscience Lab in Stevenson Hall. Prof. Anthony Hmelo guided the summer camp students from 24 states and China through putting on the ‘bunny suits’ which help protect the environment of the lab.

Students donned special suits designed to keep contaminants at bay while they conducted an experiment using a focused ion beam microscope in the “clean room” of the Vanderbilt Institute for Nanoscale Science and Engineering (VINSE) lab. They also cultured lung tissue and observed the way in which the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) penetrates cells. Other VSA offerings allowed students to delve into courses such as “Music of the Movement: From American Civil Rights to Hip Hop,” “Environmental Philosophy,” the astronomy-focused “Eyes on the Skies,” “Biomedical Engineering,” “Law, War and Terror,” “Dead Men’s Tales: Forensic Anthropology” and “Med School 101.”

For more information about VSA and Programs for Talented Youth, visit pty.vanderbilt.edu.

Summer Scholar Identity Institute

The Summer Scholar Identity Institute ran from July 9–20 at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center at Vanderbilt. It is part of the Vanderbilt University Achievement Gap Project, which is striving to close an alarming achievement gap between young black males and other students.

The project was developed by Gilman Whiting, director of undergraduate studies for Vanderbilt’s African American Diaspora Studies program and assistant professor of HOD, and Donna Ford, Betts Professor of Education and Human Development at Peabody. The participants were part of the 100 Kings program, in which Metro Nashville students in fifth through 12th grades are mentored by the 100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee organization.

“Black males are much more likely than other people to be killed by homicide, prostate cancer or AIDS,” said Whiting, assistant professor, “They drop out of high school more often and attend college less often. They are perceived as troublemakers, many times because of communication difficulties with white teachers.

“It’s often not socially acceptable to be a high achiever among their friends, and sometimes the choice becomes one of high grades or friends. It’s a tough decision for them to make.”

The Summer Scholar Identity Institute brings together young black males

from the Metro Nashville School system with high grades and potential, and seeks to reinforce good habits and create camaraderie around the notion of being a good student.

“Most of us get good grades but sometimes we don’t act like it,” said Dahjwon Waldan, 15, a student at Martin Luther King High School who wants to study computer engineering and law. “We have to watch out for each other.”

Mentoring 25 or so young men at a time while thousands languish can feel hopeless at times, but Whiting believes that each young black male who makes it is worth “a thousand more” because he may inspire and mentor others.

“One of these guys could be the next Barack Obama or Martin Luther King Jr.,” Whiting said. “If we don’t do programs like this, we could lose the skills of a boy who could grow up to be poet laureate.”



DANIEL DUBOIS

Gilman Whiting, director of the Summer Scholar Identity Institute, with Metro Nashville students.



DANIEL DUBOIS

The Charter School Leadership Institute was one offering of the Peabody Professional Institutes this summer.

Peabody Professional Institutes

A host of higher education and K–12 professionals descended on the Vanderbilt Peabody campus in June and July for their own form of summer school, the Peabody Professional Institutes.

“The institutes are an intensive learning experience taught by Vanderbilt faculty and external experts for professional educators, administrators, directors, executives and managers from across the nation and around the world,” PPI Director and Peabody Associate Dean for External Relations and Professional Programs Timothy Caboni said. “This summer’s institutes focused on higher education management, fundraising, charter and independent schools, and academic libraries. Attendees, who were selected through a competitive application process, came from 32 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.”

New to PPI this summer was a partnership with the state of Ten-

nessee that created an opportunity for 12 Tennessee charter school leaders to attend the Charter School Leadership Institute June 18–22. Institute instructors will conduct follow-up visits to each of the schools to help the leaders implement what they learned.

“This institute gave charter school leaders strategies and tools that they can take back to their schools to improve teaching, learning and administration,” Caboni said. “The focus of all of the institutes is to empower education leaders with the latest research and practice in the field so that they can be more effective when they return to their school or university.”

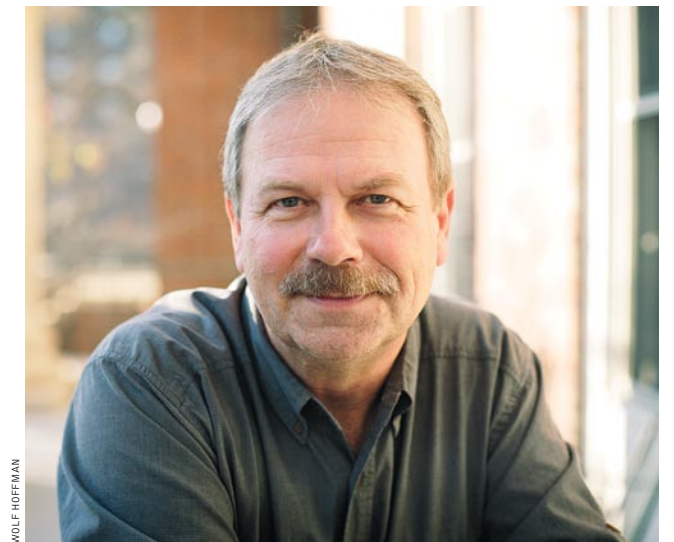
PPI also partnered with the Institute for Museum and Library Services to make scholarships available for 10 participants of the Academic Library Leadership Institute, which took place July 8–12.

To learn more about the Peabody Professional Institutes, visit peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ppi.xml

Read 180 Turns It Around

Putting cutting-edge research into practice can be tricky, but Ted Hasselbring, research professor of special education at Peabody, has been able to do just that. As one of the creators of Read 180, a Scholastic reading intervention program, his work has had a quantifiable influence on reading education. Initially developed in 1985 by Hasselbring and others at Vanderbilt’s Learning Technology Center, Read 180 is now one of the most respected reading intervention programs in America, implemented in all 50 states and used in thousands of classrooms.

“We never started out with the idea of creating a commercial product,” says Hasselbring. “In the beginning, we were simply



WOLF HOFFMAN

Hasselbring

looking at the use of video as a way to provide background knowledge and help kids create a model of text.” Scholastic, a global leader in education publishing, became interested in the program after witnessing its successful implementation in Florida. “In 1993, Orange County schools were experiencing a huge dropout

Campus Changes and Additions

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

Timothy C. Caboni has been promoted to associate dean for external relations and professional education.

Craig Anne Heflinger has been promoted to associate dean for graduate education.

Stephen N. Elliott, Dunn Family Professor of Educational and Psychological Assessment, has been appointed interim director of Vanderbilt's Learning Sciences Institute.

David Dickinson, professor of education, will serve as interim chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning.

John Reiser, professor of psychology, will serve as interim chair of the Department of Psychology and Human Development.

NEW FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Kimberly D. Bess, assistant professor of human and organizational development

Andrea Capizzi, assistant professor of the practice of special education

Bridget Dalton, assistant professor of language, literacy and culture

Stella M. Flores, assistant professor of public policy and higher education

James C. Fraser, associate professor of human and organizational development

Christopher P. Loss, assistant professor of public policy and higher education

Susan C. Saegert, visiting professor of human and organizational development, visiting from City University of New York

Heather Smith, assistant professor of the practice, human development counseling

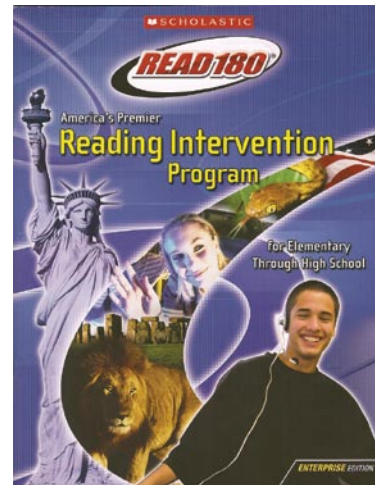
Liang Zhang, assistant professor of public policy and higher education

rate, a very high truancy rate, and behavioral problems," recalls Hasselbring. "We discovered that virtually all of the kids had reading problems—that's why the drop-out rate and the truancy and the behavioral problems were high. After implementing our program, the students' reading improved and the behavioral problems diminished." After a "serendipitous" meeting between Hasselbring and Scholastic Education president Margery Mayer, Vanderbilt and Scholastic entered into a licensing agreement, and within two years, Read 180 was born.

Partnering with Scholastic has allowed Hasselbring to concentrate on refining the research behind Read 180 while Scholastic editors and software engineers focus on designing the computer programs and reading materials so that they appeal to middle- and high-school readers. Thanks to this unique collaboration, Read 180 has developed from a rudimentary, video-based program to a 90-minute instructional model involving direct teacher instruction, modeled and independent reading, and the use of interactive software. High-interest video segments remain a cornerstone of the program.

Hasselbring believes Read 180's success lies in the combination of high-tech, interactive software, age-appropriate supporting materials, and faithful program implementation by teachers. Implementation fidelity is, he says, particularly vital to the program's success. "The model is laid out specifically for good reason. If schools don't follow the model, it's not going to work," Hasselbring explains. "People think just because it's a computer-based program the teacher doesn't have

to do anything. That's not true." To help ensure success, Scholastic provides extensive professional development opportunities for teachers implementing Read 180, including an annual summer conference where teachers, administrators, and researchers can discuss the program implementation and share tips and success stories.



Hasselbring's recent return to Vanderbilt after six years at the University of Kentucky has provided him with an opportunity to continue to develop cutting-edge implementations aimed at older struggling readers. He is focused on developing complementary programs for students who lack the skills needed to participate in Read 180. "What we're finding is that, surprisingly, there are a lot of kids who don't have the prerequisite skills for Read 180," he says.

Another area of interest is providing more support to those students who are exiting the Read 180 classroom and reentering standard curriculum classes. "We need to examine what kind of support we can provide to make that regular curriculum a little more accessible to them," Hasselbring

explains. "It might be as simple as providing text on a computer instead of in books so that if the students come to a word they don't know they could click on it and the word would be read to them or they would be given a definition." He also hopes to develop a program similar to Read 180 for mathematically challenged students.

Whatever new projects lie in the future, Hasselbring's collaboration with Scholastic has already had a significant impact on the lives of millions of struggling readers.

To view a presentation by Ted Hasselbring and Margery Mayer about the development of Read 180, visit www.vanderbilt.edu/lsi/videogallery.html.

Fuchs Named to Special Olympics Delegation



Fuchs

Lynn Fuchs, professor of special education and human development, was named by President Bush to be part of

the U.S. delegation attending the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Beijing, China, on Oct. 2.

Fuchs has published more than 200 studies and has been named as one of the most cited researchers in the social sciences. Her focus is improving reading and math for students with learning disabilities.

Other members of the delegation included Ernie Banks, Hall of Fame baseball player with the Chicago Cubs, and champion figure skater Michelle Kwan.

Reunion 2007



The Human and Organizational Development (HOD) department marked its 25th anniversary on campus with a reception during Homecoming. Coming from England were former faculty members John Murrell and John Hammond. Prof. Hammond is pictured with Linda Isaacs, MEd'96, EdD'03.



Dean Camilla Benbow with Cherrie Forte Farnette, BS'67, MA'68, her daughter, Jennifer Caver, and Jennifer's husband, Giles Caver, at the dedication of the Imogene Forte Youth Collection Room in the Peabody Library during Homecoming. The Forte Youth Collection Room is named in honor of Ms. Farnette's mother, Imogene Forte, BS'55, MA'60, who was Distinguished Alumna in 2000.

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STEVE GREEN

The newly opened Commons Center, where the Hill Center once stood, next year will serve 1500 freshmen, all of whom will be housed on the Peabody campus.

Peabody Partnership with Tennessee School System Garners National Notice

A preschool program in Wayne County, Tenn., schools supported by Peabody College researchers Dale Farran, professor of psychology and education, and Mark Lipsey, director of the Center for Evaluation Research and Methodology, was included in the U.S. Department of Education's "Doing What Works in Early Childhood" series this fall. The series is posted on the department's Web site, www.ed.gov.

The Wayne County Early Reading First program is a pre-kindergarten program that brings research done at Vanderbilt and elsewhere into the classroom to improve reading instruction.

"Mark Lipsey and I began working with Wayne County in our Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) grant. It

was one of seven Middle Tennessee school systems that agreed to work with us in a randomized control trial comparing the effects of two alternative curricula and a business-as-usual control group," Farran said.

"In 2004, we worked with Wayne County to help them secure a \$4.5 million Early Reading First award from the U.S. Department of Education, for which we became their evaluators. Thus we have had a strong and close working relationship with the school system for more than five years," Farran said.

The program, which began in three classrooms, today includes 12 classrooms and a mobile classroom that travels to remote areas of rural Wayne County, located in Southern Tennessee and bordering Alabama. The school district analyzes data about the students' progress over time to help further

refine the focus of the preschool curricula.

"For example, in the first year of Early Reading First, we discovered that children's scores in writing were not increasing in the same way as in other areas. Our classroom data...suggested that there was not enough attention to writing in the curriculum," Farran wrote in her report to the Department of Education commending the school system. "The immediate response from the program was to schedule professional development for the teachers focused on how to include more opportunities for writing. The next year saw a significant gain in the (test) scores.

"We have never worked with a school system more committed to improving the experiences of young children, nor any system more willing to engage in and use the results of research to improve practice," she wrote.

New Research Shows How Military Base Schools Boost Student Achievement

The Pentagon is not the first place to which policy makers look for ideas on increasing parental involvement in education, but they should, according to Claire Smrekar, associate professor of education and public policy.

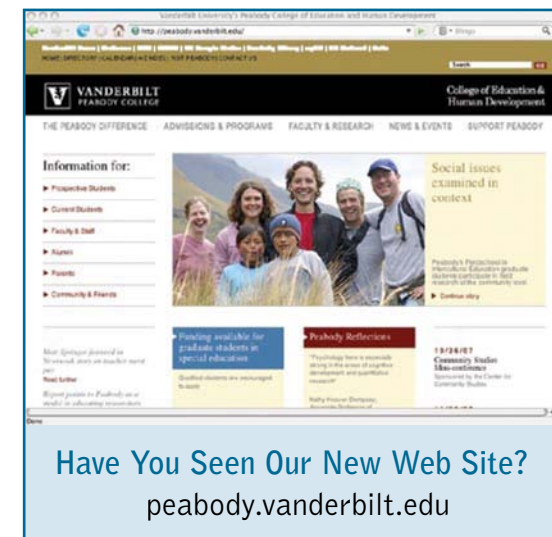
Smrekar has found that the high academic achievement of students at base schools has its roots in an approach to education that supports the whole family.

"While some of the elements that lead to these schools' success are unique to the general structure, safety and discipline of life on a military base, the schools' approach to putting themselves at the center of family life and reacting to community stressors can and should be replicated outside of the military," Smrekar said.

"What we found could provide a roadmap for public education systems, even in the era of No Child Left Behind," she wrote in a report of her findings available on the Teachers College Record Web site, www.tcrecord.org.

Smrekar found that teachers, counselors and administrators at military base schools follow a model that places the schools at the center of family life and takes into account the stresses and changes affecting their students' families, including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The schools maintain high academic benchmarks and are generally small in size, ensuring that no child is overlooked.

In contrast to the popular image of the close-knit military community, Smrekar found that enlisted soldiers' housing areas are shabby, transitory, subject to crime and lacking the social support of



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officers' living areas. The school is the primary place where neighbors in enlisted housing interact.

"Most enlisted members and their spouses reported that if they knew any parents on post, they knew them best from interaction at their children's school," Smrekar wrote. "Indeed, more than any other place or program on post, the schools emerged as the most critical institutional support and social sanctuary for families."

The report, "The Social Context of Success: School, Neighborhood and Family Structures that Support High Academic Achievement in DoDEA Schools," was prepared for the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy.



KRISTYNA WERTZ-GRAFF/FAMILIAR/KEE/JOURNAL SENTINEL/AMCT

Saharra Lane, 9, of Manawa, Wisconsin, center, watches eagerly as her parents kiss upon the return of her father, Allen Lane, right, from Iraq, July 19, 2007. Allen served with the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery and was deployed for 14 months.



DANIEL DUBOIS

The Tennessee Charter School Leadership Institute included presenters such as Chris Barbic, BS'92. Barbic was Peabody's Distinguished Alumnus in 2006 for his work as founder of Yes College Preparatory Schools in Houston, Texas.

New Book Explores Effectiveness, Challenges of Charter Schools

As perhaps the fastest-growing sector in the school choice movement, charter schools claim to offer a bigger bang for the public education buck. The question is, is it true? According to *Charter School Outcomes*, a new book by some of the leading charter school researchers in the country, it depends.

"There is copious speculation about the need for, the effectiveness, cost and impact of charter schools on students and on our nation's education system," Mark Berends, one of the volume's editors and director of the National Center on School Choice (NCSC) at Peabody, said. "This book brings tested, factual research to this debate to provide some answers based on evidence to guide U.S. educational policy and practice."

In three broad sections—teaching and learning; governance, finance, and law; and student achievement—*Charter School Outcomes* tackles questions most

pertinent to the charter school debate. Among them: What research designs are best for comparing charter and regular public school performance? Do charter schools receive less funding per student than regular public schools? What do we know about the effects of charter and regular public schools on how children learn?

Charter schools are supported by public funds but managed by a private board under contract to the local school district. Though public, they are free of many of the regulations traditional public schools face. Thus—so the idea goes—educators have the freedom to try innovative educational and administrative approaches with the end goal of improving student achievement.

Interest in such innovations is growing as concerns increase about public school performance and costs. Charter schools are one of the more popular "choice" options in many states, with more than 1 million students attending about 4,000 charter schools nationwide. Other increasingly popular school options are magnet schools, school vouchers to attend private schools, and homeschooling.

Charter School Outcomes is a compilation of papers presented at a September 2006 conference sponsored by NCSC and held at Peabody. The book's editors are Berends, associate professor of public policy and education, Matthew G. Springer, assistant professor and director of the National Center on Performance Incentives, and Herbert J. Walberg, distinguished visiting fellow at Stanford University. It was published in August 2007 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates/Taylor & Francis Group.

This is the first volume in a NCSC-sponsored series, "Research on School Choice," which will explore and report on research surrounding school choice and its impact on student learning, including perspectives from economics, sociology, politics, psychology, history and law. The series' second volume, *Handbook of Research on School Choice*, is due for publication in 2008.

Next-level Thinking Empowers African American Males

Helping African American males succeed in urban schools may seem like an intractable problem, but applying some basic principles that empower teachers and students is a key part of the answer, finds Vanderbilt education researcher H. Richard Milner. In his recent article in the journal *Theory Into Practice*, he argues that teachers and school leaders must move beyond making excuses to turn around failing schools.

Milner outlines five key principles that he has found through his research and personal experience as a teacher and student that teachers can use, regardless of the situation students face outside of the classroom. These principles "teach and empower" students and help them to succeed.

Under Milner's principles, teachers and students: envision life beyond their present situations; come to know themselves in relation to others; speak possibility and not destruction; care, and demonstrate that care; change



Milner

their thinking to change their actions.

"All of these principles rely on what I call 'next-level thinking,'" Milner said. "We have a choice—to dwell on the statistics and the enormous challenges these students face outside of the classroom, or to focus on what we as educators can do during those hours we have them to provide space where students can explore, create and develop knowledge and skills they will need to succeed academically and personally.

"These principles are what helped me succeed, and I have observed and studied them in classrooms and schools that work," he said. "We must move the discussion to this 'next level' to create lasting change for an entire generation of young people. Clearly, these principles are not only specific to black male students; they are transferable to other students as well."

Milner cites disturbing statistics driving his work to create a new approach for educating African American males. For example, they continue to be grossly underrepresented in gifted education and overrepresented in special education. A 2001–02 study found 59 percent of African American males did not receive a diploma with their classmates, with that number climbing to 70 percent in New York and Chicago. Also, differential treatment and punishment continue to exist for black and white students who have been involved in the same sorts of trouble, with black students receiving harsher consequences.

"As an educational researcher, I often find myself amazed and a bit disappointed by the enormous list of excuses available for why black male students are not succeeding in school," Milner wrote.

"Black male students can and are succeeding in all types of schools, urban included, and the time has come for those of us in education to teach and empower black males to reach their full capacity in urban schools across the nation."

Peabody Researcher to Advise Brazilian Government on Early Education

Peabody researcher David Dickinson traveled to Brasilia, Brazil, the week of Oct. 15 to share with that nation's parliament lessons learned about educating children from birth to age 3.

research that examined that role of preschool classrooms in fostering young children's language development and has helped establish the importance of early language for later literacy skills.

"Education for children aged 0 to 3 has been a marginal concern of Brazilian public policies until very recently. Most existing services are private or provided under voucher-type systems allocated to poorer families," Dickinson, interim chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning and professor of education, said. "The new concern for education at this level is just emerging, with



TERRY HARRIS/INACT

Very early childhood education, increasingly common in the United States, is relatively unheard of in Brazil. Dickinson participated in a seminar organized to inform the Education Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the National Brazilian Parliament (Comissão de Educação e Cultura da Câmara dos Deputados) Oct. 15. In his comments, he drew on his own groundbreaking

some recognizing that care for children at this age may have a significant impact on their future academic success.

This seminar is an effort to provide Brazilian policymakers with evidence from research about what programs are most effective to help them develop a system that benefits children and makes sense financially."

For more information on many of these stories, please see peabody.vanderbilt.edu/news_and_events/index.htm.

Is the Supreme Court Ruling in *Parents v. Seattle* a setback for racial diversity in schools?

No The Supreme Court's recent decision in *Parents v. Seattle* nudges the nation further along the path of race-neutral decision-making in the educational arena.

Unlike the 2003 Michigan cases that dealt with racial preferences in higher education, the latest case strikes down the use of race in pupil assignment to K-12 schools in Louisville, Ky., and Seattle, Wash. By doing so the Court agreed with the parents that the diversity plans being challenged violated the equal protection rights of the white students to attend the schools of their choice.

...it makes strategic sense to direct our collective energies toward improving the experiences that minority students can have in segregated schools.

How should we view the 5-4 decision in which the crucial fifth vote by Justice Anthony Kennedy still makes allowance for schools to pursue the praiseworthy goal of greater diversity through the use of race-neutral measures? Presumably, these would include the use of magnet schools and plans that use socioeconomics rather than race to promote greater diversity.

The adverse Supreme Court decision was not unexpected. Therefore, it

should not be received as a blow that knocks one off one's feet. Instead, it could have the positive outcome of forcing minority advocates to work collectively towards identifying race-neutral strategies to improve the educational experiences of students trapped in low-performing schools.

The Court's ruling does not have to be viewed as a huge setback for those concerned about failing urban schools. Instead, it can provide a new opportunity for concerned citizens of all races to focus their energies and resources on improving the educational experience of

students in low performing schools. One aspect of this must involve changing the cultural norms and behavior patterns that work against high achievement among large numbers of minority youth in segregated schools.

I believe that measurable success can be attained in graduation rates and in achievement scores. These will come when we expand our efforts beyond diversity gestures to vigorously identify and address negative factors that impede minority success.

These include a lack of parental involvement in schools, ineffective study skills, and the negative impact of peer pressure. These factors can combine with substandard environmental conditions at home to adversely affect the life chances of students from poor backgrounds.

All of us can make it our business to monitor and address inequities in school funding and local decisions that place poor schools at a competitive disadvantage for basic goods and services.

As we mull over this decision, we should remember that the integration promises of *Brown v. Board of Education* have never been achieved. Racially segregated housing, the size and distribution of the minority populations in cities and towns and the overrepresentation of minorities among the poor have worked in concert to prevent meaningful school integration.

Consequently, it makes strategic sense to direct our collective energies toward improving the experiences that minority students can have in segregated schools. A key component of our strategy must include identifying and changing negative cultural norms that limit and structure the ability of minorities to compete effectively in the classroom and in the larger society.



DANIEL DUBOIS

BY Carol Swain,
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND PROFESSOR OF LAW

BY Claire Smrekar,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF EDUCATION AND
PUBLIC POLICY

Yes The Supreme Court ruling in *Parents v. Seattle* represents a chokehold for public school districts committed to maintaining racial integration among students in grades kindergarten through high school.

It was always clear from the volley of questions that

Kennedy's "remedies" point to the problem of practicality and the probable demise of the use of race in school policies designed to promote racial diversity.

peppered attorneys for the school districts in Louisville, Ky., and Seattle, Wash., on December 4, 2006, that race-based student assignment plans were threatened by the leanings of the new conservative majority on the Court (and the absence of Justice O'Connor's moderate views). On June 28, 2007, the Court essentially eliminated any practical (if not legal) approach to reducing racial isolation in schools by asserting that such efforts equated to "racial discrimination," in the words of Chief Justice John Roberts. The

Chief Justice was neither narrow nor nuanced in a 5-4 majority. Justice Kennedy, in a concurring opinion that underscored that a district may consider it a "compelling interest to achieve a diverse student population," offered race neutral mechanisms designed to achieve the aims of racial diversity. The

NAACP and other groups optimistically assert that Kennedy's controlling opinion keeps racial diversity aims viable for districts nationwide. I respectfully dissent. Kennedy's "remedies" point to the problem of practicality and the probable demise of the use of race in school policies designed to promote racial diversity – a critical irony in the aftermath of this decision.

What is perhaps most paramount in this discussion is what occurs in the absence of racial diversity plans. This is the problem — and reality — of inequity that sits at the

center of school desegregation policies. Segregated African American schools tend to reflect the concentrated poverty of the urban (or some rural) neighborhoods in which these students live. In other words, racially isolated schools for African Americans students usually translate into isolated, high poverty schools in which there is a higher proportion of inexperienced teachers, a higher turnover among teachers and students, more limited curriculum and educational resources, lower average achievement and higher dropout rates.

No one can know now what is the most efficacious approach to achieving the aim of diversity in schooling under these newly drawn Constitutional constraints. Only one thing is certain after the most important Supreme Court rulings on race and education in over 50 years: the "color-blind" Constitution that the majority forcefully foisted on the Louisville and Seattle school districts will shape the lives of all school children well beyond the classrooms and corridors they occupy this fall.

These op-ed pieces were originally published in the Tennessean on July 7, 2007.

We invite readers' ideas for future "Versus" topics. If you have ideas or wish to submit commentary, please send it to the Editor, Peabody Reflector, VU Station B #357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or email reflector@vanderbilt.edu.

equity vs. excellence

Is education still a zero-sum game?

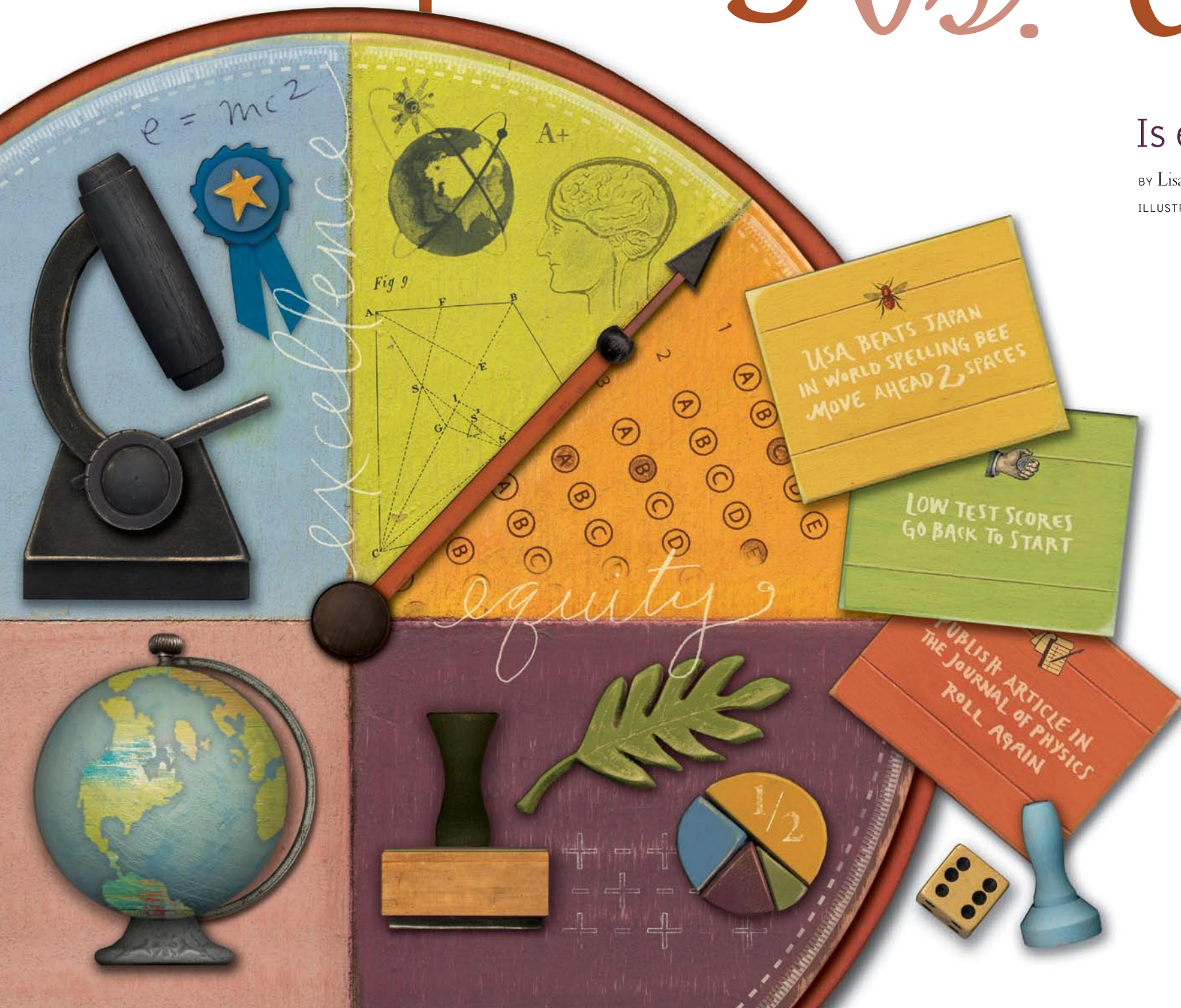
BY Lisa Robbins

ILLUSTRATION BY Amanda Warren

Since the signing of No Child Left Behind in 2002, closing the achievement gap has topped the nation's education policy agenda. Compliance with the law has consumed vast federal, state and local resources. Now, in the heated debate over NCLB reforms that has preceded the law's reauthorization, an insistent voice has gained attention, amplified by reports on United States competitiveness in the global arena. As a nation, it asks, are we sacrificing educational excellence in our quest for quality public education for all or equity?

The question is not new. For decades, U.S. education policy has oscillated between the priorities of equity and competitive excellence. Policy analysts Frederick Hess and Andrew Rotherham summed up the dynamic in an article for the American Enterprise Institute in June:

"Historically, there always has been an unavoidable tension between efforts to bolster American 'competitiveness' (read as efforts to boost the performance of elite students, especially in science, math, and engineering) and those to promote educational equity. Champions of particular federal initiatives tend to argue that the two notions are complementary, but trends of the last fifty years show that the ascendance of one tends to take attention from the other." ("Can NCLB Survive the Competitiveness Competition?" aei.org)





The United States v. the World

According to *Education at a Glance 2007*, released in September by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United States ranks second in spending on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP. It also spends the most dollars per student, excluding the pre-primary level, at which it is second only to the United Kingdom.

All this spending, however, may be serving neither the equity nor the excellence agenda as well as it might. The U.S. high school graduation

rate of 76 percent is sixth from the bottom—besting only Mexico, Turkey, Spain, New Zealand and Luxembourg. The GED helps to keep the overall U.S. secondary-education attainment rate above the OECD average.

Furthermore, while entry to university-level programs in the United States has increased over the last decade, only 54 percent of entrants obtain a degree. This puts the United States, with New Zealand, at the very bottom of the pack. The average rate among OECD countries is 71 percent, with Japan topping the list at 91 percent.

Of similar concern, U.S. higher-education attainment rates are stagnant. In the 55-to-64-year-old category, the United States has the highest rate of attainment, at 37 percent for 2005. But in the 25-to-34-year-old group, the United States' 39 percent attainment rate ranks tenth, behind countries including Canada, France, Korea and Spain.

These rates have implications for socioeconomic equity: U.S. higher-education graduates in the 25-to-64-year-old age group earn, on average, 75 percent more than their peers with only a secondary education. Only Hungary, the Czech Republic and Portugal have greater earnings gaps for this age group.

The OECD data also shed light on competitiveness issues. For example, the number of U.S. science graduates remains significantly below the OECD average.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) reports that foreign students (defined as those on temporary visas) account for less than 10 percent of computer science and engineering degrees at the undergraduate level. But they earn a third of all science and engineering doctorates in the United States; more than 40 percent of doctorates in math, computer science and agricultural science and 55 percent of engineering doctorates.

Meanwhile, various analyses of 2003 data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conclude that by high school, U.S. students fall behind their peers abroad in math achievement, despite high educational investment.

PISA 2003 also found that in the United States, while math performance was below the OECD mean, the impact of socioeconomic background on performance was not significantly different from the OECD average.

Hess and Rotherham describe a pendulum that swings in tandem with other major policy concerns: The Cold War and Sputnik I spurred the competitiveness agenda of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. Less than a decade later, in keeping with the priorities of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 made improving education for underprivileged children the lead imperative. The 1980s returned competitiveness issues to the fore, with worries over Japan's technological successes and the country's place in the world helping to galvanize the standards movement.

By the late 1990s, however, collapsing urban school systems had refocused attention on equity. NCLB, a reauthorized version of ESEA passed by Congress in January 2001, marked the culmination of this renewed emphasis. NCLB declares its agenda in its first line: "An Act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility and choice, so that no child is left behind."

After almost 40 years, in other words, the United States is back at the same table, still trying to crack the same tough nut. It's a sobering thought.

"It's probably incorrect to say American education has grown worse over the past few decades," Hess told *The Reflector* in September. "However, spending has tripled over the past 35 years, and American education hasn't improved either. In no case does it seem we're adding a lot of value."

Perhaps an approach that pits excellence against equity is part of the problem.

The Case for Excellence

Those who have preached excellence in the broader educational policy debates typically have had international competitiveness in mind. In this framework, excellence advances U.S. interests economically, politically and militarily.

This idea of competitive excellence informed "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," a 2005 expert-panel report solicited by the federal government. The report in turn helped bolster support for the 2006 American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), which called for \$136 billion in federal spending over the next decade. In August 2007, President Bush signed a related bill, with a grammatically

less-than-excellent title, but a snappy acronym: the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science Act, a.k.a. America COMPETES.

ACI and America COMPETES authorize billions of dollars in spending on science, technology and math, but leave the actual allocations up to future legislation. Neither points much money in the direction of K-12 education.

"Despite the rhetorical centrality of education in the policy debate on competitiveness," Hess and Rotherham note, less than 1 percent of ACI "was earmarked to support math, science and technological education in K-12 schooling, and even that amount has fallen prey to political infighting among various members of Congress."

In short, while competitive excellence generates concern, especially in the business community, it does not seem to be making lasting headway in education policy during these tight budgetary times.

Excellence in education also has advocates who approach it from a wider angle. They understand excellence as an educational imperative as well as a national economic and strategic advantage.

Camilla Benbow, Peabody's Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, and psychology Professor David Lubinski co-direct the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY), an ongoing 50-year longitudinal study of intellectual talent. Their research has found that gifted learners who experience educational acceleration (which encompasses a host of measures, such as early entrance to school, grade-skipping, subject-specific acceleration and curriculum compacting) have high levels of both achievement and educational satisfaction. In other words, gifted education ends up benefiting both society and the individual.

When it comes to gifted education, many object to acceleration interventions as unnecessary or, worse, unfair. Benbow and Lubinski reject these assumptions. Their research on gifted children is grounded in the idea of "appropriate developmental placement," which they describe as "providing students with educational opportunities tailored to their rates of learning."

"Appropriate developmental placement is beneficial for all children," says Benbow, who serves on the National Science Board and is also vice chair of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. "Every child should have the opportunity to learn something new every day."

Benbow and Lubinski also caution against conflating giftedness with privilege.

"There are many gifted kids coming from low socioeconomic-status backgrounds," Benbow points out. "When you remove programs for the gifted, you don't hurt kids from highly advantaged, educated, middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds as much. Those parents can find and afford alternatives. What about children from lower SES, or less highly educated families? You are disproportionately hurting those kids the most."



"There are many more kids coming from low socioeconomic-status backgrounds that are gifted. When you remove programs for the gifted...you are disproportionately hurting those kids the most."

"The Achievement Trap: How America is Failing Millions of High-Achieving Students from Lower-Income Families," a report released in September by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, echoes this idea. Though it looks at a broader band of students, it, too, calls into question the assumption that high-achieving students can " fend for themselves" while the system concentrates on basic proficiency.

"There are far fewer lower-income students achieving at the highest levels than there should be, they disproportionately fall out of the high-achieving group during elementary and high school, they rarely rise into the ranks of high achievers during those periods, and, perhaps most disturbingly, far too few ever graduate from college or go on to graduate school," the report summarizes. "Unless something is done, many more of America's brightest lower-income students will meet this same educational fate, robbing them of opportunity and our nation of a valuable resource."

Rethinking Equity

Data from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress, released in late September, offer further evidence that current policies fall short in terms of equity and excellence. For example, the average fourth-grade math score hit its highest level in 17 years, and the percentage of fourth graders at or above proficiency increased 7 points since 2003—but that still only brought the proficiency rate up to 39 percent. In reading, proficiency rates and achievement gaps improved slightly since 2002 for fourth graders, but deteriorated slightly or stagnated for eighth graders.

“A big problem with NCLB is its relatively narrow focus on kids at or above the proficient level,” says Peabody’s Tom Smith, an assistant professor of public policy and education. Smith’s research focuses on how organizational and policy

“Does equity mean sameness? Do we want all our students to learn the same thing? Or do we want each child to reach his or her full potential?”

contexts affect teaching and learning. “The accountability system is centered around that, and in many cases, that level is set pretty low. It creates a big incentive for districts and schools to focus on those kids just below proficiency level—but not necessarily on all low-performing kids. If you can move some of those kids just up and over, you might just reach your target. This doesn’t put much pressure on kids in other parts of the distribution.”

Smith notes that though there is a 100 percent proficiency target in place for 2014, schools tend to focus on the short term.

“Schools don’t necessarily do that,” Smith says. “But if you have limited resources, that’s where you have to concentrate.”

Rich Milner, Peabody’s Betts Assistant Professor of Education and Human Development, researches race and equity issues in urban schools. He does not view NCLB as part of an equity agenda. He also thinks concerns over competitiveness are overblown, with more students in AP classes and qualified for elite colleges than ever before.

“Equity has to do with social justice and suggests that organizations should go beyond normal means to achieve a set of goals,” Milner says. “NCLB is designed to encourage educators to do what most would consider ‘appropriate’ for schools—that is, teach all students. This is not necessarily equity by definition.”

Milner’s greater concern is whether schools are “pushing students to reach their full capacity, tapping into the multiple levels of knowledge and expertise they bring to the classroom.” NCLB, he says, does not encourage that; rather, its testing regimen attempts to measure just one dimension of knowledge. His most recent research, published in the fall issue of *Theory Into Practice*, identifies five principles teachers can use to “teach and empower” African American male students (see pages 12 and 13).

“Equity and excellence are certainly not dichotomous in my perspective; they go hand in hand,” Milner says. “Does equity mean sameness? Do we want all our students to learn the same thing? Or do we want each child to reach his or her full potential?”

Though they approach the topic from different research, Milner and Benbow use similar language to talk about the excellence-equity relationship. “Giving everyone the same thing is inequitable,” Benbow says. “Excellence versus equity is a false dichotomy. Can you have excellence without equity? And what’s equity without excellence?”



Why Not Both?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Report 2003 found that some countries bucked trends to score both high math performance levels and low socioeconomic impact levels.

“PISA suggests that maximising overall performance and securing similar levels of performance among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds can be achieved simultaneously,” reads the report’s chapter on the relationship between achievement and socioeconomic background. “The results suggest therefore that quality and equity need not be considered as competing policy objectives.”

Professor Stephen Heyneman specializes in international educational policy at Peabody, after spending 21 years at the World Bank. He agrees that some countries do pursue both objectives well. The United States is just not one of them.

“We don’t pay enough attention to our brightest students,” Heyneman says. “We are embarrassed to segregate them of, and that reflects our culture more than anything else. We are egalitarian.”

Heyneman does not see any quick fixes to the U.S. system’s combination of wide achievement gaps and disappointing achievement levels, though he thinks concerns over the latter’s impact on economic competitiveness are overstated. Many of the policies that his research indicates would help address these issues are still not politically or culturally palatable in this country. They include national assessment standards; national curricula; more in-school tracking; good-teaching incentives in teacher pay; closures of failed schools; and higher standards that would, at least in the short term, lower performance statistics such as test scores and graduation rates.

Retiring the Pendulum

In reforming NCLB, will educational policymakers move toward integrating excellence and equity agendas for all students? It’s a tall order, given the history of educational policy trends. In any case, we likely will not find out until the dust from the 2008 elections finally settles. Many observers predict that Congress will not make any significant changes to NCLB until then. In the meantime, interested parties will continue to push their competing agendas, with students in the middle, dodging the pendulum.



Gifted Youth, Accomplished Adults

The Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY)—a 50-year longitudinal study now in its 36th year—is co-directed by Dean Camilla Benbow and Professor David Lubinski. The study has found that giftedness in youth can significantly predict achievement in adults. For example, 30 percent of the study’s 12-year-olds who scored 500 or above on the verbal or math SAT went on to earn doctorates within 20 years; 50 percent of those who scored above 700 did so. This compares to a 1 percent base rate for earning a doctorate in the United States.

SMPY relies on “above-level” testing—in this case, SATs administered to 12- and 13-year-olds—to take a closer look at students. When age-designated tests are used to identify giftedness, the children seem alike, because their scores cluster at the top of the distribution; one test result looks very much like the next. When the students take tests above their learning levels, variations in performance in different categories reveal the distribution of their distinct abilities.

SMPY’s latest findings, published in November’s issue of *Psychological Science*, focus on differential abilities within the top tier of gifted youth and on the manifestation of these abilities in later accomplishment.

“Results showed that distinct ability patterns uncovered by age 13 portend contrasting forms of creative expression by middle age,” write Benbow, Lubinski and doctoral student Gregory Park. “Whereas ability level contributes significantly to creative accomplishments, ability tilt is critical for predicting the specific domain in which they occur.”

The 2,409 adults included in this latest analysis, who were identified by SMPY as gifted at least 25 years earlier, have made significant contributions to their fields, including 817 patents and 93 books between them. They also, according to the report, debunk the idea that standardized tests are not predictive of “real-world success later in life.”

For more information about SMPY, visit smpy.vanderbilt.edu.

CAPITOL Connections

Charles Dickens once wrote of Washington, D.C., that it was “the City of Magnificent Intentions.... Spacious avenues, that begin in nothing and lead nowhere; streets, mile-long, that only want houses, roads, and inhabitants; public buildings that need but a public to be complete.” This may have been true when Dickens wrote it in the 1840s, but if he could see the city now, he would find it quite complete. As the eighth largest metropolitan statistical area in the United States with a city population in D.C. alone of nearly 500,000, those who live within reach of “the Beltway” are often there because some aspect of public service has drawn them there, their own “magnificent intentions” finding an outlet in the myriad number of government agencies, nonprofits and businesses centered in D.C. because it is our nation’s capital.

Over 700 Peabody alumni live and work in this fast-paced setting. Their occupations are diverse, but show that the ideals of public service espoused under the dome of the Social Religious Building/Wyatt Center transfer easily. Recently, THE REFLECTOR spoke with five of these alumni about what they do and why they live and work in Washington, D.C.

Alums bring the spirit of Peabody to work in our nation’s seat of power

PROFILES BY Cindy Thomsen
PORTRAITS BY Pamela Lepold

IN THIS TEMPLE
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER



CATHERINE Freeman

Implementing the President's No Child Left Behind Act

Often people with very important sounding titles hold seemingly meaningless jobs. Nothing could be farther from the truth when it comes to Catherine Freeman, BS'93, PhD'00. Freeman is the deputy assistant secretary for policy in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.

A large part of Freeman's job revolves around the No Child Left Behind Act.

"I am responsible for helping the Secretary implement the accountability and assessment provisions of the law. I also help make sure that our priorities are known to Congress and provide technical assistance to Congressional staff as they prepare for reauthorization," she says.

In other words, when members of Congress have questions, they turn to Catherine Freeman for answers. It means that her days are unpredictable and that she's often at her desk when most of us are settled in for the evening, but that's one reason she loves what she does. And at the end of a long day, she can be well satisfied.

"It takes a while to see the results, but every year we have more students with disabilities who are performing better in reading and math. And that in and of itself makes the work valuable. When we see the achievement gap closing, and when we see states implementing valid and reliable assessment systems, it's a good day for me," she added.

Because she is a political appointee, Freeman knows that she doesn't have much time left in her current position. But leaving the city she loves is not in her plans.

"Every time I fly into Washington I'm always impressed with its beauty and political importance. But at the same time, you forget that there's life outside the Beltway. It's hard work and it's important work, but that makes every day both exciting and manageable."

Catherine Freeman at the capitol.

MOHAMED Abdel-Kader

Jeffersonian Ideals

Mohamed Abdel-Kader, MEd'03, always wanted to live in Washington, working at a job with a strong international focus. As a new employee at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Affairs, he now has accomplished that goal.

"For me, Washington was always the city to be in. Ever since I was in high school I knew I wanted to be involved in government and politics. And then as my interest in education grew, I knew I really wanted to work in international education. So Georgetown is a perfect fit," he says.

Abdel-Kader works in major gifts fundraising for Georgetown's top-ranked graduate school for international affairs. Students in this program are tomorrow's leaders in foreign service and the private sector.

"I want to make sure that students who go on to work in international affairs and the business world are trained in the best possible way and that the resources are available to give them a stronger grasp of global issues so that they can make the best decisions possible in the future," he explains.

As a first-generation American of Egyptian parents, who grew up in the South, Abdel-Kader hasn't always lived in diverse surroundings. That's another reason that he loves living in Washington.

"Regardless of people's political views—conservative or liberal—people are exposed to a lot more here in D.C. Just the daily interaction with people from all over the world helps to open your eyes to what they've experienced," he said.

He also recalled his favorite "Washington moment," which occurred shortly after he moved there.

"One evening I was completely lost on the George Washington Parkway, and I came upon this beautiful view of the monuments. I parked to take some photographs and took a walk around. I was so inspired by the ideals, especially of Jefferson. In Washington you hear about all the scandals and other stuff in the news, but ultimately it's those ideals that are behind everything. It's really important to pay attention to that."



Mohamed Abdel-Kader at the Jefferson Memorial.

TOM and JULIE Jones

A Journey Taken Together

When Tom Jones, MA'73, was a freshman at the University of South Florida, an academic advisor told him that the state of Florida did not need another history teacher and suggested that he switch majors. Tom talked with a friend majoring in special education and decided that it sounded interesting. And after a summer job working at a camp for the developmentally delayed, he was hooked for good. Not only that, he convinced then-girlfriend Julie, MA'73, to make the switch with him.

"It was fascinating working with those kids. Seeing what they could do and helping them to do more than they thought they could do," he says about the experience. "When you work with kids with disabilities, there's no textbook that has all the answers. It's a puzzle and you have to find the pieces and put them together."

That change started a journey for Tom and Julie that took them from Florida, to Tennessee, Texas and Pennsylvania until they ultimately landed in Washington, D.C. Along the way, both earned doctoral degrees. Today Tom is a professor at Gallaudet University, and Julie works as an educational consultant.

"Washington today is not like President Kennedy described it, as having the 'charm of a northern city and the efficiency of a Southern city,'" Tom says.

But, according to Julie, it's a great place to raise a child.

"Any class our son was in looked like the United Nations. There was a map outside his classroom in the fifth grade with pins showing where everyone was born, and it was a world map with pins everywhere," she says.

Julie consults internationally, and in October, she spent time working with Save the Children in Bangladesh. There she used her expertise to review local inclusion efforts of early childhood programs and to train staffs on early intervention and inclusive education of children with disabilities.

Granted, Washington, D.C. is a seat of power, but it's still full of people just going to work and raising families. However, as Tom says, there is one big difference.

"The people you see on the news, we stand in line with at the airport and grocery store."



Tom and Julie Jones at the Kennedy Center.

MOLLY Henneberg

In the Thick of Breaking News

Even when she was studying elementary education at Peabody, Molly Henneberg, BS'95, was intrigued with the idea of becoming a journalist. Every summer she'd return to her hometown of Washington, D.C. and work as an intern at one of the many media outlets. In the end, journalism won out, and after stints in smaller markets like Hagerstown, Md., and Travers City, Mich., she made it back home with a job at Fox News.

Today, if you ask Henneberg to describe a typical day, she just laughs.

"I'm a general assignment reporter which means I could find myself at the Pentagon, at the White House, on Capitol Hill or anywhere news is breaking around the world," Henneberg says. "One time I got 18 hours notice that I was going to Iraq for six weeks. But I love the excitement of finding out a new assignment and racing off to it."

On April 16, 2007, she was the first national reporter on the scene at the Virginia Tech tragedy.

"When it first started breaking, we were on the road within minutes and got there about an hour before most of the other networks. I just remember the campus being so quiet. Nobody was anywhere to be found," she remembered.

In addition to covering the war and events at Virginia Tech, Henneberg's duties have included following both the Bush and Kerry 2004 presidential campaigns and a two-week assignment at a Baton Rouge evacuee shelter following Hurricane Katrina.

For this fifth generation Washingtonian, whose family lore has it that her great-great-grandmother once saw Abraham Lincoln strolling down Pennsylvania Avenue, it's not surprising to be in the company of presidents. She has covered campaign stops and attended President Bush's annual off-the-record, media-only pool party at his Crawford, Texas, ranch.

"It's very interesting to just sit around the pool at his ranch and ask him questions," she says. "He's gregarious with a good sense of humor."



Molly Henneberg at the White House.



A NEW Frontier

Peabody Professor Kevin Leander finds new definitions of literacy

BY Ashley Crownover

You might say Kevin Leander's interest in literacy began on the wagon train.

"Our teacher had us plan for months to be pioneers in fifth grade," the Peabody professor recalls. "We loaded up on a bus and pulled makeshift wagons across a field, had lunch—that is one of my best memories of school. That's fifth grade to me."

What does literacy have to do with wagons? Leander's keen memory of the field trip suggests that it was a "hot spot" of learning, a place or situation where awareness is heightened and learning is active. The memorable nature of such an experience can be attributed in part to what he calls

"a shift in our everyday experiences of space and time at a very basic level."

If the connection between new frontier and literacy is not immediately apparent, it's because conceptions of what it means to be literate in our society are changing. Traditional ways of thinking about students' experiences with reading and writing have defined literacy as "a set of cognitive skills that people acquire and contain within themselves," explains Leander. "But there's a move away from this to the idea that the nature of what it means to be literate is imminently social. We have begun to see literacy as a set of social practices—where people

make and use all manner of texts to act and interpret the world in meaningful ways."

The effects of this shift are not yet understood by researchers. "There have been many studies conducted in the lab or in isolated classrooms," Leander says, "but we don't really know a lot about the connections kids make across space and time, or about how they experience an entire day." As professor of language, literacy and culture in Peabody's Department of Teaching and Learning, Leander has continued his pioneering efforts by examining these hot spots, extending beyond the material and into the virtual world of the Internet.

More than words on a page

Leander's interest in the technology of literacy began in the pre-World Wide Web days of the late 1980s. A teacher of secondary students at an American school in Italy, he used a computer and modem to share student work with teachers and classrooms across the country—and across Europe—thus creating a basic network of distance learning. Thanks to the explosion of "new media" in the 20 years since—digital media and the Internet in general; virtual gathering places like MySpace, Facebook and YouTube in particular—the boundaries of communication and literacy have expanded dramatically.

"Literacy now is about communicating and using visual text, sound, digital forms of communication as well as nondigital forms," Leander explains. In the classes he teaches at Peabody, students do everything from public blogging in a doctoral class on "new literacies" to developing short digital films for a writing pedagogy course. Leander uses Facebook in a class for undergraduates this

semester, noting that around 80 percent of his students already belong to the online social network. "If there is a class discussion on Facebook, they will see it more readily than if they have to actively go to a separate academic space," he says. "It's something that interacts more natively with their everyday practices."

This integration of out-of-school and in-school practices is not necessarily the norm in education. "There's a disconnection between what students are experiencing in and outside of school," Leander notes. "In some cases, we have kids who look incredibly connected and able and engaged in social practices with literacy [online], but when you follow them inside school, they look disconnected; they look unable. Teachers talk about them as being poor readers and writers."

An example of this lack of carryover is the attention middle- and high-school students often give to designing elaborate personal Web spaces or creating online video game characters. "Kids spend a lot of time crafting images, and especially transforming and remixing images from popular cultural texts," Leander says. But when the same students are required to draw a cover for an in-class writing assignment, "they scratch out something that looks like a second grader drew it."

Using technology so that its more interesting and valuable

qualities are preserved in the classroom is a challenge educators now face. "There is this wildly expanding world of what people are doing with literacy outside of school," Leander says, "but when you introduce new tools into school without fairly substantial rethinking about how the tool, the system of activity, and the beliefs about learning change, that tool becomes just another thing, like the things you are already using." In other words, using a laptop or computer merely to replace paper or blackboard limits the potential of both the technology and the students who use it.

As new technology leads schools to begin rethinking teaching practices, so too will the idea of literacy as a social process—the movement of people through space and time—expand the possibilities for student learning. "It goes back to that 'rendezvous' we had as pioneers," Leander says of his fifth-grade field trip. "You can talk about it as curriculum, you can talk about it in a lot of different ways, but at a very basic level, we shifted the space and time of school practices." And then they were off—to the new frontier.

To find out more about Kevin Leander, visit <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/litspace>



DANIEL DUROIS

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July 1, 2006–June 30, 2007



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Dear Friends,

The challenges that face our society are significantly different than they were 50 or 60 years ago. The leaders that we produce who go into education, business, public policy, government, research and so on, have to be thoroughly grounded in traditional liberal arts values, and it is equally important that they acquire the skills that will enable them to compete in a changing global economy. It is important that they understand information technology, know how to deal with population growth, environmental concerns and the changes in the way we communicate and deal with information.

A key to Peabody's success has been our student body. We seek to attract the best students, regardless of their financial need. Since the cost of attending Vanderbilt is more than what most families can afford, sufficient scholarships and loans are a necessity. For Peabody to advance at the same pace as other top-ranked schools of education and human development, it is important that the support of our alumni and friends continue so that we will maintain our presence, not only as the No.1 ranked school at Vanderbilt, but around the country and in the research we do around the world.

On behalf of Peabody's faculty, staff and students, **thank you** for your continued interest and support of Peabody College.

In appreciation,

Kerry McCartney, Ed.D.
Associate Dean for Development, Peabody College
kerry.mccartney@vanderbilt.edu

PEABODY COLLEGE SUPPORTERS, JULY 1, 2006–JUNE 30, 2007

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this report. If an error has been made, we offer our sincerest apology and ask that you bring it to our attention by contacting the Peabody College Development and Alumni Relations office at 615/322-8500.

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PEABODY'S SHAPE THE FUTURE CAMPAIGN SCHOLARSHIPS

Peabody's success with its ongoing capital campaign has now reached \$53 million. As we reflect on the college's achievements and the lives that have been impacted with these gifts—Peabody students and faculty and our donors' lives—I am reminded that this campaign has had a much broader reach. Alumni often impart the effect that scholarships had on their lives as college students. They remember the donors who made it possible for them to attend Peabody and now, in turn, they are making this a reality for another generation of students.

When we began our capital campaign, it was mostly comprehensive in scope. It included programmatic support, faculty chairs, scholarships, technology and so on. Each of these areas remains important to Peabody, but now scholarships are at the top of our priority list, along with faculty chairs. Scholarships allow us to attract the very best students without having to worry about their financial need. We want our students to come here because they want an excellent education and the full student experience. We want to reach out to a broad population of prospective students and make our student population diverse and interesting so that our students will understand how to work with people from various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and races. We live in a global world and Peabody is at the forefront of higher education. Other institutions look to us to lead the way to impact change, to make a difference and to maintain our reputation for rigor and creativity.

Scholarships at Peabody—whether annual or endowed—are transformative and create new opportunities for our students whose lives are changed for the better. Recently, we have received several scholarships, two of which are noted herein. Scholarships like these, regardless of size, only help us to retain quality students and allow us to remove the financial obstacles to higher education.

Kerry McCartney, Ed.D.
Associate Dean for Development
Peabody College
kerry.mccartney@vanderbilt.edu

To learn more about our students and life at Peabody, please visit peabody.vanderbilt.edu.

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THE DUNN FAMILY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Doug Dunn, son of the late Lloyd Dunn, a faculty member at Peabody College and national pioneer in educational assessment, has established the Dunn Family Scholars Program at Peabody, a three-year funding program of \$1.2 million. Along with this generous gift from the Dunn Family Foundation, the cornerstone has been established for development of a new generation of Vanderbilt educators and researchers dedicated to better measurement and assessment of children's learning.

Over the next several years, 12 top-flight doctoral students will come to Peabody College as Dunn Family Scholars to study and contribute to the Interdisciplinary Program in Educational Psychology. Central to their work will be the development of improved or new measurement tools that advance our understanding of learning and facilitate appropriate educational services to many students. This opportunity for these scholars is the result of the Dunn family's continuing support of Peabody and a clear reflection of Lloyd Dunn's career of training education leaders and developing assessment tools that advance our understanding of human abilities. This program will be managed by Steve Elliott, the Dunn Family Professor of Educational and Psychological Assessment and interim director of the Learning Sciences Institute.

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BERT E. ROGERS, PB (ATTENDED 1941)

Bert Rogers attended Peabody College in 1941 for just 6 months. It soon became apparent that Bert and his family could not afford Peabody's books or tuition payment and, subsequently, Bert had to withdraw from the college. One would assume that this experience would have altered the way he regarded Peabody, but it didn't. His experience and memories were long-lasting. In 1999, Bert established a Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT) at Peabody, which provided him with income and made the college the beneficiary. Unfortunately, Bert recently passed away, but he left \$80,000 to Peabody to go towards the newly-established Bert E. Rogers Jr. and Pearl D. Rogers Scholarship. Bert made it clear that he didn't want someone else to experience what he went through 66 years ago. He obviously understood the value and impact of a Peabody education, and we are very pleased to be able to carry on his memory in this way.

**Deceased*



Helen Lowe, BS'62, (left) and Wanda Cutter, BS'74, helped deliver school supplies to villages along the Unini River in Brazil.

Please Note: Class Notes appear only in the printed version of this publication.

Carlos Carela, BS'99 *Posse of Dreams*

Carlos Carela owes everything he is today to his big brother, Endy.

In October 1993, at the age of 21, Endy Carela was murdered in a Bronx park, in a drug deal gone bad. Carlos was 16 and a junior at John F. Kennedy High School. The death of his adored older brother convinced the gifted baseball player to follow a different path.

"I never expected to live past 21," Carlos Carela recalls. "My mother was terrified that I'd be killed too."

So, when the opportunity came to travel thousands of miles away to attend Peabody College on a Dean's Scholarship as a Posse Scholar, he grabbed it with both hands.

Peabody was a major culture shock for this seventeen-year-old from a close-knit Dominican community, whose parents spoke only Spanish.

"Going to Peabody was like moving to Tokyo and not speaking Japanese," he says. The experience, however, was "fantastic."

"It was a concentrated four-year education on how to be a leader."

After graduating in 1999 with a double major in human and organizational development and economics, Carela began a successful Wall Street career. He worked first for Lehman Bros Inc., on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, then for Bloomberg LLP as an executive account manager with responsibility for expanding the company's data information markets in the Caribbean.



ELENA OLIVO

Along the way, he served on the Posse Foundation board of directors and coached Little League baseball in Harlem. He also helped start "Gats for Gadgets," a non-profit program that encourages young people to trade guns and knives for used iPods and computers.

Although he enjoyed his work on Wall Street, Carela dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur. Last year he resigned from Bloomberg, took his savings and retirement funds, and leased a landmark building in Manhattan's Upper West Side. He plans to open "De Uva," a wine bar/art gallery showcasing Latin American art and wines, early next year.

"It's important for young people from the inner city to see what someone like me is doing today," he says. "Peabody was definitely a big part of accomplishing my dream."

— Joanne Lamphere Beckham

It's important for young people from the inner city to see what someone like me is doing today.

—CARLOS CARELA



Above, left: Vicki Monroe Harris on the stern of the ice-reinforced ship on which she traveled to Antarctica. Above, right: Her classroom in Swaziland, September 1976.

Vicki Monroe Harris, BS'76

Worlds Away

Vicki Monroe Harris's international teaching career began inauspiciously, out of a trip to visit a friend in Africa. Little did she know what a long and interesting journey lay ahead.

"Each country I've lived in has been unique," says Harris. "Swaziland was a wonderful experience for a young woman just graduated from Peabody. I went to visit a family friend with the intention of only being in the country six weeks. There was a great need for teachers there, and within six days, I had worked out that I simply had to stay."

She taught 36 six-year-olds of 19 different nationalities in an English-speaking school for a salary that barely provided enough to live on. Fresh food was available, but Harris couldn't afford to buy a refrigerator. She wrapped up at night to save money on heating. "Trust me, it got COLD there," she says.

Harris was married by the time she and her husband moved to Botswana, where she taught a class of 36 third-graders. In her second year there, "I set up a program for a dozen children of several different ages who had fallen behind in their school work," she says. "It was rewarding to see how quickly some of the children caught on and were able to be reunited with their regular classes."



Her husband's job then moved the family to Sierra Leone, West Africa, where Harris raised their two small children despite unbelievable hardships—no running water, hours-long waits to purchase automobile gas, lack of proper medicines and only intermittent electricity.

"After years of deprivation in Africa, moving to Australia was a panacea," she says. "We were sent for two years, but I've been here now for 22 years. Sydney is one of those rare places where you have beauty around you all the time."

Despite a lack of special education training, Harris was recruited to teach children of all ages with disabilities for several years in Sydney. Before retiring, she spent a year working with adults with disabilities.

"The training I received at Peabody has been invaluable to me throughout all the years and over the different continents," Harris says. "An opportunity has arisen for me to make a charitable contribution to Peabody. I hope it will make it possible for others to reap similar rewards."

—Lew Harris

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—VICKI MONROE HARRIS

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Autumn at Peabody

PHOTO BY Neil Brake

Ah, the beautiful fall colors! Well, we wish it were so this year. Tennessee, like much of the Southeast, has suffered from record drought and high temperatures. As recently as a week before *The Reflector* went to press, temperatures still hovered in the mid-'80s, producing an atmosphere not exactly conducive to brilliant fall foliage.

So, we celebrate the usual blaze of autumn with this photo taken last November of students Erin Rojas and Jon Hedgecock (now juniors) in hopes that we soon will witness cooler temperatures and the turning of the leaves in Middle Tennessee.



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