

## ORGANIZATIONS GATHER AT USC TO DISCUSS EFFECTIVE TEACHING

On March 2, 2010, Teachers Network and the Ford Foundation co-hosted a conversation at the University of Southern California with the Cotsen Family Foundation, the Stuart Foundation and the Los Angeles

Education Partnership. The conversation was inspired by the survey funded by the Ford Foundation of effective teachers participating in the Teachers Network community across the country that asked why competent and effective teachers stay or leave the profession. The conversation then continued in Los Angeles to build on the survey information and ask, "What will it really take to make sure every child has an effective teacher?" This was the first in a series of three nationwide conversations with similar events in New York City and Chicago.



*Left to right: Panel Members Sandy Dean, Jane Fung, Bill Cirone, Margaret Gaston and Becky Zoglman*

Nearly 200 people from K-12 teachers, school and district administration, boards of education, nonprofit and foundation sectors, teachers unions, and policy organizations attended. Participants were greeted by

Cotsen Board President Barry Munitz, along with Fred Frelow, Education and Scholarship program officer for the Ford Foundation and Judy Johnson, executive director of the Cotsen Family Foundation. Participants also heard from Ellen Dempsey, president and C.E.O. of the Teachers Network and Rick Miller, formerly the deputy superintendent of development and external affairs at the California Department of Education, who also moderated the event.

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## WHAT WILL IT REALLY TAKE TO HELP TEACHERS SUCCEED

*Educators Say Teacher Collaboration, Interaction is Key*

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"We need a community and national commitment to teaching in ways that support teachers and really help them learn to teach over time." So said UCLA School of Education Professor Megan Franke at the recent conference in Los Angeles exploring what it will really take to make sure that every child has an effective teacher.

"The best way to help teachers grow is to put them in an environment that is supportive and collaborative," said Ruthellen Moss, assistant principal at the UCLA Lab School and Cotsen alumna mentor. "Teachers need

opportunities to work together and access to a mentor on-site, someone they trust, someone that can help them grow."

The need for teacher collaboration and interaction was a common theme among conference participants. Alumna Carmen Jimenez, a math and literacy coach at Yorbita Elementary School in Rowland Unified, said, "We need a system where collaboration among teachers is the rule, is

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## 2010 GRADUATES HONORED AT THE SKIRBALL

Once again gathered in the Cotsen Auditorium of the Skirball Cultural Center, the ART of TEACHING participants celebrated the 2010 cohort of mentors and fellows upon completion of the core two-year fellowship. Attended by nearly 150 people, the May 22 end-of-year luncheon and graduation recognized the accomplishments of 66 fellows and 13 mentors.

Foundation President Barry Munitz and Executive Director Judy Johnson spoke briefly, congratulating the graduates and noting that “this is just the beginning,” a reference to the foundation’s ongoing interest in and support for active alumni. After introductions of the speakers, fellows – one from each of the districts with 2010 graduates – took their seats on the dais. Mentor George Herrera of the Rowland Unified District then joined them to speak for the 2010 cohort of mentors.

Their comments were compelling, echoing similar themes with different details. Jennifer Moore of Tamura in Fountain Valley, talked about the struggle that comes with the paradigm shift she experienced as her teaching practice evolved. She acknowledged the role of the Cotsen alumni’s classrooms where she observed and the foundation-supported professional development in helping her advance her practice. Concluding, she thanked Lloyd Cotsen for “making magic through your vision.”

Mediha Din of Green in Lawndale spoke of moving her teaching from “knowing what my students need” to

“knowing what they need to get there.” Her students, she observed, now know multiple ways to solve a math problem. Noting her gratitude to Mr. Cotsen, she stated the way to improve our schools is by giving teachers, as he has done, “the opportunity and the time to do just what we want our students to do — think critically about our practice and our craft.”



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

From Rowland, Killian’s Amy Sanchez said the Cotsen experience returned her to the roots of the teacher she was “when I left Whittier College 16 years ago.” She identified those who had helped grow her practice: from Katie Wood Ray to Lucy Calkins, to alumna Fellow Sarah Frederick, who not only welcomed Amy into her classroom, but also visited Amy’s school and taught Amy’s students.

Elizabeth Wystrach from Riley in Long Beach talked about an infusion of new energy after teaching 12 years. Her new work in writing resulted in her confident first-grade students thinking of themselves as authors. She too paid tribute to Cotsen alumni and to the school-based institute at Alvarado for the spark she has experienced.

Santa Monica’s representative, Aileen Salmaggi from Edison Language Academy noted that she’d heard students “groan in my classroom before, but NEVER for the fact that they had to stop reading.” She talked of the “magic” she sees in reviewing students’ reading journals and the evidence of their thinking. Mentioning

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## LAWNDALE'S BILLY MITCHELL OFFERS NEW INSTITUTE

Cotsen participants at Billy Mitchell School kicked off a new kind of school-based writing institute on November 17 for the ART of TEACHING. Mitchell's institute, led by Cotsen fellow Jodi Manby '05, offers four opportunities spread over a six-month period for Cotsen participants to learn about writing workshop, observe in classrooms, and debrief with the demonstration teachers. This structure allows for smaller groups of observers and for the opportunity to return and see the progress of students over time. Sixty-three Cotsen mentors, fellows, alumni and some of their school colleagues attended what the foundation has dubbed a "rolling" institute. Overall, teachers from seventeen schools in the ART of TEACHING network participated.

Mitchell provided visitors with the experience of watching the same lesson taught at the same grade level by two different teachers. Observers were then able to see the results of the collaborative practice that the Mitchell teachers have developed. When two fifth-grade teachers did different lessons — presenting a two-day sequence of a unit, with one teacher being "behind" the other — observers saw the coherence of the two lessons and the scaffolding that Erica Olivas and Liz Horan Adams had created for their students.

Those attending also made note of the remarkable writing stamina and engagement of first-grade students



*Cotsen Alumna Jodi Manby '05 with a first-grade student*



*Cotsen Fellow Erica Olivas '10 with fifth-grade students*

in Manby's and Iliana Cruz's classrooms. Acknowledging kindergarten teachers Agnes Vasquez and Ruth Gillespie, the first-grade teachers reported how their students were able to advance more rapidly because of Vasquez's and Gillespie's effective work the previous year.

The debriefings, organized around primary or upper elementary teachers, gave visiting teachers an insight into the school's development of a cohesive approach to the teaching of writing, the kind of professional development that has informed their practice, and the importance of planning. Principal Lucia Karaptian, recognized by the demonstration teachers as critical to their success,

frequently attended the sessions where her informed understanding of the teachers' practice, and her pride in it, was evident.

A participant, in response to the evaluation's question, "What worked?" wrote:

- Continuity of teaching from last visit
- Debriefing with specific questions
- Listening in on conferences
- Discussing specific skills and strategies and how they develop over time
- Tips for assessing individual students

And to "What didn't?" responded "Nothing!" ■



## COSTEN FAMILY FOUNDATION SPONSORS LEARNING AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The fall of '09 brought an unexpected opportunity to the ART of TEACHING: an invitation from the Library of Congress to train participants from the Cotsen network in the use of primary source documents in support of inquiry learning — and at the Library of Congress! With this invitation in mind, former Cotsen Mcentor Ruthellen Moss '08 (and former social studies teacher at UCLA Lab School) and Barbara Golding, the ART of TEACHING's associate director, visited two middle schools in northern California to see classrooms where teachers use primary source documents as a significant part of their curriculum.

Convinced that this process could work well in elementary school, the foundation followed up with Elizabeth Ridgway, director of educational outreach, and her associate Vivian Awumey, teaching with primary sources coordinator, of the Library of Congress who flew to California and met with the foundation and UCLA Lab School representatives. Since Lab School teacher Ruthellen Moss and librarian Judith Kantor had earlier led a primary source teachers' project at the UCLA Research Library, they, and their school, brought both knowledge and experience to the endeavor. A meeting was held with the Library of Congress representatives in February for a selected group of Cotsen alumni and fellows (consideration was given to interest, grade level, district, region and



*Standing left to right: Christopher Wilson '08, Judith Kantor, Ruthellen Moss '08, Tristen Macon '06, Kristina Scott '08, Cindy Wechsung '05, Myriam Quintanilla; Seated: Denise Reid '09, JoAnn Silliker '11; Not shown: Raul Almada '11, Carlen Le Hessinger '09; Setting out from LAX on March 21*

willingness to commit to follow-up work with colleagues) at UCLA to hear about the project and to consider making an application for the limited number of spaces available. In addition, to Ruthellen and Judith, nine teachers were selected to travel to Washington.

The next month brought a flurry of activity. Judith created a Wiki social network online, while Ruthellen, Judith, and the foundation developed the project timeline, expectations, and lesson format that were shared among the 11 participants.

Weeks before departure, participants shared their specific areas of interest with Ruthellen and Judith who, in turn, compiled the information for the library leaders who would instruct the group in Washington. When the Cotsen "family" hit the ground on March 21, 2010, Gail Petri and Sherrie Galloway had already alerted the Library staff about the resources the group would be seeking.

The group will be opening their classrooms for observations come September and will be presenting at the annual the ART of TEACHING Conference on September 25 at the Long Beach Convention Center. Kristina Scott '08 recounts the group's experience in the following article in this edition of the newsletter. ■

## FELLOW KRISTINA SCOTT '08 RECOUNTS THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRIMARY DOCUMENT TRAINING

Just when I believed that life as a Cotsen alumna couldn't get better...an opportunity arose. A group of seven alumni, two fellows, and two teacher colleagues were invited to hear about an adventure to explore the unknown land of the Library of Congress.

Like the early pioneers who set out for new territories, Raul Almada '11, Carlen Le Hessinger '09, Myriam Quintanilla, Denise Reid '09, Chris Wilson '08, Tristen Macon '06, JoAnn Silliker '11, Cindy Wechsung '05, Ruthellen Moss '08, Judith Kantor and I packed our bags, said good-bye to our classrooms and embarked on our journey to Washington D.C. on March 21. Like the early settlers, we had some obstacles on the trail...two-hour lines at LAX, excessive security screenings, a vehicle inspection, and an almost missed flight. Yet, when we landed and arrived in D.C., it was the Promised Land — full of opportunity. The rough journey already felt worth it.

The first night was spent finding the illuminated White House and walking through town to get our bearings. Imagine our delight to know we had landed on the historic day of the passage of health care reform. Already, we felt a part of history and pioneering; we couldn't wait to begin our work.

Bright and early Monday morning, we navigated the Metro on our way to the Library of Congress. (Imagine the laughter as a group of Southern California teachers struggled to decipher the Metro machines and purchase tickets.) When we arrived at the Madison Building, Gail Petri and Sherri Galloway, our library leaders for the next three days, welcomed us with open arms, enthusiasm, and humor. Our work now began. First step, obtain researchers' cards. What a feeling to be official and have the proper identification to work in the Library! Monday and Tuesday were spent soaking up every word Gail and Sherri spoke. Like the settlers building a home, we plugged in laptops and set our

frame of minds to build a primary source unit. Hours were spent exploring the research rooms and the extensive online library available for creating our projects. Excitement ensued while viewing Ben Franklin's journals and George Washington's schoolbooks in the manuscript room. As budding historians we practiced the art of preservation by taking photos without flash, narrating video feeds for our students back home, and copiously documenting the tenets of inquiry-based teaching. All day we researched our project areas in history and toured the Library. There was much to see, research, and discover. The beauty and architecture of the building left us breathless, and the amount of history we examined and experienced kept our minds racing.

Wednesday was a day of closure, reflection and goodbyes. Each member of the group had refined his or her path of research. Although each path is different we all had a similar plan. We will teach our students to inquire, to ask meaningful questions about primary sources. We will create lessons with primary sources that encourage close readings and that help them discover the background and history of the time. And we will share our new learning with our Cotsen network.

As we set off on Wednesday evening, we vowed to commit to this inquiry model when teaching history. With a Wiki (a social network online site created by Judith Kantor) in place, and mentors at the Library of Congress, we set out for the trip West with an enhanced understanding of social studies teaching. In the end, this expedition was more than worth the journey. I can't help but think Eureka! We found the historian's Promised Land at the Library of Congress! ■

## COTSEN PRINCIPALS SHARE IN THE LEARNING

Principals from “Cotsen schools,” those with current or alumni cohorts, continued their shared dialogue and learning during the spring semester. Cotsen Program Officer Jerry Harris convened the group for three school visitations, the Ford Foundation/Teacher Network event at Davidson Conference Center at USC, and two breakfasts at the Long Beach Grand.

The group came together to visit schools with especially effective school-wide approaches to math, reading or writing. On February 3, they joined current fellows and alumni at Santa Monica’s Will Rogers for visits to a series of classrooms to see Cognitively Guided Instruction, or, as commonly called, CGI. A later visit on February 18 to Weaver Elementary School in Los Alamitos offered further observations of CGI, this time K-3 and grade 5. Alvarado in Long Beach opened its doors on March 16 for an observation of both reading and writing workshop.

The Ford Foundation/Teacher Network event at the Davidson Conference Center, USC, on March 2 brought principals together with mentors, fellows, and alumni in a discussion about what it will take to make sure every child has an effective teacher.

Rounding out the year, the April 23 breakfast offered participants the opportunity to hear about the competitively awarded Cotsen Strategic Opportunity grants for alumni schools. Three alumni principals, Brett Geithman, Erika Krohn, and Christopher Lund presented an overview of their grants, awarded for the 2009-2010 year. On their feedback forms, principals expressed appreciation for the “great presentations and information!” and the ideas they generated. They also noted the value of networking with those from other districts and indicated their enthusiasm for ongoing collaboration with their Cotsen colleagues. ■

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## 2010 GRADUATES HONORED, CONTINUED

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a boy who had been a struggling reader, she reported his enthusiastic assessment of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*: “This is person versus nature.”

Kristen Paulson, of Arroyo in Tustin, had seriously considered leaving teaching when the ART of TEACHING came her way. In the current climate of criticism that teachers hear from political leaders, reform groups, and the media, “it leaves us dispirited and overwhelmed.” But, she continued “we know we have work to do that is important. And, thankfully, so does Mr. Cotsen.” With that, she described the sense of a community that has developed both in her classroom and within her school’s Cotsen cohort.

“Am I a better teacher? My own answer is that I’m a teacher I like better.”

Concluding the program, George Herrera titled his talk “Cotsen gifts:” “...living and breathing in space that harbors what is most noble about the teaching profession; being alive with people who care about the art and craft of teaching; and knowing our efforts transform the lives of young, impressionable students.” Recognizing the graduating fellows, he thanked them for the honor of being allowed into their classrooms. Closing, he thanked Mr. Cotsen for allowing “us to be part of the tapestry that is weaving a powerful vision of hope for the future of education.” ■



## LEARNING WALK AT WILL ROGERS FEATURES TEACHING MATH FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

The fifth and final day of the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) workshop concluded at Will Rogers in Santa Monica on February 3 with a CGI Learning Walk, a 20-minute visit to each of nine classrooms where math taught through the CGI approach could be seen at different stages of the lesson.

Will Rogers Learning Community welcomed 27 Cotsen mentors, fellows, and alumni who had started their CGI formal learning in June of 2009. Rogers was of particular interest because of its Cotsen alumni, three-year experience with CGI, school-wide implementation, and the successful outcomes for their students. Another reason for interest in Rogers was its Title I status and its significant enrollment of English language learners. The only other school where Cotsen participants had seen school-wide implementation of CGI was at Weaver Elementary in Los Alamitos, a non-Title I school.

The CGI “learners,” drawn from 16 current and alumni schools were eager and now, informed observers. Having finally attended the training in June of ‘09, led by Angela Chan of UCLA, they had returned to their classrooms, implemented what they had learned, and returned with



*Cotsen Fellow Aimee Johnson '10 with student*



*Students counting*



*Cotsen Mentor Tim Zweber '10  
and Fellow Janis Leach '10*

further questions for Chan on a follow-up day in October. The observation in February at Rogers, where Chan and Professor Megan Franke had been coaching and conducting professional development for three years, was a great opportunity for observation with those a few years ahead of the observers.

During classroom visits, the Cotsen participants were invited to ask the students about their problem-solving strategies and thinking. The students, whose classrooms have frequently been visited, were eager and proud to share their math prowess. After each observation, groups gathered with Franke, Chan, Jerry Harris, a former Santa Monica principal, or Assistant Principal Mary Anna Noveck, to discuss what had been seen.

The day concluded with a group debrief, the Learning “Walkers” posing multiple questions to Katja Alexander, Carolina Barba-Ortiz, Sitara Contreras '06, Mary De La Rosa '07, Laura Henning '08, Mayra Herrera, Joan Klein '07, Y. Kleiser, Yoli Marmelejo '06, Darwin Mendinueto '06, Roberta Reid '07, Devon Smith, Cindy Thatcher '06, and Rebecca Urias '07. ■

## WHAT WILL IT REALLY TAKE TO HELP TEACHERS SUCCEED, CONTINUED

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the norm, not the exception. We need a system where teachers can learn and grow from each other continually.”

“Teacher collaboration is critical,” added Jane Patterson, director of the Los Angeles Education Partnership’s Humanitas program. “Teachers who are struggling, but who have access to a supportive network of really excellent experienced teachers, have a terrific incentive to improve. It’s also a kind of built-in accountability system where teachers are accountable to each other.”

Others attending the conference highlighted additional elements of quality teaching. “Teachers need a strong understanding of the subject matter they are teaching, whether that be math, science or reading,” said Karen Symms Gallagher, dean of the USC Rossier School of Education. “They also need to know how to teach the subject they are teaching to the kids that are in front of them, so they need to understand the developmental needs and the social and cultural backgrounds of the children.”

Mediha Din, a second-grade teacher at Lawndale’s Green Elementary School, said that changes to the school environment were needed. “Teachers need more parental support, time to plan, time to collaborate and more exposure to best practices that inspire and excite us.”



*Cotsen Program Officer Jerry Harris, Professor Megan Franke and Alvarado Principal Brett Geithman*

Some participants took a more personal approach. Miriam Kim, a principal at Hollingworth Elementary in Rowland Unified said that the first thing she looks for in a teacher is heart. “Do they truly care about kids, are they going to go that extra mile day in and day out? Are they truly willing to go where other teachers may not to give kids what they need?” Kim asked.

While there was a wide range of opinions expressed at the meeting, there would have been little, if any, dissent from the comments of Alumna Mentor Joan Major, a teacher at the UCLA Lab School. “Teaching is a profession and teachers need to be treated professionally,” said Major. “Teachers need ongoing interaction, evaluation and reflection. We need to be sure they have time to think about what they are teaching and why they are teaching it, and a lot of time to get to know their children.”

To view highlights of educators’ comments on what it will really take to help teachers succeed, visit the Cotsen Foundation website at [www.cotsen.org](http://www.cotsen.org), or the Teachers Network social networking site at [www.effectiveteachers.org](http://www.effectiveteachers.org). ■



## THREE SCHOOL-BASED WORKSHOPS FOLLOW UP ON WRITING AND MATH

January and February were months for follow-ups. Long Beach's Alvarado Elementary School offered a second day of each of its writing workshop trainings: Introduction to Writing Workshop and Advanced Writing Workshop. McGaugh in Los Alamitos followed up its fall institute with a second day on February 24.

Alvarado's Introduction to Writing Workshop, January 19, day two, focused on conferring, what many consider the most demanding of workshop's practices. Gathered in the library, participants heard the theory and rationale for conferring, learned its steps, and watched video of successful teacher-student conferences around writing. Leaving the library for some on-the-ground practice, participants entered their grade-alike classroom and sat with their designated student whose work would be the

focus for a conference. The classroom's "real" teacher watched and listened in on the conferences, making note of what she or he heard for later debriefing. After another visit to the library and a share with the entire group, participants returned to the classrooms for an official debrief with the workshop teachers.

The Advanced Institute on February 16 featured work on mentor text, record keeping on mini-lessons, conferences, and the development of lines of growth. Teachers also shared their student work with grade-alike colleagues and discussed what they would record on different kinds of data-tracking forms. They looked through Alvarado binders, notebooks with a wealth of

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## ORGANIZATIONS GATHER AT USC TO DISCUSS EFFECTIVE TEACHING, CONTINUED

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Results of the Teachers Network national survey were presented by Barnett Berry, president and C.E.O. of the Center for Teaching Quality. Ken Futernick, director of WestEd's Tipping Point School Turnaround Center, also presented on re-framing the debate on teacher quality and accountability. A panel was invited to summarize and emphasize what needs to be done to retain effective teachers. The panel included Bill Cirone, Santa Barbara County superintendent of schools, Sandy Dean, director of the National Board Resource Center at Stanford University, Becky Zogelman, associate director of the California Teachers Association, Jane Fung, teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District, and Margaret Gaston, president and executive director of the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

A discussion also took place, facilitated by author Joan Goldsmith, in which participants shared ideas about what needs to be done to make sure that every child has an effective teacher. Echoing the Teachers Network national survey, participants identified collaborative learning and peer support, along with professional development, including mentoring and coaching most often, as important stimulants to effective teaching. Respondents mentioned needing time for collaboration, planning and meeting with parents. They thought that all people in the education system are accountable for student learning and achievement. Regardless of their respective roles in the school system, participants agreed that supporting teachers in continuous learning — from the start to the finish of their careers — is essential. ■

## GREATER INTEREST IN SHARED INQUIRY RESULTS IN WORKSHOP

Interest in Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry — resulting from the breakout sessions at the ART of TEACHING Conference in September — spurred the Cotsen Family Foundation to engage Don Smith, one of the conference presenters, to return for two days in February. Conducted at Mill School and Technology Academy in Whittier City, the Shared Inquiry workshop was attended by 23 Cotsen fellows and their mentors. Joining the southern Cotsen contingent, Pajaro Valley Unified Mentor Susan Murphy and Fellow T.J. Miller traveled from northern California for the event.



*Left to right: Michelle Aceves '11, Don Smith, Marjorie Toldi '11, Claudette Pantney '11, and Ginger Sparks '11*

The participants, Cotsen fellows whose goal in the ART of TEACHING is strengthening their students' reading comprehension and critical thinking, were eager to delve more deeply into the elements of both shared inquiry and the role of an inquiry facilitator.

Smith presented both. First acting as leader, he engaged the teachers as participants who responded to his focus question about a short story, prompted them to speak directly to one another, asked effective follow-up questions, and frequently encouraged others to cite evidence from the text. He modeled clarifying questions, noting that students often do not say exactly what they mean and require further questions to make their words match their thinking. Acknowledging that shy or quiet students may need some motivation to join the conversation, he suggested inquiring if they agree or disagree with a given point.

Turning to the task of an inquiry leader, Smith stressed the selection of a reading that is “rich in interpretive possibilities,” and the development of a focus question

that the leaders are genuinely interested in pursuing and for which they have no answer. In reading the text, the teachers should make notes in the margins and then practice turning their notes into questions, aiming for interpretive and evaluative questions. Subsequent topics were an analysis of the difference between the two kinds of questions and practice in clarifying questions by

specific literary aspect: character motivation, unusual use of language, prominent details, words or phrases with multiple meanings, and connections between parts of the reading. Teachers then broke into three groups and practiced a shared inquiry, with Smith leaning in and coaching participants as they talked.

The day concluded with Smith leading a powerful inquiry on a piece called *Wolf* by Loren Eiseley about which a participant commented, “if ever there was a reading rich with interpretive possibilities, this is it.” Multiple questions emerged, teachers addressed one another, follow-up questions were offered, much text was cited, and the conversation extended beyond the time to leave as teachers wrestled with the meaning of the story's dark forest and the return of an artifact to a shelf.

As the day ended, participants lingered and expressed the sentiment that Don had been a great leader and the workshop had given them another way to advance their students as readers. But, it was also said, and noted in Mentor Helen Oh's comments in her evaluation of the two days, that she had not only learned a great deal as an instructor, but “as a reader/thinker/inquirer as well.” ■

## PARENTS LEARN ANOTHER WAY TO DO MATH AT VALENCIA

Mentor Susan Murphy '10

With support from the Cotsen Family Foundation, Valencia Elementary School in the Pajaro Unified School District presented a highly successful Parents' Math Night on Tuesday, April 20. More than forty parents participated and learned how their children are learning math for understanding. Eight teachers presented while Principal Diana Higginbotham and Mentor Susan Murphy provided logistical support. The response was so positive that already teachers and parents are sharing ideas about how to do a similar event next school year.

The first-grade team, which has been studying Cognitively Guided Instruction with other primary teachers, talked about direct modeling and problem-solving strategies followed by the second-grade team who showed a video of their students solving a division problem. A variety of approaches were captured by the camera, as was the teacher's questioning to probe thinking. The video complemented the other presentations because it showed student work in the context of classroom instruction. Some parents shared their strategies as did a first-grader, who brought her white board up to the front to explain her approach. fellow Rick Lober '10 showed student work that

demonstrated how students represent their thinking when problem-solving with large numbers. Parents had the opportunity to practice using white boards. Rick also demonstrated alternative algorithms that support student understanding of place value. Finally, upper-grade teachers discussed the development of algebraic thinking. At several points in the evening, audible gasps of understanding could be heard as parents connected with the new ideas.

The teachers' (first through sixth-grades) impact was powerful. Parents could see the importance of students' representing and explaining their reasoning. They were able to see that the singular goal of executing an algorithm correctly does not develop understanding and can lead to frustration and confusion. Several parents, after the presentations, expressed their own "issues" with math and said that the approaches to mathematical understanding were reassuring. Parents stayed well past the 8:30 ending time to discuss math teaching and learning. The evening is just another example of the positive impact that the ART of TEACHING has had on our school culture and our approach to teaching and learning. ■

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## THREE SCHOOL-BASED WORKSHOPS FOLLOW UP ON WRITING AND MATH, CONTINUED

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exemplary text, culled from good literature that can serve as "mentor texts" for students, either in a mini-lesson or during a conference, and noted what kind of text would serve what purpose best. The Advanced Institute's work will be further assisted by that of the Writing Workshop Alumni Network in Long Beach that is currently working on reading, selecting, and organizing representative binders of mentor texts.

McGaugh Elementary presented a second day of classroom observations and debriefing on February 24 during which time participants saw algebraic connections developed in contextualized math, the approach developed by Catherine Twomey Fosnot of New York's City College. Teachers watched in demonstration classrooms as students dealt with important algebraic concepts and chose from a number of strategies to solve word problems in complex lessons. Coordinated by Mentor Lisa McClellan '09, observers had a chance for an afternoon debrief of the morning's lessons. ■



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## COTSEN PARTICIPANTS TO GATHER AT 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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On Saturday, September 25, 2010, Cotsen participants, past and present, will assemble at the 5th annual conference in Long Beach. Taking its cue from mentors and fellows, the foundation engaged speakers whose work has had a significant impact on Cotsen mentors and fellows seeking to elevate their practice to a level of artfulness.

This year, speakers include noted education authors Harvey "Smokey" Daniels, Katie Wood Ray, Megan Franke, and Frank Serafini. Diane Ravitch, former United States Assistant Secretary of Education, and

author of the bestselling, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Undermine Education*, will deliver the keynote address. Participants in the Library of Congress project will be on hand to present their work.

Current mentors, fellows, principals, and district leaders, join with Cotsen alumni from years past for the annual event. A crowd of 500 is expected from across southern and northern California.