

## A COTSEN MENTOR MUSES ON TEACHING AS AN ART

Cotsen Mentor Joan Major, Corrine A. Seeds University Elementary School

Often thoughtful teachers will say that teaching is like “conducting,” or “choreographing.” I think yes, good teachers *do* conduct; they take a well-planned and documented musical score (in the classroom, the score is their plan or program) and the good teacher will competently manage, control, and produce a well-orchestrated version of that score (plan, program). They will achieve a well-delivered performance or choreographed dance, leading to the learning outcome.

But for me, a **great** teacher does much more than that. The “music” I envision for great teachers is more a well-crafted *jazz* composition or Indian Raga conversation. During such an interaction, the lead jazz composer/instrumentalist introduces the all important melody, and

then allows for conversation between instruments and encourages experimentation with the chords and scales of the identified melody. Periodically that lead instrumentalist will enter back into the improvisation and weave the original



*Joan Major, Teacher at Corrine A. Seeds University Elementary School and Cotsen Mentor*

melody once again into the piece. The individual musicians continually listen to each other, respond to each other, and, at the end of the composition, all instruments join in for the culminating reflection that acknowledges the original melody. The audience then nods, “Yes! I got it.”

Like the jazz composer, the **great** teacher thinks about and plans the melody (the learning objective, and the initial lesson), and designs lessons that introduce well-thought out goals. But then, the great teacher will encourage conversation about that objective (the melody) and allow for individual perspectives and different developmental levels of critical thinking (e.g. different minds!) The great teacher will allow students to run with the idea (the melody) in

*(Continued on page 11)*

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## 2007-2009 COHORT OF MENTORS & FELLOWS SELECTED

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The Cotsen Family Foundation has completed selection of 69 fellows and 9 mentors for the 2007-2009 cohort of the ART of TEACHING. Selected from five districts – two of them new to the program – the elected mentors and fellows attended orientations on May 9<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup>, and May 31<sup>st</sup> at currently participating schools.

In trying out a new approach at two schools in what the foundation terms “second rounds,” the ART of TEACHING selected a second group of Cotsen fellows and men-

tor at the midpoint of a first cohort’s participation. Traditionally, second rounds have been started in high-enrollment schools at the completion of a first two-year cycle. Piloting the approach at McGaugh (Los Alamitos) and Lincoln (Long Beach), the foundation will find if two mentors with one year of overlapping tenure at the school will result in a greater impact on the school.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## COTSEN FELLOWS HONORED AT SKIRBALL CENTER

Sixty-five Cotsen fellows, the largest graduating cohort of the ART of TEACHING's six-year history, were honored at the Skirball Cultural Center on May 19<sup>th</sup> in the Cotsen Auditorium. Joining the graduates, more than 100 colleagues, administrators, foundation board and staff members attended the luncheon and program that celebrated the two-year culmination of the fellows' pursuit of the art of teaching. Also honored were ten mentors who have completed between two and six years of work with fellows in Cypress, Lawndale, Long Beach, and Los Alamitos. A special addition to the program, before and after the luncheon, was the opportunity to preview the Skirball's extraordinary Noah's Ark exhibit to be opened to the public on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Addressing the graduates, Executive Director Judy Johnson cited some of their achievements with students and school faculties. Board Member Dr. Barry Munitz, Trustee Professor of California State University, Los Angeles and former Chancellor of the California State University system, greeted the fellows and observed that from a national perspective, their work is unique and on the "cutting edge." His comment that Lloyd Cotsen views the foundation as a "faith-based organization" elicited smiles as Munitz added, "because he has faith in teachers."

Before certificates of completion were awarded by foundation staff,



*Lawndale School District Participants enjoy lunch*



*Guests were treated to a sneak preview of the Skirball's Noah's Ark exhibit, including hands-on music activities*



*Touring the Skirball's Noah's Ark Exhibit*

four graduating fellows, representing their respective districts, spoke of their experience in the ART of TEACHING. Jan Wright of Arnold in Cypress characterized the effect of the ART of TEACHING as "profound" and said she has become "invigorated, reflective, and collaborative" and that her students had responded in kind. She spoke of new enthusiasm for teaching and her development in effective lesson design, built on the foundation of analysis of student work. She touched on the bonds created by collaboration, be they through school-based inquiry, district inquiry meetings with other Cypress fellows, or the broad base of professional connections established through the Cotsen network.

Lawndale's Cristal Moore of Jane Addams focused on one lesson that conveyed her sense that the ART of TEACHING has had a "decided effect on my life as a teacher." Having studied and observed an approach to teaching writing at another Cotsen school, Moore knew it required her to model what she was teaching yet she felt ambivalent about sharing a story that did evoke strong emotions, something she was asking her sixth-graders to do. Mustering courage, she shared her writing and found that her story unleashed a torrent of authentic and important writing in a classroom that became a "safe haven" where students "could be who they are, not what others may want them to

*(Continued on page 3)*

## COTSEN FELLOWS HONORED, CONTINUED



*Janice Wright representing Cypress School District fellows*



*Cristal Moore representing Lawndale School District fellows*



*Mary De La Rosa representing Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District fellows*



*The Skirball's Cotsen Auditorium was filled with fellows, mentors, and principals*



*Dwayne Davis representing Long Beach Unified School District fellows*



*McKinley Elementary (l-r): Fellow Susan Suomu, Mentor Keri King, Principal Irene Gonzalez, Fellow LaShawn Moore*

*(Continued from page 2)*

be.” This risk-taking, she held, would not have happened without her fellowship experience.

Describing her anxiety about public speaking, Santa Monica’s Mary De La Rosa talked of the “big AHAH” she experienced when she sat down to write. “Thanks to Cotsen for my experience at Teachers College, I had learned about personal essays” and realized she could use what she’d been teaching third-graders for the past two years. Describing the transformation of her teaching as “profound,” she reported on her changed lesson design, the influence of professional dialogue and research on her practice, and the higher level of expectation for her students. Now her Will Rogers third-graders, responding to the new rigor, write multi-paragraph essays and use academic language.”

Dwayne Davis of Alvarado in Long Beach spoke of the Cotsen Family Foundation’s generosity, mission, and drive for quality. But in pondering the question “why such an effort is made by this man and his group to create and maintain this overwhelming vision?” he responded by returning to the stories Lloyd Cotsen has sometimes shared about special teachers in his childhood - those who challenged and motivated him, and made him see a larger world. Relating those stories to the assembled fellows, Davis reminded them of “that one special teacher igniting the fragile spark to carry on,” noting the legacy they have received from such teachers and suggesting that they too can be the teachers who ignite the spark. Closing, he observed, “The best education is inspiration.”

After lunch, a slide show of the past two-years’ activities - evoking memories, laughter, and some tears - concluded the program. ■



## FELLOWS ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

The quality of four Cotsen fellows' work was highlighted in March when three presented at a national math conference and another co-published an article in a nationally distributed math journal.

Fellows Tracie French, Patti Lee, and Teri Malpass of Weaver Elementary in Los Alamitos were presenters at the Fourth Biennial/First International Conference on Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in Mathematics held in Raleigh, North Carolina, March 8-10. The three fellows presented a session on "Building and Connecting Children's Strategies through Math Wall." The fellows' presentation focused on why math wall came about, what it looks like, and how it supports children's thinking. Malpass then participated on a panel which observed a cable-cast first grade "lesson study," followed by a discussion which included, among others, Tom Carpenter and Linda Levi, two major researchers on CGI.



*Weaver Elementary fellows present at Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) Conference in North Carolina*



*UCLA Seeds Elementary School Fellow Julie Kern Schwerdtfeger*

Julie Kern Schwerdtfeger, a fellow at the UCLA lab school – Corinne A. Seeds University Elementary – co-authored an article with Angela Chan in the March, 2007 issue of *Teaching Children Mathematics*, a publication of The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The article, "Counting Collections," emphasized the value of counting collections of objects, a strategy that the writers say was inspired by UCLA Professor Megan Franke. The article stresses the research finding about the high value of oral counting and demonstrates through text and images the growth of number sense and other important mathematical ideas. Schwerdtfeger, who has done professional development in math with Franke through UCLA's Center X, has also worked with Franke in her own classroom at Seeds UES. ■

## 2007-2009 COHORT OF MENTORS & FELLOWS SELECTED, CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 1)*

Those schools starting a traditional second round are Burnett, Grant, and Signal Hill in Long Beach where Mentors Aracelli Nunez-Tallman, Merrill Stansbury, and Denise Reid respectively will continue in their roles.

In other developments, the ART of TEACHING has chosen schools in two new districts for participation. In Orange County, Moiola Elementary of Fountain Valley was selected. Blandford, Yorbita, and La Seda in Rowland

Heights, a suburb in the San Gabriel Valley, also will join the program. New schools in continuing districts include Lee and Los Alamitos Elementary in the Los Alamitos Unified District. In Lawndale, Twain will join the one continuing school, Carson-FDR.

The addition of the new cohort to the continuing mentors and fellows will bring the number of participants to 196. ■

## COTSEN MENTORS & FELLOWS LEAD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sharing their learning with others in their schools and districts, Cotsen mentors and fellows have taken on additional leadership roles in professional development. Mentors and fellows in Cypress, Lawndale, Long Beach, and Santa Monica have been in the forefront – developing, facilitating, and implementing study groups and institutes as well as making presentations for school staffs both during and after school hours. The most frequently addressed topics have been Teachers College Writing Workshop and Thinking Maps.

Alvarado’s Sean Lindsay and his fellows and alumni have presented a writing workshop institute in each of the past three years, adding an advanced level offering in the writing conference this year. Their institute, modeled after the training they’ve received from Columbia’s Teachers College, inspired and motivated more than 200 Cotsen mentors and fellows to implement the approach. Among those who pursued further training at Teachers College, Victoria Hurst, a Cotsen alumna at Santa Monica’s Roosevelt Elementary School, this year, led a writing institute, supported by the district’s Educational Services Division, on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> for 30 Santa Monica teachers. Participants will have the opportunity to continue their learning through a monthly writing workshop study group, initiated by Will Rogers’ Cotsen Mentor Chrysta Wyse in the fall of 2005. Joined by McKinley Mentor Keri King, they started the group as a follow-up to district-sponsored workshop training by Laurie Pessah of Teachers College.

Following a successful series of nine after-school sessions on writing at Lawndale’s Anderson Elementary, Mentor



*Alvarado Elementary (l-r) Fellow Glenda Bishop, Mentor Sean Lindsay, Fellow Dwayne Davis, Fellow Susan Bridges*



*Debbie Caulder (center) and Ruth Freedman-Finch from Weaver Elementary confer with student at Alvarado Advanced Writing Institute*



*Lawndale Mentor Lisa Paioni*

Lisa Paioni, joined by Smith Mentor Cathy Nguyen, presented an introduction to writing workshop after school on April 18<sup>th</sup>, May 9<sup>th</sup>, and May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Supported by the district, the offering drew 30 applicants from across Lawndale in the short time the announcement appeared on the district website. Like Lindsay and Hurst, Nguyen and Paioni bring an informed knowledge base to the work, having attended the week-long workshop training at Teachers College, followed by close observation and coaching of fellows using the approach. Cypress Mentor Marsha Ahn and two of her fellows, Jan Wright and Jean Wu, also alumnae of the New York training, offered an after-school weekly series on mini-lessons to their colleagues at Arnold Elementary which drew almost 80% of the faculty.

Jacki Teschke and Brenda Phillips, two other Cypress mentors, have reached out beyond their own sites to offer Thinking Map training. Having seen the positive impact of Thinking Maps at Lincoln Elementary in Long Beach, Teschke and Phillips enrolled in a trainer of trainers workshop and have offered the training to colleagues beyond their own fellows and schools.

While the ART of TEACHING focuses on the mentoring of no more than eight selected teachers or fellows at a school site, the activities of current

participants indicate that their impact can be far greater. The learning that has resulted from the Cotsen experience has stimulated interest in their work, and they have been eager to extend the professional conversation to include others. ■

## SANTA MONICA PRINCIPALS SHARE LEARNING WALK

Expressing an interest in greater interaction and learning from one another, Cotsen principals at their January breakfast responded to requests for visits to each others' schools. Because Santa Monica has a scheduled series of Learning Walks, principals from two Cotsen schools, Roosevelt and Will Rogers, offered the initial visits.

Santa Monica Principals Jerry Harris and Irma Lyons hosted Cotsen colleague-principals for three Learning Walks at their respective schools in 2007. At Roosevelt Elementary on January 18<sup>th</sup>, Harris included Lawndale's Dayla Sims, principal at Carson-FDR, among his walkers. At a second Roosevelt event on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Long Beach Principals Clare Alvarez of Patrick Henry, Cecelia Camarino of Lincoln, and Lucy Salazar of Burnett were joined by Lawndale's Denise Appell and Assistant Principal Mary Kuczma. Lyons' Learning Walk at Will Rogers on January 31<sup>st</sup> included Cypress Principals Denine Kelly and Tracy Mouren-Laurens.

Learning Walks in Santa Monica are based on the work of Lauren Resnick of the University of Pittsburgh and organized around visits to a school's learning areas. In Santa Monica during brief visits to classrooms, "walkers", using a pre-selected focus, look for evidence of learning of implementation of practices introduced earlier in professional development in the school. In preparing a

Learning Walk, administrators and staff select a focus, select and prepare walkers (to include teachers as well as administrative staff) and classrooms to visit, choose questions for use in collecting data, determine a structure for hallway debriefs, and report on what was seen in a letter written to the faculty.



*Lawndale's Anderson Elementary Principal Denise Appell and Assistant Principal Mary Kuczma visit Roosevelt Principal Jerry Harris in Santa Monica*



*Long Beach Unified Principals (l-r): Claire Alvarez, Patrick Henry Elementary, Lucy Salazar, Burnett Elementary, & Cecelia Camarino, Lincoln Elementary*

In discussions about Learning Walks, Lyons and Harris, along with Irene Gonzalez, another Santa Monica principal, emphasizes the need for planning, scheduling and adhering to times for visits, and focusing on what was seen – but not for an evaluative purpose. Harris emphasizes that if he sees something that warrants concern, he independently revisits the classroom for a full observation and gathers data collected from the separate visit, not from the 10 or so minutes of a Learning Walk visit. ■



## MENTORS JOIN PRINCIPALS IN ENGLISH LEARNER WORKSHOP

Joining together for a first-time shared training, Cotsen mentors and their principals attended a workshop on effective teaching of English language learners at The Grand in Long Beach on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Presented by Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (NTC) facilitators, Betsy Warren and Gerri Acers, the workshop moved from theory and research to specific strategies, and onto practice of observation and feedback skills. The workshop concluded with the practice of protocols that focus on English learner needs and success.

Mentors and their principals from Cypress, Lawndale, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Santa Monica, and UCLA's Seeds Elementary worked alongside other site administrators and personnel from their districts. Lively conversation – prefaced by a reminder from Betsy Warren to expect and respect different viewpoints on the topic – was interspersed with various interactive opportunities. Participants started the day seated by school groups, but as the day progressed mentors and fellows moved around the room working across both school and district lines. The various configurations – pairs, trios, within district, across districts – encouraged a broad exchange of information about successful and challenging practices and provided multiple experiences in the use of coaching language and conference protocols.



*Gerri Acers & Betsy Warren, presenters from the New Teacher Center*



*Long Beach Mentor Osvaldo Ocampo, Lawndale Mentor Vanessa Vazquez with Lawndale Principal Dayla Sims*



*Lawndale's Mary Kuczma with Cypress Mentor Susan Normoyle*

Mentors found the correlation of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP's) with best practices for English learner success particularly appropriate for their work in the ART of TEACHING. Becoming familiar with the correlation of best practices with the CSTP's, mentors felt, will enable them to help their fellows provide more effective differentiation for their English learners.

Principals appreciated both the Planning and the Reflecting Conference Protocols, developed by the New Teacher Center, "tools" familiar to Cotsen mentors from their training with the NTC. Administrators also found the opportunity to practice the coaching language their mentors use in work with their fellows to be particularly helpful. Both groups were pleased to be introduced to the Six Key Strategies for Teachers of English Learners as a tool for lesson observation. They then were able to practice its application through a video.

Comments at the end of the two days were indicative of the enthusiasm in the room throughout the workshop. One training evaluation summed up what seemed to be a unanimous opinion: "Great job – lots of useful tools that I will use with my school staff." ■

*the ART of TEACHING*  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR**  
**JANUARY – JUNE 2007**

January 8	Mentor Meeting: “Professional Growth Target Revisions,” Cotsen staff and Mentor Julie Clarke; “Baldrige Strategies,” Mentor Merrill Stansbury – Long Beach Teacher Resource Center, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD)
January 10	Second of three-day series, “The Art of Conferring,” Cotsen Mentor Sean Lindsay and Alvarado Cotsen fellows and alumni – Alvarado Elementary School, LBUSD
January 17	“Introduction to Writing Workshop,” Mentor Sean Lindsay and Alvarado Cotsen fellows and alumni – Alvarado Elementary School, LBUSD
January 18	“Learning Walk,” Cotsen Principal Jerry Harris – Roosevelt Elementary School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD)
January 26	Cotsen Principals’ Breakfast: “Professional Learning Communities and Learning Walks,” Cotsen Principal Jerry Harris – The Grand, Long Beach
January 31	“Learning Walk,” Cotsen Principal Irma Lyons - Will Rogers Elementary School, SMMUSD
February 1	Second of three-day series, “Observation for Fellows Experienced in Cognitively Guided Instruction,” Cotsen fellows and colleagues – Weaver Elementary School, Los Alamitos Unified School District
February 5	“ <i>the ART of TEACHING</i> Professional Development Model,” Associate Director Barbara Golding and Cotsen Mentor Susan Normoyle – New Teacher Center Symposium, Fairmont Hotel, San Jose
February 8	Mentor Meeting: “Using Video for Observation Practice,” Cotsen Mentors Sean Lindsay and Susan Normoyle; “Lesson Link,” Amy Teplin and Cindy Kratzer, Santa Monica Educational Services – Teacher Resource Center, LBUSD
February	“Improving Student Achievement Through Supervision for Quality Instruction of English Learners,” Outreach Coordinator Betsy Warren and Outreach Consultant Gerri Acers, Santa Cruz New Teacher Center – The Grand, Long Beach
March 5	Mentor Meeting: “Lesson Link Facilitation,” Amy Teplin and Cindy Kratzer, Santa Monica Educational Services – Teacher Resource Center, LBUSD
March 13	“Learning Walk,” Cotsen Principal Jerry Harris, - Roosevelt Elementary School, SMMUSD
March 14	Third of three-day series, “The Art of Conferring,” Cotsen Mentor Sean Lindsay and Cotsen fellows and alumni – Alvarado Elementary School, LBUSD
April 16	Mentor Meeting: “Writing the End-of-Year Report,” “Case Study – Problem Solving,” “Roles of the Cotsen Mentor,” Cotsen staff – Teacher Resource Center, LBUSD
May 9	“New Fellow Orientation,” Cotsen staff – Alvarado Elementary School, LBUSD
May 10	“New Fellow Orientation,” Cotsen staff – Weaver Elementary School, Los Alamitos School District

(Continued on page 12)



## FOCUS ON FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

*“In a writing conference, the teacher meets with a student one-to-one to talk with him about his writing and to teach him something he needs to become a better writer. The effectiveness of a writing conference depends on the teacher’s ability to assess the writers in her class.”— Carl Anderson in *Assessing Writers*.*

With a focus on the conference as an assessment opportunity, Cotsen fellows concluded the last of the three-day advanced writing institute at Alvarado Elementary School in Long Beach on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Moving beyond the structure and language of the conference, fellows, led by Mentor Sean Lindsay, reviewed the proposed framework for the day. Lindsay offered three statements to guide the discussion:

Good teachers

- ... use multiple sources of student information to inform their instruction;
- ... develop specific lines of developmental instruction for each student based upon analysis of that information;
- ... use an organized and manageable recording system.

The group reviewed different approaches to collecting and recording data from the work a student brings to the conference. Collection tools, it was noted, provide a record not only of what the teacher chooses as her teaching point but also serve as a guide for following the student-writer’s lines of growth over the semester. Fellows noted how such records inform their instruction, providing the basis for how and what they will teach each student writer.

Materials in hand, the fellows moved into Alvarado classrooms to observe highly experienced teachers of writing workshop conferring with students. Keeping to the prac-

tice on each of the two earlier institute days in October and January, participants conferred with the same students. Fellows first observed a conference. While watching, they used an adapted conferring checklist to track the structure and teaching point of the conference. Next, Cotsen fellows took their turn while the Alvarado teacher leaned in and coached. The fellow invited the student to set the agenda, read or “researched” the student’s work, assessed what lesson she should teach and recorded the appropriate student data. Having conferred with the student on two earlier dates, the fellow could note and track the growth of her conferee.



*Cotsen Fellow Rebecca Urias at the Alvarado Elementary Writing Institute in the Long Beach Unified School District*



*Alvarado’s Cotsen Mentor Sean Lindsay confers with student*

Back at the library, the fellows shared their reactions to the full-range of thinking and doing that they had packed into a tightly focused conference. They noted the usual challenges: listening carefully to what the student says about his work; reading the work quickly and identifying an appropriate teaching point – given the work and the lines of growth the teacher has begun to note for the student; and having a repertoire of lessons ready based on useful strategies. Talk returned repeatedly to the issue of on-the-spot assessment – what was seen in the student work and what to do

with it – and how to make a teaching point decision that addressed both immediate need and a longer range line of growth. In short, how to use assessment to inform instruction.

Before departing, the student partners joined the fellows who thanked the small writers for their three days of “coaching.” Students were presented with gift cards in appreciation of their very important role in conferring with the visiting fellows, helping them to improve their skills. ■

## THE ART OF TEACHING IN SANTA CRUZ

Contributed by the Santa Cruz Mentors & Valerie Leal, Cotsen Outreach Coordinator

“Standing on the shoulders of excellence” Santa Cruz mentors and fellows dive deeply into the stream of new knowledge, new thinking, new ideas and new beginnings. We have been engaged and inspired by the first year “learning curve” of the project. Fellows within and between sites have explored a variety of content areas and professional growth goals, and mentors have worked hard to provide the different levels of coaching support. Through study of the work of Jane Kise on learning styles and personality types, Mentors Sarah Balla, Janette Miller, Jody Lust and Barbara Novelli have developed an individualized coaching model that strives to tailor coaching strategies to teacher strengths and to preferred modes of taking in and processing information. Fellows and mentors together have learned how our specific personality types result in learning styles that influence both our own learning and communication, and also our teaching styles and strengths.



*Santa Cruz Cotsen Mentors (l-r) Janette Miller, Jody Lust, Barbara Novelli, and Sarah Balla*

Santa Cruz Cotsen fellows have participated in many exciting professional development opportunities. Their different growth targets, encompassing math, music, writing, reading, autism, science, and ELD have brought a variety of interests to the group and to the monthly inquiry meetings. The workshops and seminars they have attended have enriched their understanding of their curricular area and their teaching style. They have taken risks in their own classrooms and are feeling highly successful!

Just as the fellows have been evolving in their personal process, mentors have been evolving as a team to inspire and support each other through monthly Mentor Forums, mid-month “Mini-Mentor forums”, and participation in the New Teacher Project seminar series on Differentiated Instruction. The series topics include an

overview of differentiation, research highlights as they relate to student achievement, the role of pre-assessment and formative assessment in differentiating, as well as in-depth exploration of strategies such as flexible grouping, and tiered instruction. Through Socratic Seminars and other engaging activities, the Cotsen mentors have had the opportunity to meet and share ideas, experiences, and strategies with the New Teacher Project advisors working in schools throughout Santa Cruz County. The primary focus of the series is based upon the Differentiation Matrix for Teachers, which describes the five essential components of differentiation as adapted by the New Teacher Center from the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson.

Cotsen mentor relationships with teachers and principals have also evolved. Santa Cruz mentors are experiencing a renewed sense of competence and responsibility as our areas of expertise deepen. As

Santa Cruz Director of Curriculum and Instruction Diane Morgenstern says, “The mentors are doing bold, important pioneering work in the Santa Cruz City School District.” Principals at each site highlight the work of the Cotsen group at each school, and look toward Cotsen fellows and mentors for leadership. Reflecting on the work of this past year, we are inspired and rejuvenated as teachers and learners. We look forward with great enthusiasm to continuing the development of *the Art of Teaching* vision, summarized by the words of Ram Dass, “...where separate disappears, and knowledge gives way to wisdom.” ■

## EXAMPLES OF COTSEN ALUMNI & PARENT GRANTS

### School-wide Parent Involvement Grant Family Literacy Celebration Burnett Elementary School, Long Beach

More than 700 people participated in the school-wide activities supported by the Burnett Elementary parent grant. The goal was to increase parent involvement at home and school and give children books to take home to improve literacy. Participating teachers provided a pizza dinner with a Valentine's Day theme – "We love books." Each child selected a free book to take home. Entertainment was provided by volunteer storytellers and players from the Long Beach Ice Hockey team, along with their Bulldog mascot. The Cotsen teachers secured additional donations, including 100 free backpacks filled with school supplies from Costco, free food from local restaurants, and donated books for the students to take home. ■



*Students and families at Burnett Elementary in Long Beach enjoy a literacy celebration*

### School-wide Inquiry Groups Cotsen Alumni Grant Open School, Los Angeles Unified School District

The Cotsen Foundation funding was used at the Open School to support three inquiry groups. Each group selected a focus for their research which would foster the development of strategies to promote student achievement. These groups met at least six times during the school year and shared their work with other focus groups during the staff retreat. The opportunity to make inquiry a part of staff development program gave teachers a scheduled time to discuss their practice with others. The emphasis of each group was internally developed, and, therefore, both responsive to group needs as well as focused on one topic. ■

## A COTSEN MENTOR MUSES ON TEACHING AS AN ART, CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 1)*

discussion, listening to, responding to, and elaborating upon student talking points. The great teacher will encourage students to explore the idea using a variety of materials, varied expectations, varied groupings (e.g. the differentiated curriculum).

That is not enough though. For learning to take place for all (or at least most) students within this fluid context – that's when the **art** of teaching comes into play. It is the **artful** teacher who, in REAL TIME, not only finds opportunities during the learning experience to affirm students' thinking but also to redirect when necessary and help students make connections between what they are doing and saying, and what the learning goal or objective

is. An artistic teacher will consistently make those connections clear to students and help them achieve that satisfying AHAH! of learning.

From my point of view, the artful teaching-learning cycle is indeed a dance, but the choreography is not set beforehand; it is not a designed, prescribed or scripted process. It is indeed a musical composition, but it is not a fixed piece of music that must be played as it was written, true to the composer's original vision. It is the jazz composition; it is the Indian Raga conversation. For me, the **art** is knowing, analyzing, and feeling clear about what I, the teacher, want to achieve and then it's about listening, reflecting, and responding to the complex dynamics emerging from the minds of my students. ■



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*the ART of TEACHING*  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**CALENDAR, CONTINUED**

*(Continued from page 8)*

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|---------|--|
| May 14  | Mentor Meeting: "Reflecting on Relationships," "What Mentors Do to Bring the Year to a Close" – Teacher Resource Center, LBUSD   |
| May 19  | End-of-Year Luncheon for All Participants – Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles  |
| May 31  | "New Fellow Orientation," Cotsen staff – Rowland Unified School District Office  |
| June 11 | End-of-Year Mentor Luncheon – Long Beach   |
| June 14 | Third of three-day series, "Observation for Fellows Experienced in Cognitively Guided Instruction," Cotsen fellows and colleagues – Weaver Elementary School, Los Alamitos Unified School District ■ |