Charter schools represent 6.3% of all public schools in the country, which is up from 3% a decade ago. There are now more than two million students in charter schools, and there are over 100 school districts with more than 10% of public school students enrolled in charter schools. In addition, approximately one-third of all charters are now run by non-profit or for-profit management organizations (MOs), up from just 6% in 2000. As charters and MOs come to represent an increasing percentage of public schools over time, especially those serving low-income students of color, it is important to examine how they’re doing as well as the impact they have on public education and education policy. As charters become more prominent, it is critical that they be systematically studied, as they are increasingly an important part of how U.S. tax dollars are used to educate children.

Many researchers study student achievement in charters. Charter proponents argue that educators and policy makers should increase the number of higher-performing models, especially charter MOs. We hope to understand how the emergence of charter schools shapes the educational experiences and quality of education received by children, particularly children in low-income and predominantly minority communities. In order to develop this understanding, however, we must examine the policies and politics that shape charter schools and how charter schools play a role in public education more broadly.

Through our research, we have examined which school characteristics, teacher characteristics, and working conditions best predict teacher satisfaction and turnover in charter schools. We know teachers no longer spend their entire professional lives in the classroom, but in the short term, we can aim to have more of them stay in the classroom for 5-10 years. We have also focused on state laws and the role of charter school authorizers (organizations that give charter schools a “charter” or contract that allows them to receive public money to educate students). Additional studies that we conducted looked more closely at practices in charter schools, including issues such as teacher professional community and the role of management organizations that oversee charters.

Our research has resulted in several findings. We found that the odds of teachers leaving were three times greater if they rated their workloads “unmanageable” in the middle of the year than if they did not, even after controlling for teacher experience and different school characteristics. However, this result was no longer significant when teacher perceptions of a principal’s leadership and their own professional growth were taken into account. In other words, teachers who cited an unmanageable workload were more likely to stay in their current role if they felt supported by the principal and felt they were learning.

Second, the survey and interview data indicated that the perceived effectiveness of disciplinary systems at charter schools, which are highly controversial in some circles, significantly influenced teachers’ decisions to leave their schools. Survey data showed wide variation between schools on the perceived effectiveness of school-wide disciplinary systems, which further illustrated the common struggle that teachers and principals have implementing and troubleshooting school-wide disciplinary systems, particularly in a “No Excuses” environment. Getting the disciplinary component right is not impossible, but it’s a struggle. These systems, when run well, are a foundation of high student achievement in charter MOs and our findings demonstrate they also matter a great deal in terms of teacher satisfaction and retention.

These findings add much needed complexity to the debates about high teacher turnover in charter schools. For instance, even considering the heavy workload and the many expectations placed on teachers, principals still have some control over whether teachers decide to stay or go. This is promising. Much can be done to improve the leadership and working conditions in these organizations to retain teachers. We believe leadership must be

continued on pg.5
It is rare that a day goes by without education or teacher education being discussed in the news. Teacher preparation through colleges and universities in particular is challenged on a regular basis, as new organizations emerge that claim they can better prepare teachers.

In such a climate, it is especially gratifying to work in an institution where faculty, staff, students and alumni continually collaborate to prepare the most outstanding teachers and educational leaders for our schools, and who always strive to research and develop new understandings of teaching and learning. As you will see in the pages of this newsletter, College of Education and Human Services faculty and programs remain on the cutting edge of teacher preparation for early childhood, elementary and secondary educators. For example, in cooperation with colleagues in the College of Science and Mathematics, they developed a University-wide STEM Teacher Education Initiative. The two colleges have a long history of providing exceptional programs for both prospective and developing K-12 STEM teachers and teacher educators. Most recently, faculty from both colleges are collaborating in the planning and implementation of the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship program, a residency-based MAT program for prospective secondary math and science teachers for Newark and Orange Public Schools. Wipro, a leading global IT company, recently awarded a five-year $1.3 million grant to a team of faculty members across both colleges to implement the Wipro Science Education Fellowship (SEF) leadership training program for K-12 science teachers. You will read more about these programs and others in the STEM initiative on page four.

Despite economic challenges that have impacted graduate enrollments across the country, education programs in the College continue to experience robust growth. The Master of Arts in Teaching programs in Early Childhood and Elementary Education have increased enrollment by 12% over the previous year. Elisa Torturgul, a graduate of the Early Childhood program, was recognized as an outstanding student teacher, and her story appears on page 8. The Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education department recently launched a new master’s program in Inclusive Education with concentrations in Early Childhood, Elementary and Autism, in cooperation with our Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health.

The graduate programs in Educational Leadership continue to grow in number and in delivery options. The masters and certification program enrollments have increased by 33%, adding close to 100 students over the past five years. In addition to the traditional master’s program on campus, Educational Leadership faculty members have designed online, off-site and fast-track programs, so that excellent teachers have every opportunity to become excellent educational leaders. Program graduates have obtained positions as curriculum supervisors, principals and superintendents throughout the State.

Through this work, faculty, staff and students renew the commitment to teacher preparation, teacher development and to school and district partners on a daily basis. And the College honors its commitment and ensures that all children have access to the highest quality education possible by providing faculty, staff and students with opportunities to model and invent innovative practices and curriculum. I invite you to read more about these initiatives in the pages that follow.
Social Justice Education in the Elementary Classroom

by Bree Picower

The context of urban education is ripe with examples of extreme racial, economic, and social stratification and is at the heart of many market-based, neoliberal reforms. It is also filled with teacher activists who believe that such reforms exacerbate inequality, and these educators work for what they see as social justice in public education. This makes it an ideal place to understand the struggles teachers deal with in the face of corporate school reform and the acts of resistance they pursue as they work toward social justice inside and outside of their classrooms.

Ask most student-teachers why they enter the profession, and most will respond that they “want to make a difference.” However, what is often unexamined is how their racial and political understandings influence the ways they make sense of the social and educational inequality. Often working in communities different from where they grew up, many teachers are unequipped to understand the systemic forces operating in urban communities and place blame on children and families. Even teachers who don’t hold such views may be unaware of how to work toward social change in a system that feels so intractable. My research works to understand the barriers teachers face in trying to teach and organize for social justice and work toward social change.

In my recent book, Practice What You Teach: Social Justice Education in the Classroom and the Streets, I researched three different groups of educators to explore the challenges of developing and supporting teachers’ sense of social justice and activism at various stages of their careers: White pre-service teachers typically enrolled in most teacher education programs, a group of new teachers attempting to integrate social justice into their teaching, and experienced educators who see their teaching and activism as inextricably linked. I explored each group’s triumphs and challenges, providing strategies and suggestions for all teachers along with in-depth analysis. It is my hope that by understanding the challenges that teachers face in teaching for equity, we in teacher education can be better positioned to develop the kind of political analysis that lays the foundation for social justice teaching and teacher activism.

Most of my research involves interviews with student teachers, classroom teachers, and teacher activists in the NY/NJ/CT tri-state area. Previously, I have studied how race influences White teachers’ conceptualizations of urban teaching and communities of color. In another study, I interviewed educators from across the country who were involved in high profile struggles for educational justice such as the ban on ethnic studies in Tucson, Arizona, the end of collective bargaining in Milwaukee, Wisconsin as well as local teachers involved in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Most recently, I examined successful strategies and practices that shape the development of teachers’ sociopolitical analysis.

Going forward, I think it will be important for research in social justice education to look more closely at the classroom experiences of students. This would include how children are impacted on a daily basis by corporate school reform as well as understanding the experiences of students who have teachers who have a professed interest in teaching for social justice.
Montclair State University is a hub for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teacher education. The College of Education and Human Services offers a series of academic programs to further the University’s initiatives to address opportunities in this important field. These programs were developed by faculty throughout the College in partnership with faculty members in the College of Science and Mathematics, and include teacher education programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The Newark-Montclair Urban Teacher Residency Program (NMUTR) is a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program that offers students a master’s degree, certification in mathematics or science, and certification in Teacher of Students with Disabilities. The NMUTR is funded by a 5-year, $6.3 million dollar U.S Department of Education grant received by Dr. Jennifer Robinson of the Center of Pedagogy in partnership with the Newark Public Schools. This program offers an apprenticeship-based opportunity for individuals committed to urban teaching. Teacher candidates in the program receive on-site preparation and professional development, as well as preferential advancement by Newark Public Schools in the hiring process. Participants who successfully complete this program leave with a deep grounding in what it means to be an effective teacher in Newark Public Schools.

Montclair State University also participates in the Woodrow Wilson New Jersey Teaching Fellowship Residency program. Following the STEM model, this residency program includes ongoing focus on assessment of student learning, ongoing reflection and inquiry regarding improving student learning and teaching, strong transition processes for teacher education candidates from residency to induction, professional development for mentor teachers, and engaging discussions of the best program components and practices to be practiced in other MSU programs. The Newark Public Schools, Orange Public Schools, and the University are true partners in effective teacher preparation: sharing facilities, co-leading teaching experiences and coursework, as well as identifying and strengthening models of excellence. Representatives from both school districts co-designed the curriculum to ensure all candidates receive rigorous preparation. The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows Residency is not just about supplying districts with new teachers—it recruits and prepares outstanding teachers with a passion for urban education, deep commitment and dedication to the Newark and Orange communities, and a relentless focus on high levels of student engagement and achievement. The program is directed by Dr. Tanya Maloney.

The MAT Inclusive iSTEM program is a cutting-edge teacher education program that prepares middle and secondary math and science teachers through three interconnected strands of teacher preparation: rigorous content area preparation in math or science; evidence-based inclusive practices; and integrative STEM education. Graduates of this program complete 48 credits to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), NJ Initial Teaching Certification in math or science, and NJ Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certification. iSTEM teaching and learning are grounded in inquiry-based, peer-led, and problem-based learning to prevent STEM failure and promote STEM achievement. The MSU program is the only program in the nation that prepares iSTEM educators for inclusive settings thus the name “Inclusive iSTEM.” The program is supported by a $1.4 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education received by Dr. Jennifer Goeke of the Secondary and Special Education department.
The Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program (NTSP) is dedicated to recruiting, preparing, and supporting new science teachers for New Jersey’s high-need K-12 school districts. This project is funded by the National Science Foundation and was developed by Dr. Douglas Larkin of Secondary and Special Education and Dr. Sandra Adams of Biology and Molecular Biology. It offers two years of scholarships equal to the amount of New Jersey in-state tuition and fees, as well as an annual stipend to undergraduate chemistry, physics, earth science, and biology majors admitted into the MSU Teacher Education Program. The program (NTSP) involves three key features: financial support for two years of undergraduate teacher preparation; a series of professional experiences designed to support high-quality science teaching; and intensive and well-supervised school-based field experiences. In addition, the Noyce program has established partnerships with several school sites that collaborate fully in the education of new teachers.

Wipro, a leading global IT company, recently awarded a five-year $1.3 million grant to a team of five Montclair State University faculty members to implement the Wipro Science Education Fellowship (SEF) leadership training program for K-12 science teachers. More than 60 teachers from high-need schools in the Clifton, Montclair, Kearney, Orange and Paramus school districts will participate in the Wipro SEF program over the next five years. Each teacher will receive a $10,000 stipend and participate in a professional development program for two years. The Wipro SEF program supports emerging teacher leadership by focusing on reflective practice, inquiry-based pedagogies, classroom research, and leadership activities. These veteran teachers will also be prepared to train and help their districts retain new teachers. Ultimately, these teachers will be in positions to enact positive change within their schools, their districts and beyond.

open to dialogue from within and outside of their organizations and must avoid the assumptions that high turnover is acceptable, or that these young teachers will leave and burn out regardless of what is done.

The rhetoric about the possibilities and problems of charter schools is often simplistic and doesn’t begin to capture the many nuances in this major shift in the nature of public education. Many of the challenges faced by charter schools are not unique to them, but are common in public education more broadly.

The field needs additional thoughtful research regarding what is happening inside charter schools, and the impact on children who attend specific charter schools - the charter school universe is diverse in important ways, and one of the ongoing challenges in the research and the public debate is that there is no “generic” charter school. Since charter schools disproportionately serve children from historically marginalized populations, it is particularly important to understand the experiences of children and families from those populations. What can we learn from schools that are doing well, and what can we learn about why some very weak schools are continuing to operate? Who are charter schools serving, and what is happening with those students who remain in traditional public schools?

In addition, and of equal importance, we need to know more about how charters are playing a role in the broader context of public education. What is the impact of a growing charter sector on students and families, educators, and the public? High profile changes - such as school closures in cities including Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City - are tied in part to the expansion of charters. How do these important shifts impact all the stakeholders of public education? These questions will inform research on charter schools and public education as we move forward.

Katrina Bulkley is Professor of Educational Leadership at Montclair State University. Bulkley received a BA with Honors in Government from Wesleyan University, an MA in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a PhD in Administration and Policy Analysis from the Stanford University School of Education. Her research examines the intersection of policy and leadership in efforts to increase market-linked ideas in education and enhance accountability and data-driven change. She has a longstanding interest in the practices of charter schools and their role in broader change in public education. She is the co-editor of Between public and private: Politics, governance, and the new portfolio models for urban school reform published by Harvard Education Press and has recently published in the Journal of School Choice and the Peabody Journal of Education.

Chris Torres is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership. He graduated from Yale University with a BA in Psychology and a PhD in Teaching and Learning from New York University. His research aims to understand and evaluate strategies and conditions to recruit, develop, and retain high quality teachers for low-income schools. He has presented his research at recent conferences for the American Educational Research Association Conference, the Sociology of Education Association Conference (SEA), and the International School Choice and Academic Reform Conference and will also present at the November conference of the University Council for Educational Administration.
Sumi Hagiwara is an associate professor in the department of Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education. Her research examines how pre-service students are creating a community of learners through inquiry-driven science education, and how “home culture” influences the ways parents of diverse backgrounds are involved in schools. She received her bachelor’s degree in Natural Science from City University of New York, Baruch College and an M.S. in Biology from New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Science. She obtained her doctoral degree from Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Science, in Science Education.

Elementary STEM Education: Hands-On Learning Through Summer Enrichment

by Sumi Hagiwara

Montclair State University has a history of partnerships with local districts and schools. The notion of creating a community of learners through mutually beneficial partnerships is a tenet of the MSU teacher preparation program. How a community is constructed and the ways in which community members are engaged frame my teaching philosophy.

Academics are uniquely poised to create opportunities for their students. Like many teacher educators, I search for opportunities to bridge the theory-to-practice gap for my students, to deepen their understandings of coursework by seeking ways to transfer their knowledge from the classroom into the real world. As a science teacher educator, the call to do so has never been more profound. Early childhood and elementary teachers are called upon to infuse science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education into their teaching.

The paradigm of collectivism is apparent in the opportunities I seek for my students. One longstanding opportunity is with the Bradford University Magnet School in Montclair. Through this partnership, I have collaborated with Bradford teachers who opened their classrooms to my undergraduate and graduate early childhood and elementary students. Over the years, my students delivered interactive, science and math center-based instruction that compliments the school’s curricula. This opportunity has provided MSU students with experiences to co-plan instruction, implement a hands-on, inquiry-based activity, and assess student learning. MSU students reported that this experience has affirmed their decision to become a teacher, in part because of the opportunity to learn from the children. The children offered insight into how to improve instruction based on positive and constructive feedback, nuances of how they understood/misunderstood directions, questions and concerns raised, and how activities were organized to support student learning. In short, the children were positioned as “teacher” as MSU students gained mutually beneficial insights from their visits.

A similar framework of community was created through the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Literacy Education’s Summer STEM Program, epiSTEMic. epiSTEMic is a summer community of learners that has included children (grades K-6), MSU early childhood and elementary education students, mentor teachers, and MSU faculty as partners in an inclusive, 16-session program. Children participate in inquiry-based projects to develop critical-thinking and problem solving skills through experimentation and engineering design challenges. Technology in the form of the digital games, including Minecraft and Scratch, promotes digital literacy and provides a platform to transfer knowledge of camp activities from real to digital worlds. epiSTEMic also provides an opportunity for pre-clinical early childhood and elementary (ECEL) students to deepen their teaching experience with curriculum development and instruction. New ECEL students enrolled in the summer science and math methods course also participate as they implement the learning center activity. Mentor teachers provide support to MSU students and children, while receiving professional development in STEM education.

The camp has provided me with the opportunity to research camp outcomes for children and MSU students. Specifically, I aim to explore the process of developing higher order thinking skills as knowledge is transferred into the Minecraft world. Initial outcomes from the mixed-methods study indicate that students develop positive, collaborative communities in the digital world as they author a space where they apply knowledge of science content. Additional research areas include: identifying activity-specific domains that demonstrate application of content knowledge and higher order thinking skills, and creating science and math assessment strategies within the Minecraft world.
I was relatively young when I first left home to travel the world at age 18. I have always loved learning foreign languages and experiencing different cultures and customs, getting to know different places and the people that make this world so colorful.

Because of my passion for languages and cultures, I have had the opportunity to experience life in a number of international contexts. This has affected my research interests and professional choices. In Israel, I worked both as an English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual teacher in the public school system and in cooperative, community-based educational programs. In Great Britain, I earned a diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) from Cambridge University with a focus on ESL teaching methodology. While in England, I conducted part of my master’s thesis research, which involved several months of collecting and analyzing data from native British English speakers. I applied what I learned from these international experiences to my work in my native country, Brazil, where I continued to teach ESL, as well as applied linguistics and pedagogy. During that time, urban education became one of my main interests. I supervised student teachers while working with one of Paulo Freire’s educational programs. The program I helped create aimed to develop foreign language literacy for minority students both in the public school system and in community organizations. While in South America, I also worked as a teacher educator and ESL consultant in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

Inspired by the similarities and differences of working in each of these places, I continue to explore these themes in my academic pursuits. Pedagogically, I am interested not only in best practices for heritage language speakers and English language learners, but in the development of culturally responsive curricula and the preparation of teachers who are able to incorporate multiple contexts, cultures and viewpoints in their teaching in order to address diversity and the specific social, economic and educational needs of their students. Moreover, I believe that research in pedagogical practices needs to be able to address elements of social justice and educational equity and result in the implementation of instructional strategies and approaches that promote change and access.

Language functions as a mediator of relationships and its use can ultimately determine who is a member of your group and who is not. Learning to use a second language, to establish and develop relationships interculturally and to interact in the second language environment appropriately implies knowing and understanding that language use is about what to say as much as it is about how to say it. Therefore, teaching English language learners involves teaching how to listen and how to interpret conversational cues contextually.

There is more involved in second language acquisition than awareness and sensitivity to linguistic and cultural differences, though. Culture is the way one comes to understand the world, interpret it, and relate to it. Language is one of the vehicles used to express these views and relationships. In order to be able to communicate effectively and adequately in the second language, learners need to develop an understanding of this complex interaction between language and culture, and gain some control of specific strategies and semantic formulas used in developing relationships cross-culturally.

I am currently working with bilingual teachers in a high school in the Ironbound section of Newark, a historically Portuguese speaking area, in order to identify, describe and understand the processes, strategies and challenges that teachers experience as they negotiate language, content and identity in the classroom. One of my aims is to understand the benefits and drawbacks of using students’ first-language as the primary medium of instruction in supporting bilingual students’ content and language learning and their development of academic literacy and skills.

By studying the actual instructional practices and the underlying beliefs of bilingual teachers, I aim to uncover aspects of teacher education that have prepared and/or not prepared them to exercise various skills and to balance between pedagogical, content, and linguistic knowledge. By focusing on bilingual teachers, I am also looking into the teachers’ rescue of cultural and linguistic identity and at identifying processes teachers undergo to negotiate the uses and the meanings of language in the classroom.

Fernando Naiditch is an associate professor in the department of Secondary and Special Education. His research focuses on second language acquisition. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) and his doctoral degree from New York University. His research has been published in Phi Delta Kappan, The International Journal of the Sociology of Language, and the American Journal of Educational Studies.

Multicultural Education in the American Classroom

by Fernando Naiditch
Elisa Toturgul was recognized as one of the fifteen New Jersey Distinguished Student Teachers for the past year. Elisa previously worked in human resources in the pharmaceutical industry, but realized that her dream was to teach. She began her Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT)/Early Childhood and Teacher of Students with Disabilities program at Montclair State University in 2011. She was selected as a graduate assistant and maintained a 4.0 GPA in the program. Elisa graduated from the program in December 2012, and believes that her strong work ethic and Montclair's unique program preparation has been key to her success. Currently working as a kindergarten teacher in Bergen County, Elisa prides herself on having a genuine and positive connection with all of her students. She hopes to return to Montclair State University in the future to further her education and professional development.

Elisa celebrates her award with Caroline Murray, Associate Director of the Center of Pedagogy (l) and Dr. Jennifer Robinson, Executive Director of the Center of Pedagogy (r).