DONNA PADGETT, M.S.
Named Outstanding Alumni for 2015

By Kathi Bartle Angus

Donna Padgett was presented with the Outstanding Alumna award at REG’s spring breakfast. Donna joined the CSUF faculty in the fall of 1994, immediately following completion of her MS. She was granted full time status in fall 2001, teaching 5 classes each semester and taking an overload of students in every class, every semester. Ms. Padgett taught READ 201, READ 290 and READ 340 and was rated as excellent in every class. She was instrumental in designing and developing curriculum in all the classes she taught, especially READ 340. Ms. Padgett consistently provided creative and intellectual stimulation to her students by designing new and challenging assignments to move students forward in their ability to read effectively and efficiently and to think critically. As a lecturer, her focus was teaching and providing a thought-provoking environment for her students to grow as individuals. She has been recognized by student athletes as Faculty of the Year – the highest award student athletes can give a professor and for her commitment to student success for first generation and often struggling learners. A comment that highlights her effect on students comes from last semester’s evaluations, “You are a truly wonderful professor that teaches with such passion. Every student needs a professor like you at least once in their academic life. Out of my three years at CSUF, you definitely stood out from the rest.” Ms. Padgett has been a model for effective teaching. As an educator at CSUF, she has truly touched the minds, lives, and hearts of thousands of students.

Donna also provided considerable leadership in the field of reading. Over the course of her career at CSUF she collaborated with colleagues in making multiple professional presentations at national, state, and local conferences. Individually, she also designed and presented a number of professional development in-services and workshops in local school districts. Ms. Padgett took on leadership roles in her professional organizations, serving in multiple board positions, including President of REG. Ms. Padgett was recognized for her service as the recipient of the “Volunteer of the Year” award twice by Reading Educator’s Guild. Ms. Padgett has not only demonstrated excellence in teaching over her career at CSUF, but she has also demonstrated the professional commitment to her field that has made her a credit to the Reading Department and campus.
Developing Family Literacy in Riverside
By Erin Masi

As a brand new primary teacher I often had parents asking me how they could assist their children in learning how to read at home. They expressed concern that their busy lives did not allow them time to spend at home teaching their children how to read, and even more importantly were unsure of where to begin. As a result, I decided to focus my project on family literacy.

I decided to create a website that focused on family literacy development for children in kindergarten through second grade. The website "Read Across Riverside" can currently be accessed at www.fitzgeralderin.wix.com/reading. As I began to research early literacy I came across several areas of focus--phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, listening and speaking, letter knowledge and writing. I organized these areas of focus into three sections of the website. The first was "Family Reading Time" where parents could learn about the importance of reading together, what it should look like (questioning, focusing on print concepts, etc.), and see recommended booklists. Additionally this section advocates for time-efficient reading by suggesting that parents involve their children in reading environmental print--signs, menus, recipes, labels, etc.

The next section is "Daily Writing" which stresses the importance of writing practice and gives ideas for involving children in writing. After this section is "Letters, Words & Sounds". This tab suggests games, music, and poetry that can be played/recited in the car or in the home to develop letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, and increase vocabulary. "Online Resources" has websites with learning games, online books, videos, and printable activities in both English and Spanish.

The last section is "Events in Riverside" and is a community-mapping project that aims to make parents aware of the many wonderful resources in our area. It includes a map of local libraries and museums, an explanation of several places to visit, as well as a calendar of events that includes library story times, free tutoring locations, free museum nights, and more.

I really enjoyed creating this website. I was able to expand my knowledge of how the children I teach acquire literacy skills and knowledge, as well as create a tool that parents can use year after year. My next step with this website is to make it live again at ReadAcrossRiverside.com. I hope to integrate it into the personalized learning program at my school so that it can continue to be developed and remain current.
Long before students begin their formal education in the classroom, their parents and family members serve as their very first teachers and impress upon them the foundation for their future learning. As students move further into their educational journey the connection between their home and school environment becomes crucial in their development and success in literacy. The goal of my project was to provide parents with research and activities, in the form of a parent handbook that would serve to further educate parents on the importance of their involvement in their children’s literacy development at home.

Lelko (2012) explains that many parents want to be involved in their student’s education, but lack the knowledge, resources, or direction that they need in order to provide adequate and proper assistance. In the same way, many schools seek parental support, yet when parents volunteer many times, they simply ask them to make photocopies or complete preparation work. Schools, families, and community members are in need of resources and guidance in order to make their mutual relationship successful, purposeful and symbiotic in order to benefit their students.

The parent handbook details individual and group activities, related research, online resources, and community resources for the purpose of providing information for parents in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, in order to educate them on the impact that parental involvement has on student success. The handbook also provides practical applications and activities that can connect parents to their student’s learning, between the classroom and home environments.

Distribution of the handbook was not intended to be given out at school sites as a reactive resource; rather it should be given to parents as early as possible, so that parents would take a proactive approach to literacy instruction at home. A few thoughts on how to distribute the handbook might include pediatricians giving a copy to parents at a milestone checkup, allowing local organizations to post the handbook on their websites, or allowing public libraries in the community access to the handbook to incorporate into their young reader programs.

Parents, as well as teachers, need to be educated on how they can be critical participants in their students’ education and should be provided resources to help them be successful in this process. This can be done by equipping parents with knowledge and resources to adequately achieve this; otherwise the status quo of stagnant learning remains unchanged. It is also important to encourage parents to collaborate with other parents about how they are promoting literacy and their student’s literacy success. When parents and teachers form a strong foundation at home and in the classroom, students have the ability to set forth on the path of becoming lifelong learners.

References

Book Clubs and Student Motivation to Read
By Vincent Piro

Teachers have long complained that students are not inspired to read. Instructors worry that their students are not motivated to read their assigned texts or read much outside of class to extend their knowledge. However, book clubs instituted on both K-12 and college campuses have proven successful in motivating students to read and in changing their attitudes and self-perceptions as readers. Providing choice, fostering the social aspect of literacy development, encouraging student centered conversations, and creating reading as an experience are key elements to any successful book club.

Providing Choice
As Cindy O’Donnell-Allen (2006) reminds us, “In every aspect of life, developing identity and self-identity necessarily involves agency, the power to make one’s own choices” (p. 25). Choice is an important aspect in developing life-long readers because it helps students see themselves as autonomous readers, those who have the power to choose what they read based on their own interests and goals. Choice is an essential element of successful book clubs. We can create choice in book clubs by allowing our students to choose who is in their book club, choose which title(s) they will read, choose how to respond to the text, and choose the time and place of their book club meetings.

Fostering Social Aspect
Books clubs rely on the social aspect of literacy to generate intrinsic motivation. While the traditional image of a reader is a solitary figure with a book, researchers and practitioners have long known that learning to read is a social act in which readers become acculturated into reading communities (Gee, 2004). Book clubs can be places where students become active members of various reading communities, and book clubs can provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. We can foster the social aspect of reading in our book clubs by creating interdisciplinary learning communities, involving community members as mentors, using peer mentors and Supplemental Instruction, and by forming content area book clubs across campus.

Student Centered Conversations
Books clubs on many college campuses focus around student-centered conversations. Students exchange their own feelings and ideas about a text, which may be very different than a classroom discussion orchestrated by the instructor. These engaging conversations about books stimulate internal motivation as students see reading as a natural and personally rewarding act. To help students develop their abilities to hold such natural conversations about books, we can provide them with response guides and activities, such as those found in O’Donnell-Allen’s (2006) The Book Club Companion or Jim Burke’s (2006) Tools for Thought.

Creating Reading as an Experience
Too often in classrooms, students experience reading as an academic task rather than an experience that is lived. While there is certainly a need to focus on academic goals and objectives in the classroom and library, instructors and librarians should also attempt to create what Bennett (1995) calls the “trance of reading” (as cited in Addington, 2001, p. 214). However, it may become difficult for developing readers to become involved in reading as an experience if they are struggling with the text because of a lack of vocabulary, background knowledge, or reading skills or do not have the fluency necessary to get “lost in a book.” Two strategies that may help struggling readers are using audiobooks and having the teacher read the text aloud. These strategies have proven particularly useful to students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

Full references available by request. Email Vincent Piro at vincent.piro@csu.fullerton.edu.
Freeing Our Students to Care: Critical Literacy and Social Justice in Middle School
By Karen M. Brown

As educators, we all recognize the importance of adequately preparing our students to be productive members of society. However, it is not enough to merely present the curriculum or assure that our students are exposed to as many learning standards possible so that they may do well on a test. Of equal importance is the creation of a learning environment that empowers students to become caring human beings. As Noddings (1992) states, “we should educate our children not only for competence but also for caring. Our aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people” (p. xiv). This belief represents the very heart of my teaching and the reason why I became a teacher in the first place. It is what has influenced my most innovative teaching practices and what sparked the idea for my master’s project, which was not just the capstone to my graduate program, but an invitation to reacquaint myself with the type of teacher I was when I stepped into my first classroom—the type of teacher who believes that nurturing compassionate human beings must be an integral part of any middle school curriculum.

My project is built on the foundational concept of transformative education as the practice of freedom where students are free to struggle with the harsh realities of the world and to investigate ways to make a difference, instead of passively receiving knowledge from the teacher. It is problem-posing education that allows teachers and students to develop a critical attitude, pushing them to explore more deeply the inequities inherent in society (Freire, 1998). Three important elements of transformative education are critical literacy, constructivist/inquiry-based learning, collaboration, and dialogue. Critical literacy practices encourage students to question the author’s motives, recognize the influence of dominant discourse, and identify the multiple voices within a text (Ciardiello, 2004). Characters become dynamic entities whose acts and dialogues are now revealed to readers as social practices to be evaluated against their own expectations and experiences (Galda & Beach, 2001). A constructivist/inquiry-based learning environment is a student-centered community where learners are engaged in explorations, dialogue, and critical thinking (Moustafa, Ben-Zvi-Assaraf & Eshach, 2012). The learning path is not predetermined. Instead, students select topics of interest, formulate their own questions, and find their own answers (Owens, Hester & Teale, 2002). Collaboration and dialogue are integral components of a constructivist/inquiry-based classroom and encourage students to work as a community of knowledge seekers who are constantly questioning, exploring, discovering, and respecting multiple perspectives. Opportunities for unhindered, critical, and respectful dialogue are essential for students to transform their learning, and thus, their world.

The main purpose of my master’s project is to help teachers create a classroom community that encourages students to transform their learning and look at ways to transform their world, moving beyond an individual attitude of caring to embrace a collective sharing of concern and compassion for others. For my project, I created a themed year-long social justice curriculum titled “Freeing Ourselves to Care” that is designed for an 8th grade Language Arts class and provides multiple opportunities for students to personally interact with texts and activities that encourage them to approach the learning process critically, collaboratively, and with open and inquiring minds as they grapple with issues of intolerance and investigate the actions that counteract them. Each unit includes recommended texts, videos, technology, and activities, as well as sample curricular materials. Essentially, it is a collection of ideas and resources that was created to supplement or even replace the current curricular programs so that teachers can provide more opportunities for students to engage in critical literacy and activities necessary to promote collaborative constructivist and inquiry-based learning that will encourage them to investigate social justice issues and collectively find ways to be agents of change for the better.

Full references available by request. Email Karen Brown at kaemarie12@csu.fullerton.edu
This Master’s project, “A Literacy and Language App Resource Guide, Informed by Technological Community Mapping” stemmed from one crucial question: What technology resources do students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds have available in the home? In order to investigate this question, I designed and distributed a home technology questionnaire to parents at a Title I school in Orange, CA populated predominately with students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Findings from the questionnaire revealed that approximately 93% of students have access to digital mobile devices at home, and a vast majority of respondents expressed interest in learning more about how they can utilize apps to assist their children in academic literacy and language learning.

As a result of these findings I decided to create a “Parent Technology Resource Guide” for parents and published website chockfull of literacy and language learning apps. There are thousands of apps out there marketed as learning tools, however a critical examination of many of the apps exposed the fact that many apps that are fun, do not necessarily teach or reinforce a skill, and many apps that are skill focused are not engaging for children. Therefore, App selection began with first engineering selection criteria for critically analyzing learning apps and games.

All apps included are engaging, provide practice in a fundamental literacy or language development skill, and meets at least one Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts or English Language Development.

Finally, the website was published at the following address: https://sycamoreparentappguide.wordpress.com. It is a public site and available to be viewed and used by anyone.

The website is presented in English and Spanish, organized into areas of literacy with a parent friendly description and introduction, provides direct live links to allow for downloading the app from either the Google Play app store or iTunes.

The purpose of the project was first to find out what literacy and technology practices are already being used by students and their families at home, and to build upon those practices by providing school sanctioned, reviewed and recommended learning apps that will be both engaging and academically beneficial for students.

Full references available by request. Email Heather Krstich at krstich2@gmail.com
Comprehension Assessment for English Language Learners

Samantha (Sammie) Rodriguez presented her project, Comprehension Assessment for English Language Learners. In her presentation she shared the creative ways she allows her students to demonstrate their understanding and abilities to think critically about content. She shared examples of her students’ assessments that included illustrations and graphic organizers. These products often provided a much more robust understanding than being able to simply respond correctly to a direct question. With her methods students were showing their knowledge in ways that required higher levels of thinking about the material. Her creative and unique methods provide much more information to teachers of ELL’s than do traditional assessments that are heavily dependent on specific English vocabulary.

For more information, contact Samanth Rodriguez at samantharodriguez@gmail.com

ATTENTION READING DEPARTMENT
2014-2015 GRADUATES

You and your family are invited to a reception to celebrate your graduation from the Reading Department. Please join us on the second floor patio (south side) of the EC building at the conclusion of graduation on Saturday, May 16th.

Alumni who are interested in assisting with the reception should contact
Debbie Lombardi at dlombardi@cox.net or
Teri Fitz-Maurice at tfitzmaurice@cox.net
OPPORTUNITY DRAWING

The drawing at our March meeting raised almost $600 to support the Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center. Many thanks are extended to all attendees who bought tickets for a chance to win some wonderful gifts. REG would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their generous donations.

- Kathi Bartle Angus - Basket for book lovers
- READ Dept. - Tuffy Titan phone, cell phone holder and car charger
- READ Dept. - Two sets - Titan ear buds, water bottle and Tuffy key chain
- Carlen Le-Hessinger and Matt Harris - The Jungle Book Collection Set (2 DVDs, book and soundtrack)
- Jan Bagwell - Large purse/tote with books and book light
- Linda Vander Wende - Lauren Burch tote with 2 matching mugs and a Starbucks gift card
- Linda Vander Wende - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle blanket with books
- Linda Vander Wende – Frozen themed blanket and books
- Kimberly Mundala - Fairy Tale Basket
- Teri FitzMaurice - Cookbook and cooking items
- Gena Lovett - Selection of children’s books
- Catherine Maderazo - Three sets of books for children and reading professionals
- David Reid - Two $25 gift cards Barnes Noble
- Lesley Zorola - Two totes with books
- Debbie Lombardi - Set of monthly dishtowels

Reading Program alumni are involved in teaching, leadership, publishing, writing, training, tutoring, and a myriad of other activities that we know you want to know about. REG continues to fulfill one of the main missions of the organization - NETWORKING!

REG would love to hear from you! Please contact Carlen Hessinger at carlen.le@gmail.com and share with the REG community in an upcoming issue your ongoing success since completing the Reading Program.

New Directory, New Format

The 2015 REG Directory is now available. You should have received a link to the new electronic directory that includes the names, affiliations, and email addresses of current members. Saving this directory to your electronic device allows you to contact other members with just a click. We hope that members enjoy this new convenience.

There were a few members who have not provided current email addresses. In those cases we have mailed a paper copy of the directory. If you are in that category we hope you will contact Matt Harris, our membership chair, and provide him with your current address. Matt Harris can be reached at matt80s@yahoo.com.
The HMC Reading Center has been able to fulfill its mission in a myriad of ways over the last year. We have served nearly 100 students in a variety of capacities.

CSUF Reading M.S./Specialist Alumni supported the work of current graduate students in providing intervention services in the Center. The addition of the alumni tutors has allowed us to meet the needs of many more families in the community who have been on our waiting list sometimes for over a year. In addition, this brings in additional revenues into the Center.

Also, the HMC Reading Center continued to offer Reading Assessment packages to children who are struggling readers. The assessment information provides parents and classroom teachers with suggestions for individual support for readers facing multiple challenges. This service is growing in popularity as more parents discover the power of an informed assessment for their children.

In 2014, Dr. Erica Bowers, the Center Director, partnered with the Director of the Center for Autism, Dr. Erica Howell, to develop a project to study a model of intervention service. The intervention was based on collaboration between an MS READ candidate and a SPED pre-service candidate in providing service to a child with ASD. The project was piloted during spring, 2014. A paper proposal detailing the project was submitted to the Literacy Research Association’s Annual Conference for 2014.

In addition, the Center supported the work of our graduate students in READ 516, the assessment class. The Center was able to facilitate matching each student with a primary learner and an older learner so that they could experience the differences in the types of assessments and students in preparing reports on each learner.

The work at the HMC Center has been highlighted in two important ways over the last year. First, Dr. Erica Bowers and Dr. Catherine Maderazo presented a paper, “Virtually Delivering the Clinical Practicum” with colleagues at the annual meeting of the Literacy Research Association (LRA) conference in Dallas, Texas. Second, graduate students involved in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Practicum Project presented on their experience at the CSUF Student Research Day, April 2014.

We are very grateful to the contributions of alumni and members of the community that help facilitate this work. We look forward to more expansion, including a community based summer program this August.

For more information about the HMC Reading Center or to contribute please visit our websites. HMC Reading Center - http://ed.fullerton.edu/reading/community/hazel-miller-croy-reading-center/

Support Cal State Fullerton, Specific Funds - https://giving.fullerton.edu/specific-funds/Search.aspx Search for Hazel Miller Croy Endowment

Thank you to our 2015 Hancock Fund Donors. Their generosity helps fund scholarships for current graduate students and Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center students.

Jan Bagwell  
Kathi Bartle-Angus
Pat Irot  
Debbie Lombardi
Ana Ngo  
Donna Padgett
Sammie Rodriguez  
Jordan Fabish
Margaret Hirsen  
Leslee Milch
Andrea Sward  
Margaret Vieh
Come Read with Me
By Leslee Milch

Over 15 years ago, I was sharing with my class how many days they would be home for the summer, when one of my children asked, “BUT!  Who is going to read to us?”  I responded that they could go to the library, read with their parents, etc., but he replied, “NO!  YOU read to us teacher!”

Thus, during school breaks I began my READ WITH ME! program at the park adjacent to my school. Bringing a lawn chair, my bag of books and a healthy snack; we read, shared stories, sang songs and sometimes drew with sidewalk chalk or blew soap bubbles. Children came with their parents from all over Buena Park, including many former students with their children. Some afternoons, I have a handful of children, and sometimes 30-50 children from babies to teenagers show up.

As my program grew, I wanted to find ways to get books into the children’s homes too.  Fortunately, I was the recipient of the first REG Grant.  I was grateful and inspired!  Since then I have received many donations in the form of books and financial support from friends, colleagues, the Buena Park Women’s Club, OCDE, Think Together, AND imagine the look on the school secretary’s face when the FBI showed up asking for me one day, to donate books via their Community Outreach Program!

This past summer, my program grew to nearly 100 children each week when the Buena Park Library, Successful Families for Buena Park, and Giving Children Hope partnered with me to provide books, healthy snacks and parenting sessions for parents while the children and I read together.

Come READ WITH ME if you’re ever in the neighborhood during the summer!
We met! We mixed! We mingled!

A good time and many fine conversations were had at the first Mix! Meet! Mingle event co-sponsored by REG, OCRA, and the Reading Department. We met at BJ’s at the Block in Orange on March 19. Please watch for emails and newsletter items announcing the next event!

REG Winter Breakfast 2015

More photos are available on our Facebook page.
Reading Educators Guild Membership

Membership benefits include:

• three newsletters each year filled with alumni, department, and literacy news
• information about REG events (sponsored speakers, social, networking)
• directory of current members
• opportunity to apply for alumni grants
• opportunity to be included on Reading Department Tutor List

In addition your dues support:

• scholarships for Reading Center children
• scholarships for current graduate students
• Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center activities

The REG membership dues enable REG to make significant contributions to Reading Department students and the community through the Reading Center.

For more information about joining, renewing, or donating, please contact Matt Harris, Vice-President of Membership, at matt80s@yahoo.com or visit http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/join-us/

Has your contact information and address changed? Please take a moment to update your information, if necessary. Contact Matt or visit the REG website.

Follow the Reading Department & The Reading Educators Guild on...

Facebook: Reading Educators Guild
YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxrLwsFnUTo&feature=youtu.be

Visit the REG website: http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/