

MENTOR CHRIS WILSON SPEAKS ON THE MEANING OF THE ART OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE END-OF-YEAR LUNCHEON, MAY 17TH 2008

As the experience of being a Cotsen mentor comes to an end, I can't help but reflect on what the past two years have meant to my fellows, my school community, and to me.

I have been trying to think of a way to explain this experience, and I believe the following metaphor captures my thinking.

I remember my trip to Italy, fourteen years ago. I had just finished my first year as a teacher at McGaugh. My two best friends invited me to go on an art and architecture tour of Italy with a group of architecture students and professors from Cal Poly, Pomona. We spent the first five days touring northern Italy. I was



Cotsen Mentor Christopher Wilson

amazed by Leonardo's Last Supper and the ornate cathedral in Milan, the opera house in Vicenza, Palladio's Villa Rotunda with its frescos and perfect symmetry, Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna, and, of course, the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Being a lover of art and architecture, I thought, "I have arrived." I now knew what true "art" was.

The gilded, gothic triptychs, important subjects: religion, history, culture. I thought, "This is perfect; this is art."

I did not know how my experience could get any better. I had reached the pinnacle of my vacation in Florence...I wanted to stay there for the rest of the trip.

And then we went to Venice, and a whole new experience began. In Venice, I discovered the joy of getting lost in a city. I discovered the Peggy Guggenheim Gallery, its nouveau gates lapping at the Grand Canal. Inside, I passed refreshing blue and white Picassos and early Jackson Pollocks that looked nothing like the

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2008 COHORT OF FELLOWS AND MENTORS HONORED

With the sun streaming into the Cotsen Auditorium of the Skirball Cultural Center, 160 participants of the ART of TEACHING, their principals, district administrators, and members of the Cotsen Family Foundation Board gathered to applaud the 2008 cohort as they were recognized for their successful completion of the two-year program.

The End-of-Year Luncheon on May 17th was alive with lots of laughter, tears, and stories about shared experiences – conferences, inquiry meetings, classroom visits, lessons. Fellows and mentors, sitting by school, nonetheless,

moved about, greeting others whose classrooms they had visited, or with whom they'd shared a math training, or a school-based institute. Mentors, some completing their tenure, hugged colleagues with firm promises to stay connected through the Cotsen networks. Many, delighted to see Founder Lloyd Cotsen at the event, took the opportunity to personally thank him for the remarkable journey they'd experienced because of his belief in and support of them.

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THE NETWORK: CONTINUING THE WORK

By Sean Lindsay

The Cotsen Family Foundation, with the help of Alumnus Mentor Sean Lindsay and Alumna Fellow Susan Suomu, piloted two Alumni Networks in specific content areas this past year – Lindsay in writing workshop, Suomu in Cognitively Guided Instruction. Here Sean Lindsay reflects on the experience of starting a new endeavor with other alumni, who, like him, share a passion for teaching writing.

Being in Alvarado Elementary School's library is somewhat like being underneath an overturned ship, all wood planks running side by side that stretch from the ceiling down to the top of the bookshelves lining the walls. It was a January afternoon when we first met here. After work. There were twelve of us, Cotsen alumni all, representing kindergarten through 5th grade, classroom teachers and specialists, from schools in Long Beach, Cypress, and LA Unified. We were gathering to try something new, to set sail on not our first, but a new voyage together.

It was almost 3:30 on that first day, and the late afternoon light was growing pale. People trickled into the room slowly. Many carried books and hefty shoulder bags. We reintroduced ourselves and the schools we were from. We remembered out loud the Cotsen times and Cotsen places where we had last seen each other. We chose seats around the large meeting table, grace notes of anticipation and curiosity in the air.

Our task was to begin a new network of Cotsen alumni for in-depth, continuing study of a content area. We would build on the rich professional dialogue and meaningful personal connections that had blossomed during our program years with Cotsen. The energy from these connections, Cotsen envisioned, can continue to be the currency of significant growth if nurtured beyond the initial years with the foundation. Our pilot network would meet several times over several months and study some aspect of Writing Workshop.

We began the first meeting by sharing. What's going well in the classroom? The energy of hard won successes filled the room. *"The students now have ownership of the process."* *"I am planning consistent strategy groups now."* *"I have begun dialoguing with my grade-level colleagues."* *"All the components are working together!"*

We then turned towards some honest, self-searching talk about ongoing or newly found struggles in the practice of Writing Workshop. The issues ranged from the volume of students' writing to their levels of independence in the process to the rate of teacher conferring. By the end of the meeting we had consensus that what our group desired most was to try and understand, in as much specificity as possible, the differences (and maybe more importantly, the similarities!) between narrative and non-narrative forms of writing.

So for our second meeting, we used the text *Thinking Through Genre* by Heather Lattimer as the basis of our dialogue. Our discussion focused on meaning. We talked of how all good writing is thematic, and that the task any writer of any age has is to convey such meaning. We agreed that narrative and non-narrative forms of writing used many different tools as well as some of the same tools. We began to make a working list of these elements. We also agreed that it was important to teach our students ideas that exist in the world. These ideas might be called "universal," and the introductions of these ideas were great opportunities to teach vocabulary.

For our last meeting together, we wanted to take our collective thinking and turn it toward the realm of the practical. We analyzed both student and professional samples of narrative and non-narrative writing. We highlighted parts of these writings that typified the various "meaning" elements that we had listed during

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2008 COHORT OF FELLOWS AND MENTORS HONORED, CONTINUED

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These expressions were also formally delivered from the podium where six graduating fellows and one mentor presented glimpses of what the program had meant to them.

Representing the five districts and UCLA whose participants had completed the formal program in Southern California, six fellows spoke on behalf of their colleagues from Cypress, Lawndale, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Santa Monica and UCLA's Seeds University Elementary. Mentor Chris Wilson from Los Alamitos concluded the program with his thoughts and thank you to Mr. Cotsen, using a travel metaphor to suggest the power of realizing everything he didn't know but became aware of because of the ART of TEACHING. (See the full text in this newsletter.)

Will Rogers Fellow Emily Ferrera, the speaker for Santa Monica, said that she had not one pervasive memory but rather a string of moments that best describes her Cotsen experience. She turned to describing changes in her classroom, citing the way "students now discuss books, with such a passion and enthusiasm...the way they cheer on, shed a tear, and applaud characters through journeys." Stating that being in a career that is, "by its nature,



Cotsen fellows representing each district spoke at the luncheon. Top to bottom, left to right: Kevin Koga, Emily Ferrera, Isis Ortiz, Sylvia Gentile, Sarah Meylor, and Maggie Serna

based on the needs of others," she observed how delightful it had been to have "the light shone on us," and to have the chance to "dream" and have those dreams granted, in her case, with training at Teachers College in New York. Addressing Lloyd Costen, she closed with "a heartfelt thank you. It has been, quite simply wonderful."

Sylvia Gentile of Seeds University Elementary spoke of the "bittersweet day for all of us." She noted, "One of the most remarkable things about Cotsen is their

notion that teachers should choose their own guiding questions." As examples, she cited the activities resulting from the guiding question that each Seeds colleague had formulated for her or his major focus area. Thanking the foundation for "treasures that have emerged over the past two years," she spoke of the Inquiry Group conversations about "intellectually stimulating questions, free of the business of school," and her relationship with her mentor.

Isis Ortiz of Cawthon in Cypress talked about the changed teacher she is today. "I no longer show my students how to do the problems; they show me." Describing the turn that her math teaching has taken, she credited the opportunity for intensive training in Cognitively Guided Instruction that the foundation facilitated and/or financially supported. Her classroom, she stated, is a different place. Students cheer when math time arrives and are reluctant to leave for recess. Their enthusiasm and confidence as mathematicians has so grown that, as a class, they now visit the kindergarten room where they ask the same kinds of questions about "showing your thinking" that she asks of them back in their second-grade classroom. Finishing her talk, she reported a recent

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MENTOR CHRIS WILSON SPEAKS ON THE MEANING OF THE ART OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE, CONTINUED

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work I knew. It was modern, different, and unexpected in this historic city. I saw Italy in an entirely new way, with the lens of discovery and wonder, not just appreciation.

That has been my experience in the ART of TEACHING program. I felt I was a good teacher, had a good grasp of curriculum and strategies. I was in Milan, Vicenza, and Florence, admittedly not a bad place to be...

I was a member of district committees, and the executive board and bargaining team for our union. I was grade-level leader and at every PTA function. I was happy. I was a hard worker. I was stressed.

I had spent the past 20 years in my district: first, in the after-school program while working on my credential, then, at Rossmoor School in our district as a student teacher, and, finally, at McGaugh as a first and second-grade teacher for 12 years. While I love my school district, I was getting burned out. I was being asked to teach in ways I did not think were best for kids. I was on the verge of leaving the profession.

But then, Mr. Cotsen came into our lives...and we got to go to Venice, and Rome, and Paris.

During our two years in the ART of TEACHING, my fellows and I discovered the joy of getting lost in new ideas. We tried new things with our students, and developed new units.

We visited other schools that opened our eyes: The teaching and classrooms at Seeds, University Elementary School (at UCLA), were like going to Paris. You know how in Paris you turn a corner and see something breathtaking, and you immediately want to move there? Billy Mitchell School (in Lawndale), like Madrid, so warm and immediately comfortable – people so willing to share

and live their lives to the fullest; Roosevelt (in Santa Monica), like San Francisco: hip, innovative, and passionate. And Alvarado, like Rome, where foundations built in writing instruction led to so many other workshop city-states. Then, so many other schools reached out through their mentors and fellows and changed our teaching.

These two years were full of important breakthroughs: for my fourth-grade fellow who went into a classroom at Alvarado and declared, “Finally, a way to make reading workshop work for my students.” For my second-grade fellows who heard Ellin Keene, at the annual conference, talk about metacognition and saw her “think-aloud” with primary students, expecting them to dig deeper into their thinking. For me, it was on candidate observations with Susan Normoyle, Cathy Nguyen, and Judy Johnson, hearing them discuss the lessons we had just observed, talking about the teaching and the classroom.

Like that Jackson Pollock painting, so unlike any other I’d ever seen, in the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, the new learning in the ART of TEACHING revealed I had no idea about what I did not know.

My hope is that my fellows and I continue to travel, discovering the wonders of teaching, developing our passions, and sharing them with our students.

That we remember...it is not about what we teach, but how we teach.

Thank you, Mr. Cotsen, the staff of the ART of TEACHING, my family of mentors and our fellows who do the hard work everyday.

Thank you for taking me to Venice. ■

2008 COHORT OF FELLOWS AND MENTORS HONORED, CONTINUED

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incident when a little girl – one who has struggled, looked up and asked Ms. Ortiz if she “knows what makes me smile?” When her teacher said no and the girl’s response was “You,” Ms. Ortiz reported, she, once again, was gratified by the opportunity for growth presented by the ART of TEACHING.

Lawndale was represented by FDR’s Kevin Koga, who said he found it difficult to separate out any aspect or moment in the ART of TEACHING as being more memorable than any other. Using a cake metaphor, he suggested that like a cake, teaching has many disparate elements that “when baked,” result in something wholly different from each of the constituent parts. As an example of the uniqueness of the parts from the whole, he identified the ingredients of a cake – evoking laughter when he hesitated after listing the basic ingredients and resorted to “Betty Crocker.” Returning to teaching, he talked about the power of reflection with his mentor and how he learned from great lessons and the ones that “bombed.”

Sarah Meylor from Hopkinson in Los Alamitos shared a story about a day in her kindergarten class that came about a few months into her introduction of writing workshop after being encouraged by her mentor. Shocked, when two girls asked if they could do “small moment writing” instead of participate in the end-of-day play centers, she gleefully approved and then continued with some other task. Looking up – the room was



*Cotsen participants from Seeds UES
at UCLA*



*Cotsen participants from Blandford
Elementary in the Rowland Heights
Unified School District*



*Lloyd Cotsen (center) with Cotsen
participants from FDR Elementary in
Lawndale*

strangely quiet - she was astonished to see half of her kinders sitting at their desks writing. This vision prompted a whispered phone call to her mentor, hilariously reenacted for the ART of TEACHING audience, urging her mentor to “come see it for yourself!” She thanked the Cotsen Foundation for her enhanced skills as an educator, and for the result: “my kindergartners embracing themselves as writers.”

From Patrick Henry in Long Beach, Margarita “Maggie” Serna described her response on the day she received her acceptance letter to the ART of TEACHING. She felt she had been given a “most cherished gift – honor.” Adding that she was somewhat surprised at her acceptance because her observation was on a day when she felt her lesson had “bombed,” she attributed it to three words that any teacher can understand, “RAINY DAY SCHEDULE.” Continuing with other “gifts”, she added that “Cotsen gives us distinction, notability, and integrity.” To that list, she added “intense growth as an educator,” and the “awe-inspiring work” her students are now doing, combining technology and science.

Concluding the program, Executive Director Judy Johnson and the staff called the mentors forward to receive the fellows’ certificates and flowers followed by brief words from Lloyd Cotsen, which brought the group to its feet in an emotional show of thanks. ■

LEARNING FROM OBSERVATIONS

“Priceless,” “invaluable,” “eye-opening.” These are some of the characterizations offered by Cotsen mentors about the process of observing and selecting new mentors and fellows. Come spring each year, Cotsen staff and mentors are on the road, traveling to schools in Los Angeles, Orange, and Santa Cruz Counties to observe and interview teachers for the ART of TEACHING. This year Cotsen mentors observed 156 candidates in 19 schools located in ten school districts.

The observation team typically works from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., if not later – as they observe candidates, conduct interviews following the lesson, and then debrief with the team. Following the last three days of the 2008 observation cycle, Cotsen Mentors Jill Nevin, Irisalba Pino, and Misook Kimura shared their thoughts about the process.

Having taught eight, 17, and 10 years respectively, they bring well-grounded experience to the task yet spoke of their growth as a result of the classroom observations. Jill, having observed 15 candidates this year, noted that “the opportunity has strengthened my skills as an observer.” Misook commented about the insight gained from working on different observation teams (four, observing 35 candidates) with colleagues who bring a wide range of expertise to the task. All agreed that observing teachers whom they do not know and with whom they do not have a personal relationship was particularly valuable – “no emotional attachments,” which can impede objectivity.

When asked whether they have come to value a particular element of teaching more than they had in the past, they offered different responses. Misook stated she

has come to value environment – both physical and social – more than before. Are materials accessible, is authentic student work valued and displayed, and are areas of the room designated for specific student activities? About social environment, she asks, “Is there community?” rather than obedient compliance, and added, emphatically, “Do the students have a sense of efficacy?” “Has the teacher’s practice promoted it?”



Cotsen Mentors (left to right) Misook Kimura, Jill Nevin, and Irisalba Pino debriefing a day of classroom observations

All three mentors spoke of their greater appreciation for teachers who cultivate and encourage productive student interaction, specifically citing the teacher as facilitator promoting student talk. Misook’s question, “Who talks more? Teacher or students?” is one she poses to herself at each observation. While all said rigorous lessons with clear teaching points, aligned with coherent activities are

critical, Irisalba Pino, who has observed 30 fellows at five schools, indicated surprise at the number of lessons that lack such characteristics. Jill echoed her concern but added that she’s keeping a notebook on the positive and effective practices she has seen and plans to implement when she returns to the classroom.

Turning to the effect of the process on work with their respective fellows, Jill and Irisalba noted that having sharpened their observation skills, they have better “lenses” for gathering data in the fellows’ classrooms. As an example, Jill observed that most of her “Aha’s” have come from discussions following observations, when she hears details of the lesson or about students that she may not have noted. Irisalba volunteered that as a result of the interviews with candidates, and the subsequent

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MENTORS DEVELOP AFFINITY GROUPS

Responding to Cotsen mentors' request that mentor meetings devote substantial time to enhancing content and pedagogy knowledge, the foundation instituted what has come to be known as "affinity" groups, starting at the December meeting.

Since the ART of TEACHING requires Cotsen fellows to work in an area of strength (going from good to great), each Cotsen fellow chooses one content and one teaching standard as a focus for a year's work. This razor-like focus in an area in which a fellow is already strong leads to high expectations for the fellow's learning and enhanced teaching. However, while each fellow has a focus, the mentor's task is multi-faceted: coaching, feedback, and reflection on any number of foci selected by each of five to eight fellows. Hence, mentors desire to grow in their own understanding of content and pedagogy since they may have multiple content and teaching areas in which to coach.

Another interesting aspect of a Cotsen mentor's work is the nature of growth for fellows selected for their already strong performance. The fellow is strong in the chosen area of focus but may want to expand his or her repertoire of strategies or experiment with different approaches to teaching. Upon choosing that approach or strategy, the fellow may find that the shift in practice is challenging, even in an area of strength. The mentor's own depth of knowledge, in this case, becomes even more critical.



Cotsen mentors meet in affinity groups

Affinity groupings provide a monthly opportunity for mentors to explore and deepen their own knowledge base. Topics of interest are proposed each month, and individual mentors with experience and/or expertise in that content or approach are asked, or volunteer, to lead or facilitate the sessions at the next meeting. The selected topics are then emailed ahead of time to the mentors who prepare any pertinent materials for their groups of choice. Mentors attend one or two sessions from among three or four offerings during the mentor meetings. They share materials, books, and/or student work. Sometimes, an individual mentor provides an introduction to a practice or a strategy of interest to a particular group.

When affinity groups started, the expectation was that each topic would be a one-time meeting. What has resulted is a continuing series of certain affinity groups on the same topic, with mentors going deeper into the area of interest. Those groups that have continued from month to month are focused on reading comprehension, inquiry science, and Cognitively Guided Instruction, often called CGI, in math. Reading groups have divided along primary and upper elementary while science and CGI groups have remained as one. The CGI group spent one meeting examining different methods and tools for assessing student work done through the approach. The following month they analyzed and discussed authentic student work from their fellows' classrooms and concluded by determining the next problem and number set for each student's work reviewed.

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LEARNING FROM OBSERVATIONS, CONTINUED

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mentor conversations, she has strengthened her ability to “formulate questions,” that can elicit reflective thinking from her fellows.

Commenting on her surprise at the convergence of opinion she has experienced in assessing teaching with various teams, Irisalba, joined by Jill, credited “the training we first get as mentors and the monthly mentor meetings where we discuss the work we’re doing with our fellows.” Reflecting back on now-retired Cotsen Mentor Susan Normoyle, Irisalba added “I could never match her notes.” But, “what I learned from her is to search for evidence around the room for good teaching, and to watch teacher interactions with students: Is it natural or

forced?” Misook concurred with Irisalba on what each called a shared “sixth sense” about assessing teaching, rooted in the ongoing mentor training.

Final thoughts from the three mentors - Misook Kimura: “Observations are the only way I get to see teachers outside my district. Too much inbreeding is a bad thing;” Jill Nevin: “Being a part of an observation team allows mentors to be evaluative, not the role we play with our fellows, but the experience deepens the way we look at lessons, classrooms, and teacher-student interactions;” Irisalba Pino: “(Observations) validate you as a mentor, provide an opportunity to learn from other mentors, and create a network.” ■

MENTORS DEVELOP AFFINITY GROUPS, CONTINUED

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Those sessions that have met for one meeting have tended to be about highly specific questions or strategies. One group met around the concern of boys’ learning, especially in the area of reading, and another convened in a session to learn about Professor Sandra Kaplan’s depth and complexity program.

Along with deepening their own professional knowledge, affinity groups have offered mentors the opportunity to learn more about the expertise within their colleagues’ schools. This understanding has led to mentors and their appropriate fellows venturing out more often into other classrooms in the ART of TEACHING, an activity that, once again, enhances and expands the vision of teaching.

The sessions have also stimulated interest in the pursuit of particular topics through workshop, institute, or conference attendance. Getting a glimpse of the work that results from, for example, effective reading comprehension strategies may be just the information that

a mentor needs to suggest an Ellin Keene or a Debbie Miller workshop to the appropriate fellows back at school. Since the ART of TEACHING provides mentors and fellows a yearly grant of \$1,000 – along with substitute days for fellows – they are able to take advantage of the opportunities for more in-depth professional development.

While Cotsen mentors receive excellent training in reflective coaching during the summer Mentor Academy, their learning does not stop with the all-important coaching language and tools for observation. Their concern to grow and understand deeply the content and teaching strategies their fellows choose indicates their own professionalism and commitment to the development of greatness. As Laura Stokes of Inverness Research Associates noted, “You can’t do great teaching without great content.” Cotsen fellows are working on great teaching and their mentors are right alongside them. ■

CGI LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEETS

April 10th marked the beginning of a math leadership group formed by Cotsen participants and Corrine A. Seeds University Elementary School (UES) teachers with advanced standing in Cognitively Guided Instruction. The teachers, drawn from ten Cotsen schools representing five districts and UES, met for a day of study and observation with UCLA's Professor Megan Franke, director of Center X. Franke is a co-author of *Children's Mathematics*, a seminal book in the math approach, informally called CGI.

The leadership day and agenda, initially proposed by UES Mentor Ruthellen Moss, were planned by Franke and Cotsen participants from UES and other Cotsen schools. Representing UES were Moss, Cotsen Mentor Joan Major and Fellows Julie Kern and Kim Stajer joined by teacher Adriana Sheinbaum, Principal Jim Kennedy and Sharon Sutton, coordinator of technology and outreach. Representatives from the Cotsen network were Mentors Bonnie Houck, Jill Nevin and Alumnae Fellows Teri Malpass, and Susan Suomu, along with Cotsen staff.

The intent of the day was both to respond to the math interests of those trained and experienced in CGI and to garner ideas for how to create support for a larger group who are newer to the approach or want to learn about it.

The leadership day's activities included observation of two classes co-taught by Franke with teachers Adriana Sheinbaum and Sue DeBlasio. Each class ended with a half-hour debrief led by Franke and the classroom teachers. Following lunch, Franke presented a talk about new learning relative to CGI and its outcomes as well as current thinking about how best to provide professional development, based on research derived from CGI. The afternoon concluded with participants, in groups of four, analyzing student work. Franke and her UCLA colleague Angela Chan interacted with the individual groups and later conducted a debrief of the teachers' decisions about the nature of the next steps that might be taken with each of the students whose work was discussed.



Megan Franke (standing) discusses math problem solving with participants



Cotsen alumni and faculty from Seeds UES meet at UCLA



Seeds UES Principal Jim Kennedy with Cotsen Family Foundation Executive Director Judy Johnson

The group, whose working title is the CGI Leadership Network, provided suggestions in their evaluations for how to move forward with an expansion to other interested Seeds and Cotsen teachers. Some suggestions were: a basic training workshop led by those experienced in CGI; a network conference on CGI; collaboration and observation at a wide variety of schools; a day with the same format but different content at Seeds, or other schools with a number of CGI classrooms; and committee work on gathering/creating assessments and tracking tools for CGI.

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NEW DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS JOIN THE ART OF TEACHING

With the opening of the fall 2008 school year, the ART of TEACHING will include four districts new to the program, one in Southern California and three in the North. Arroyo and Red Hill Elementary Schools in Orange County's Tustin District will join the program as will Boulder Creek in San Lorenzo Valley, Main Street in Soquel Unified and Valencia in Pajaro Valley Unified.

The ART of TEACHING is also expanding in four districts in Southern California. Ybarra, Farjardo, Killian, Northam, and Hollingworth will join Blandford, La Seda and Yorbita, currently participating schools in Rowland Unified. The Cotsen cohort in Fountain Valley will expand from one school, Moliola, to three with the addition of Newland and Tamura.



New Cotsen participants from Los Angeles and Orange Counties at orientation meetings

Whittier and Riley in Long Beach Unified will join the district's four continuing schools, Burnett, Grant, Lincoln and Signal Hill. One additional school will be added in both Lawndale and Santa Monica-Malibu Unified - respectively Smith and Edison.

The new additions will bring the total of current Cotsen mentors and fellows to 193: 165 fellows and 28 mentors in 30 schools. ■

CGI LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEETS, CONTINUED

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They also expressed enthusiasm for continuing to meet with others who have similar training and experience. Their ideas, among others, for further work among the leadership group included support to become trainers; more time with Megan Franke; more opportunities to discuss next steps in the context of their students' work; and sessions to view and discuss other teachers using a CGI approach.

The appreciation for the day was best represented in a participant's assessment which said "Overall – an awesome, informative, memorable day!!!"

The Cotsen Family Foundation will be reviewing suggestions for how to move forward with outreach to the larger cohort of teachers interested in CGI and to accommodate those most experienced in the practice. ■

LOOKING AT TEACHING THROUGH MULTIPLE LENSES

Teaching is a complex activity so its observation requires careful attention. Because of the multitude of decisions, actions, responses, questions, and activities that the teacher is orchestrating, looking through one of multiple lenses allows for a sharper focus. In using these ways of viewing teaching, consideration is also given to the time of year; school, district, and state policies; lesson design; and the student population. Lenses the Cotsen Family Foundation uses to focus classroom observations: environment, instruction, content, assessment, and effects on students.

ENVIRONMENT

Physical	Social
Clean and safe	In the Fall well-managed classroom
Rich variety of books and materials easily accessible	Moving to self-managed classroom
Room arrangement to facilitate different activities	Achieving strong sense of community

INSTRUCTION

Teaching to standards
Clear teaching points that lead to focused lessons
A wide variety of strategies that are purposeful, strategic, coherent, and cumulative
Inquiry, choice, and decision-making that lead to student engagement
Effective use of time

CONTENT

Standards-based and beyond
High level skills and concepts – facts are often taught within the framework of a big idea or a universal theme
Material that is challenging, relevant and important to know

ASSESSMENT

Understanding of individual students' learning needs
Use of student learning to guide and design instruction
Use of multiple assessments

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

ON COMMON GROUND

Jody Lust, Cotsen Mentor
Gault Elementary School, Santa Cruz

A diverse group of teachers at Gault Elementary School in Santa Cruz, California agree and disagree on many issues. But when asked the question, “Is teaching intellectual work?” They unanimously reply, “YES!” If so, then what does it take to feed the hungry intellect? One small group of dedicated Cotsen Fellows plus two went to New York City to find out.

Standing on the steps of the Teachers College at Columbia University, Cotsen Fellow Amariah Hernandez paused and looked up, and in that moment she knew something special was about to happen. Attending the 19th Annual Summer Institute on The Teaching of Writing was an integral step in the continued development of a rigorous writing curriculum that leads teachers and their students to the heart of what it means to write and live in a community of powerful writers.

During the institute, Lucy Calkins invited us to see with new eyes and to become keen observers of the world around us. By recording, collecting and revealing the small moments of our lives, we became more thoughtful and connected to each other. It is through this shared

experience that we leave the isolation of the classroom and walk willingly into collaboration. Together, the Gault team members, supported by the guiding principles of the art of teaching writing, have pushed our understanding of the teaching of writing to new levels of excellence.

As teachers, we know the most important skills that students can learn are the skills that prepare them for life beyond school. Students need to become active and engaged citizens of the world in which they live. Writing is an analytical, creative and practical achievement. It is also a tool to succeed in the twenty first century. Writing matters!

Finally, at the end of our two year journey, we would like to sincerely thank the Cotsen Family Foundation for its creative vision, generosity and intention to make the world a better place by empowering one school and one teacher at a time. ■

THE NETWORK: CONTINUING THE WORK, CONTINUED

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meeting two. And we discussed ways we might turn these examples into models for our teaching.

Roland Barth, in his book *Learning By Heart*, suggests that educators that gather to do this kind of work will ultimately create an invaluable culture of learning for their students.

“If they see about them adults who ask questions, read, write, pose, and solve problems, work together, and struggle with important learning, they want to ask questions, read, write, pose and solve problems, and engage in and struggle with important learning.”

Maybe, just maybe, our students will see or feel it about us and engage in their own voyage, their own “struggle with important learning.” ■

THE ART OF TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVENTS CALENDAR DECEMBER 2007 – JUNE 2008

December 3	Mentor Meeting: “Affinity Sessions:” Cognitively Guided Instruction, Mentor Bonnie Houck; Reading Comprehension, Mentor Chris Wilson; Boys’ Achievement, Mentor Julie Clark; Inquiry Science, Mentor Chrysta Wyse; Writing, Mentor Joan Major – Teacher Resource Center, Long Beach Unified School District
January – April	Selection of Participants for the ART of TEACHING: “Candidate Observations,” Cotsen mentors & staff – Southern California and Santa Cruz County
January 4	CGI Alumni Network Meeting: “Sharing Lessons,” Alumna Facilitator Susan Suomu - Will Rogers Elementary School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
January 8	Writing Workshop Alumni Network Meeting: “Setting the Agenda,” Alumnus Facilitator Sean Lindsay - Alvarado Elementary School, Long Beach Unified School District
January 14	Mentor Meeting: “Norms, Practice, & Assessment of Videos;” Cotsen staff; “Affinity Sessions:” Science: Mentor Chrysta Wyse; Reflective Thinking, Mentor Merrill Stansbury; CGI-Tracking Strategies over Time, Mentor Bonnie Houck; Reading with Meaning and Purpose, Mentor Chris Wilson – Teacher Resource Center, Long Beach Unified School District
January 15	Principals’ Visit: “Response to Intervention,” Cotsen staff – FDR, Lawndale School District
January 18	Principals’ Breakfast Meeting; “Dialogue on Rick DuFour’s book, <i>On Common Ground</i> , Cotsen staff – The Grand, Long Beach
January 22	Rowland Heights School Board Meeting: “Presentation to Board on the ART of TEACHING,” Assistant Superintendent Sue Brewer, Cotsen staff, and Mentors Joyce Garcia, Carmen Jimenez, and Trisha Johnson
January 29	Alvarado Writing Institute: “Introduction to Writing Workshop,” Day Two, Alumnus Mentor Sean Lindsay and Alumna Fellow Leslie Courtney – Alvarado Elementary School, Long Beach Unified School District
February 4	Mentor Meeting; “Affinity Sessions:” Cognitively Guided Instruction, Mentor Bonnie Houck; Writing, Mentor Osvaldo Ocampo; Primary Reading, Mentor Shelly Tallman; Inquiry, Mentor Julie Clark; Science, Mentor Chrysta Wyse; Upper Elementary Reading, Mentor Merrill Stansbury – Alvarado Elementary School Library, Signal Hill
February 7	Planning Meeting for CGI Leadership Day: Corrine Seeds University Elementary School Administrative Staff, Professor Megan Franke, Mentor Ruthellen Moss, Cotsen staff, selected Seeds and Cotsen teachers
February 12	CGI Observation Day: “Grades 1-3 Observations of Cognitively Guided Instruction,” Alumnae Teri Malpass, Evan Grandon, Ruth Freedman Finch and Tanya Yosanovich – Weaver Elementary School, Los Alamitos Unified School District

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THE ART OF TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVENTS CALENDAR DECEMBER 2007 – JUNE 2008, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 13)

- February 13 CGI Alumni Network Meeting: “Looking at Catheriene Fosnot’s Work in Math,” Alumna Facilitator Susan Suomu – Will Rogers Elementary School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
- February 19 Writing Workshop Alumni Network Meeting: “Heather Lattimore’s *Thinking Through Genre*,” Alumnus Facilitator Sean Lindsay – Alvarado Elementary School, Long Beach Unified School District
- February 22 Principals’ Breakfast Meeting: “Dialogue on Richard DuFour’s book *On Common Ground*,” Cotsen staff – Santa Cruz, CA
- March 3 Mentor Meeting: “Observing Teaching,” Alumnus Mentor Sean Lindsay; “Affinity Sessions:” Science, Mentor Chrysta Wyse; CGI, Mentor Bonnie Houck; Primary Reading, Mentor Shelly Tallman; Upper Elementary Reading, Mentor Chris Wilson; Writing, Mentor Gina Tardif; Professor Sandra Kaplan’s Depth & Complexity Icons, Mentor Misook Kimura; Thoughts on Returning to the Classroom, Mentor Chrysta Wyse – Alvarado Elementary School Library, Long Beach Unified School District
- March 13 Principals’ & Mentors’ Visit: “Thinking Maps,” La Seda Elementary School, Rowland Heights Unified School District
- March 13 Fountain Valley Board of Education Meeting: “Presentation to Board on the ART of TEACHING,” Cotsen staff, Principal Tom Markel, Mentor Heidi Sinay, and Fellows Kate Dillon, Jeff Doherty, Abir Kim, Kathleen Naughton, Amelia Terich, and Julie Sipes, Fountain Valley School District
- April 8 Mentor Meeting: “End of Year Report - Tips for Video and Written Record,” Cotsen staff and “Affinity Groups:” Science, Mentor Lisa McClellan; CGI, Mentor Gina Tardif; k-2 Reading, Mentor Shelly Tallman; Upper Elementary Reading, Mentor Chris Wilson – Teacher Resource Center, Long Beach Unified School District
- April 10 Kick-off CGI Leadership Day: “A Day of Observation & Dialogue for Teachers Advanced in CGI Practice,” Professor Megan Franke, Demonstration Teachers Sue DeBlasio & Adriana Sheinbaum – Corrine Seeds, University Elementary School, UCLA
- April 24 Presentation: National Education Writers Association Annual Conference: “What Great Teaching Looks Like,” Executive Director Judy Johnson & Associate Director Barbara Golding – Wyndham Hotel, Chicago Illinois
- April 28 Principals’ Visit: “CGI (math) Classroom Observation,” Alumna Fellow Teri Malpass & Principal Erin Kominsky – Weaver Elementary School, Los Alamitos Unified School District

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THE ART OF TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVENTS CALENDAR DECEMBER 2007 – JUNE 2008, CONTINUED

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- April 30 CGI Alumni Network Meeting: “Sharing CGI Lessons,” Alumna Facilitator Susan Suomu – Billy Mitchell Elementary School - Lawndale School District
- May 6 Writing Workshop Alumni Network Meeting: “Looking at Workshop Lessons and Student Work,” Alumnus Facilitator Sean Lindsay, Alvarado Elementary School – Long Beach Unified School District
- May 12 Mentor Meeting: “End of Year Report Authentic Sample,” Mentor Chris Wilson, “Reporting on Elements of the ART of TEACHING in Center Rotations,” Cotsen staff, & “Mentor Reflections in Two Groups – Exiting and Continuing Mentors,” Cotsen staff – Teacher Resource Center, Long Beach Unified School District
- May 15 New Mentor and Fellows’ Meeting: “Orientation,” Cotsen staff – Edison Elementary School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
- May 17 End-of-Year Luncheon: “Celebration of 2006-2008 Los Angeles & Orange County Cohort’s Completion of the ART of TEACHING,” – Skirball Cultural Center
- May 22 New Mentors’ Meeting: “Orientation for Fountain Valley, Long Beach & Tustin Mentors,” Cotsen staff – Fountain Valley District Office
- May 27- 28 Principals’ Visit: “Learning Walks,” Cotsen staff & Principal Irene Gonzales – McKinley Elementary School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
- May 29 New Mentors and Fellows Meeting in Santa Cruz County: “Orientation for San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District, Soquel Union Elementary School District, & Pajaro Valley Unified School District,” Cotsen staff – McPherson Center, Santa Cruz
- June 2 New Mentors’ & Fellows’ Meeting: “Orientation for Rowland Heights,” Cotsen staff – Board Room, Rowland Heights Unified School District
- June 3 New Fellows’ Meeting: “Orientation for Fountain Valley, Long Beach, & Tustin Fellows,” Cotsen staff – Fountain Valley District Office
- June 6 End-of-Year Luncheon: Celebration of 2006-2008 Santa Cruz Cohort’s Completion of the ART of TEACHING, – The Chaminade, Santa Cruz
- June 3 New Fellows’ Meeting: “Orientation for Lawndale Fellows,” Cotsen staff – Smith Elementary School ■

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