

# PENN GSE

Education, Language,  
and Culture

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# PENN GSE

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
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**On the cover and below:** Kindergarten teacher Cybil Sanzetenea works with students at Lewis Elkin Elementary, one of six schools in which The School District of Philadelphia has implemented dual-language bilingual education programs with the help of Penn GSE Assistant Professor Nelson Flores. Photos by Ginger Fox Photography



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# Letter from the Dean



Photo by Goldenberg Photography

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As my Unlocking Opportunity tour concludes, I want to say how delighted I have been to meet so many of you and to speak with you about Penn GSE's work and my vision for the future of the School. As I traveled the country, graduates from recent years and every decade back to the 1960s recounted to me their fond memories of Penn GSE and the impact it had on their lives. Friends of the School told me why they believe in the power of education. It has been moving and inspiring to hear what Penn GSE and education mean to you.

Ultimately, I believe that the most important resources in education are human resources. There is no substitute for well-prepared and inspiring professionals to teach students, lead schools and institutions, and produce research and policies that support the efforts of educators. That is why I believe so strongly in Penn GSE's mission of preparing transformative teachers and leaders.

In order to best prepare teachers for twenty-first-century classrooms, at Penn GSE we are working to envision our teacher education programs, combining our expertise in urban education with an experimental, cutting-edge perspective. Our faculty are fundamentally rethinking how we prepare

teachers for the complexities of the future and the realities of under-resourced schools.

Another new effort to rethink how we prepare professionals is our creation of the Penn Futures Project, a collaboration between GSE, Penn Nursing, and the School of Social Policy and Practice. Penn GSE is committed to creating greater educational opportunities for all students, but we know that ensuring these opportunities will require us to work together—teachers and social workers, school nurses and counselors—to ensure pathways to success for all students. Penn Futures has already launched several initiatives, including one that places graduate students from all three schools in fieldwork assignments at Kensington Health Sciences Academy. This increases the human resources at the only neighborhood public school in Philadelphia devoted to preparing students for health science professions.

In these and all of our programs, Penn GSE's commitment to innovation and thought leadership will continue to put us at the forefront of producing the teachers and leaders the world needs. The story of this work, and of all transformational change in education, always includes a much larger cast of individuals than a Hollywood movie. In this issue you will see the range of roles that the people of Penn GSE—students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends—have embraced to advance education. Our cover story features Assistant Professor Nelson Flores's work in bilingual education, part of the extraordinary legacy of our Educational Linguistics division, now celebrating its fortieth anniversary. Other stories highlight alumni leading in education policy, faculty aiming to improve civic engagement, a doctoral student working to increase educational opportunity, and Penn GSE programs offering professional development.

As always, I want to thank you for your role in the story of education. I hope you will join us during Penn's Alumni Weekend on May 13, 2017, for Voices in Education, a special conversation about education with Penn Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W'65, HON'14, founder and chairman of Say Yes to Education. Following that event we will recognize outstanding alumni accomplishments at our Celebration of Educators and Education Alumni Awards. Please see inside the back cover for details on these opportunities to celebrate our shared purpose together.

*Pam Grossman*

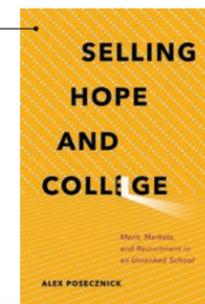
Pam Grossman  
Dean, Penn Graduate School of Education  
George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education

## FACULTY BOOKSHELF

Names in **bold** are members of the Penn GSE faculty.

*Selling Hope and College: Merit, Markets, and Recruitment in an Unranked School*

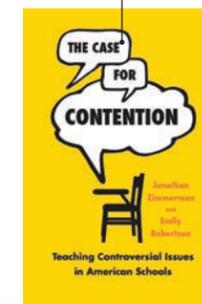
**Alex Posecznick**  
Published April 2017 by Cornell University Press



*Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Kombat: Intersectional Perspectives and Inclusive Designs in Gaming*

Edited by **Yasmin B. Kafai**, Gabriela T. Richard, and Brendesha M. Tynes

Published October 2016 by ETC Press



*The Case for Contention: Teaching Controversial Issues in American Schools*

**Jonathan Zimmerman** and Emily Robertson  
Published April 2017 by University of Chicago Press



*Connected Gaming: What Making Video Games Can Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*

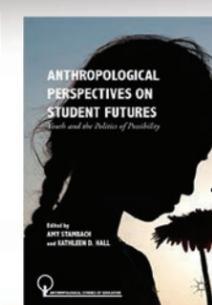
**Yasmin B. Kafai** and Quinn Burke  
Published December 2016 by The MIT Press



*Honoring Richard Ruiz and his Work on Language Planning and Bilingual Education*

Edited by **Nancy H. Hornberger**

Published November 2016 by Multilingual Matters



*Anthropological Perspectives on Student Futures: Youth and the Politics of Possibility*

Edited by Amy Stambach and **Kathleen D. Hall**  
Published October 2016 by Palgrave Macmillan

Photo by iStock.com/waiwai08

## FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS

**Nelson Flores (1)** received the 2017 Early Career Award for excellence in advancing the field of bilingual education from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Bilingual Education Research Special Interest Group. **Vivian L. Gadsden (2)** is one of fourteen exceptional education scholars elected in 2017 to membership in the National Academy of Education.

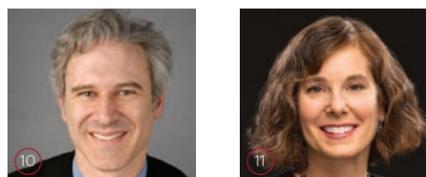
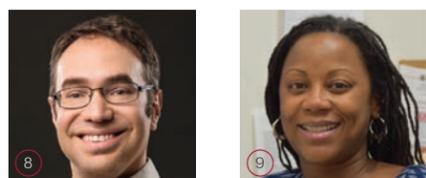
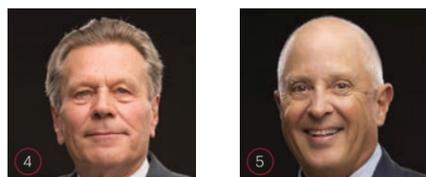
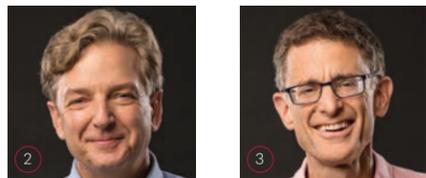
She completes her term as president of AERA this spring. **Marybeth Gasman (3)** was named to LinkedIn's Top Voices 2016 list of the ten must-know writers in education. **Pam Grossman (4)** and **Shaun R. Harper (5)** were named 2017 AERA Fellows for exceptional contributions to education research. Harper was also named to *The Root* 100 for 2016, a list of the year's most

influential African Americans. **Yasmin B. Kafai (6)** was invited to the White House Symposium on the Future of Education R&D and Digital Learning in October. **Laura W. Perna (7)** was named to AERA's grants governing board and also serves as chair of the organization's award committee for outstanding public communication of education research. An article coauthored by **Matthew P. Steinberg (8)**, "What Do We Know About School Discipline Reform," was named to a list of the top twenty articles published by *EducationNext* in 2016. **Daniel A. Wagner (9)** accepted an award from the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program on behalf of Penn GSE's International Literacy Institute, one of fourteen organizations honored worldwide "for implementation of best practices in literacy promotion."



Faculty headshots on pages 3 and 4 courtesy of Candace diCarlo and Goldenberg Photography

# News Briefs



## Penn GSE Ranked #3 Nationally



■ Penn's Graduate School of Education has been ranked #3 in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2018 rankings for graduate schools of education. The ranking marks

the School's highest performance ever, and the sixth consecutive year Penn GSE has been in the top 10. Two of the School's specialty programs, linked by their strengths in education policy, continue to be ranked among the best. The renowned Higher Education division moved up to #2 in the nation; Penn GSE's Education Policy division rose to #7. "It's an honor to be ranked so highly by *U.S. News & World Report*," said Dean **Pam Grossman**. "At Penn GSE, we have worked to build a faculty of thought leaders whose scholarship is changing the way education policy is understood and implemented, while also preparing the next generation of teachers, leaders, and researchers. This is a community that cares deeply about using research to make a difference in the world."

■ Professor **Yasmin B. Kafai** is creating a curriculum using wearable technology—the same idea behind Fitbits and Apple Watches—to teach students to code. The curriculum was rolled out

in the Los Angeles Unified School District in January following a prototype class at String Theory's Performance Arts School in Philadelphia in the fall. Eventually, it will be available nationally. The curriculum combines sewing and computer programming to create wearable items like gloves and headbands with electronic components that can monitor the wearer's skin temperature. By incorporating elements of fashion design and providing an alternative to classes that teach coding through robots, Dr. Kafai hopes to interest a wider range of students—particularly girls—in computer science. Kafai and her team are working with partners in the Exploring Computer Science project, which is supported by the National Science Foundation. Pictured (1): Eleventh grader Eva Snyder (left) sews a sensor into a knit glove worn by her classmate Brianna Maldonado (right) at String Theory's Performance Arts School in Philadelphia.

■ Eleven researchers from Penn GSE, including nine standing faculty, made *Education Week's* 2017 Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings. The list, created by Rick Hess, the Director of Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute, recognizes scholars whose work shapes public discussion around education. It included **Shaun R. Harper**, **Marybeth Gasman**, **Richard M. Ingersoll** (2), **Jonathan Zimmerman** (3), **Laura W. Perna**, **Robert Boruch** (4), **Andy Porter** (5), **Pam Grossman**, **Vivian L. Gadsden**, and **Margaret E. Goertz** (6). **Angela Duckworth**, a professor of psychology with a secondary appointment at Penn GSE, was also recognized.

■ In response to concerns about political polarization in the wake of the presidential election, Penn GSE Professor **Jonathan Zimmerman** initiated two February events bringing together students from Christian college Cairn University and Penn for civil political dialogue across differing perspectives and party affiliations. The conversations were moderated by Penn GSE's **Harris Sokoloff** (7), faculty director of the Penn Project for Civic Engagement (PPCE), and PPCE cofounder **Chris Satullo**, both experts in civic dialogue. Entitled "Politics in the Age of Trump: Speaking Across Our Differences," the events each drew approximately eighty students from Cairn and Penn for panels and small-group discussions about their personal political views. "I decided to organize the event because I was distressed at the amount of political polarization in the country," says Dr. Zimmerman. "Our democracy is premised on the ability of people to speak across their differences."



Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

■ Aiming to drive the next generation of online learning, Associate Professor **Ryan Baker** (8) has established the Penn Center for Learning Analytics (PCLA) with generous support from the Penn's Office of the Provost as well as federal funding. PCLA will research both state-of-the-art online learning environments and traditional classroom instruction, investigating what approaches and methods best enhance students' long-term outcomes. Dr. Baker, PCLA's founding director, researches how students use and learn from educational games, intelligent tutors, simulations, and other kinds of educational software. He has received a grant of \$862,492 from the National Science Foundation to study students' learning processes within computer-based middle school science.

■ Penn GSE alumna **ShaVon Savage**, GED'02, G'07, L'07 (9), was named principal of the Henry C. Lea Elementary School in West Philadelphia, a K-8 school with which Penn GSE coordinates a partnership. Groups across Penn—including Penn GSE, the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, Penn Libraries, and Penn Science Across the Ages—work with a Penn GSE-based liaison on site at the Lea School to operate a variety of school-day and after-school programs.

■ The Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University of Pennsylvania Partnership School (Penn Alexander) was one of only a few hundred schools to be named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School (12). A K-8 school where Penn GSE maintains a University-wide partnership, Penn Alexander opened in 2001 through a historic effort by Penn, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to build a model university-assisted public school for West Philadelphia children.

■ Professor **Jonathan A. Supovitz** (10), Associate Professor **Janine Remillard** (11), and Dean **Pam Grossman** have received a \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation for a project to strengthen implementation of the Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) mathematics intervention in School District of Philadelphia elementary schools. The project will create supports, tools, and resources for school leaders to help deepen OGAP's efforts to improve learning of mathematics. It will be co-developed in a research practice partnership with the District and the Philadelphia Educational Research Consortium.

■ The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, directed by Professor **Marybeth Gasman**, has been awarded over \$745,000 in grants from ECMC Foundation and the Kresge Foundation to host a new program called "MSI Aspiring Leaders," an effort to prepare the next generation of MSI presidents. An integral part of American higher education, MSIs—specifically, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions—have carved out a unique niche in the nation, serving the needs of low-income, underrepresented students of color.



Photo by Jeff Frantz

## In the Media

As leading voices in the field, Penn GSE faculty regularly weigh in on top issues in education. Here are a few highlights of their recent contributions in the media:

"A New Frontier: U.S. Academia Under President Trump"  
*Times Higher Education*  
January 19, 2017  
**Matthew Hartley** and **Alan Ruby** comment on the political, social, and educational impact of a Trump presidency.

"Nationwide, State Budget Cuts Disproportionately Hit Low-Income, Minority College Students"  
*PBS Newshour*  
January 3, 2017

**Joni Finney** discusses her study of community college affordability in the context of national gaps in education attainment.

"Betsy DeVos as the Ed Secretary"  
Wharton Business Radio  
December 17, 2016  
**Mike Johaneck** and Michigan State's **Rebecca Jacobsen** discuss Betsy DeVos's nomination for U.S. Secretary of Education.

"Memo: Improving the Teacher Workforce"  
Brookings Institute  
December 9, 2016  
**Pam Grossman** offers recommendations for the next administration on improving the teacher workforce.

"How Minority Serving Institutions Are Responding to Trump's Win—and Making Their Pitch"  
*The Chronicle of Higher Education*  
November 16, 2016  
**Marybeth Gasman** considers how a Trump presidency may affect prior White House initiatives supporting minority serving institutions.

"Both Trump Voters and People of Color Deserve to be Heard"  
*Inside Higher Ed*  
November 14, 2016  
**Shaun Harper** reflects on the U.S. presidential election and the concerns of Trump voters and people of color.

*Names in bold are members of the Penn GSE faculty.*

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↑ Teacher Cybil Sanzetenea leads students in a Spanish literacy lesson as part of the dual-language bilingual education program at Lewis Elkin Elementary School in The School District of Philadelphia.

Photo by Ginger Fox Photography Map by Stock.com/sankai

# Education, Language, and Culture

## Penn GSE's Dr. Nelson Flores Advances Bilingual Education

by Juliana Rosati

As a child attending Philadelphia public schools, Penn GSE Assistant Professor Nelson Flores discovered that in some ways he lived in two worlds. When he unknowingly slipped a Spanish word into his English speech to say he was running from the *cuco* (boogeyman) or enjoyed watching a *novela* (soap opera) with his mother, he confronted confused looks or blank stares from his classmates and teachers. Fluent in English, he understood everything his mother said in Spanish at home. But at school, his knowledge of a language other than English had no place.

"I was negotiating such complex linguistic terrain, and yet none of this was incorporated into the curriculum," he says. "My emerging bilingualism was irrelevant to the school."

By the end of elementary school, Flores felt unable to speak Spanish due to lack of practice. It wasn't until high school and college that he found a place for Spanish in his education. "By studying Spanish formally I was able to awaken the bilingualism that had been inside of me since I was a child," he says.

Today Dr. Flores is working to change how language is taught, as well as how students from Spanish-speaking or bilingual households are perceived. His work has earned him the 2017 Early Career Award given for excellence in advancing the field of bilingual education by the American Educational Research Association's Bilingual Education Research Special Interest Group.

"A lot of the dominant discourses about children from language-minoritized households—in particular Latino children from bilingual homes—say that the language these students are learning at home is somehow a barrier or is just not applicable to their learning in school," Flores says.



Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

↑ Penn GSE Assistant Professor Nelson Flores draws upon his experiences as a student and teacher in The School District of Philadelphia as he advises the District on implementing dual-language programs.

Research has shown otherwise, revealing long-term benefits of bilingualism for both English language learners and native English speakers. Based on such findings, Flores argues that students with knowledge of Spanish should be viewed as bringing valuable resources to the classroom, rather than possessing deficient or irrelevant language skills. Through his research and his work with Philadelphia schools, Flores hopes to advance understanding of language teaching so that more students can draw upon their linguistic and cultural backgrounds as tools for learning.

## “Language is also a symbol or an index of identity. We define who we are very much by what we say.”

The advantages, he notes, extend beyond academic achievement. “Language education is empowering when students’ home language practices are made central to the curriculum,” he says.

### Continuing a Linguistic Legacy at Penn GSE

Flores’s current work focuses on “dual-language” programs, which provide sustained instruction in both English and Spanish literacy over a number of years. Students in such programs have been shown to outperform students in English-only programs on standardized assessments of English. This suggests that skills in one language can transfer to another, and that bilingualism supports English proficiency.

By studying a cohort of students as they progress through a dual-language program at a charter school and supporting The School District of Philadelphia in its efforts to implement dual-language programs in six elementary schools, Flores is taking forward a legacy in the renowned Educational Linguistics division at Penn GSE. The division, now celebrating its fortieth year, has always been dedicated to studying language in the classroom—not only as a subject to be taught, but also as the means through which all learning occurs.

“When you think about it, all teaching and learning is happening through language,” says Professor Nancy H. Hornberger, who recently stepped down as chair of the division after twenty-one years in the role. “Language is also a symbol or an index of identity. We define who we are very much by what we say.”

Dr. Hornberger, recognized internationally as a leading scholar of educational linguistics, including bilingualism and biliteracy, carried out forerunning research on bilingual education in Philadelphia schools with her Penn GSE students beginning in the 1980s. She joined the faculty of Penn GSE in 1985 while the founder of the Educational Linguistics division, the late Dr. Dell Hymes, was dean of Penn GSE. Hymes took the groundbreaking approach of



Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

↑ Penn GSE Professor Nancy H. Hornberger served for twenty-one years as chair of the Educational Linguistics division. She is recognized internationally as a leading scholar in bilingualism and biliteracy, ethnography and language policy, and Indigenous language revitalization.

combining linguistic anthropological techniques with education research so that scholars would become long-term observers of day-to-day language use in classrooms and other educational settings. The result was one of the first two educational linguistics programs in the world—and one of only two today in the Ivy League.

“Hymes believed we could do a better job in our schools of recognizing language and culture,” says Hornberger. “There weren’t, and there still aren’t, many programs nationally or

internationally that have that kind of focus.”

According to the division’s current chair, Professor Betsy R. Rymes, that focus means offering degree programs that prepare educators to communicate across cultures.

“In today’s world, teachers can’t assume that one day their students are going to live in a place where everybody speaks one way—the way they learned in language class. Being a successful human will always involve communicating with people from different backgrounds and in different ways,” she says. “Our division views a language teacher as someone who teaches their students how to move flexibly across different communities and ways of communicating.”

The division’s focus also means studying the relationship between language use and perceptions of academic success. When only one way of speaking is valued in the classroom, Dr. Rymes explains, students may be seen as unsuccessful on the basis of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. “If you don’t deeply examine why some people succeed and some people don’t, inequities just replicate themselves,” she says, citing as an example early research by linguistic anthropologist Katherine Au regarding Hawaiian children’s storytelling styles. “Native Hawaiian children were used to telling stories in an overlapping style, called ‘talking story.’ Teachers who weren’t native Hawaiians would come in and just see this as unruly behavior. They would spend most of their time trying to manage the class rather than recognizing and building on the students’ storytelling skills,” Rymes says.

The aim of recognizing and building on students’ existing language skills has led Flores to conduct a study at a dual-language charter school. Observing a group of students in school settings on a weekly basis from year to year, he and his team, including Penn GSE Ph.D. students Mark Lewis and Jennifer Phuong, document the students’ processes of making meaning as they navigate between languages. The study began when the students were in kindergarten,

and they are now in third grade.

“Bilingual children’s lives often require them to do really sophisticated linguistic analysis,” says Flores. One example that Phuong observed in the study was a discussion about *frijoles* and *habichuelas*, two words for “bean” in Spanish. Flores says, “When they were only in first grade, some of the students were really thinking about why these two different words are used. They realized maybe it’s because *frijoles* is from Mexico and *habichuelas* is from Puerto Rico. No one had taught them that; it was just something they concluded from speaking with classmates of different backgrounds.”

Flores sees that kind of analysis as an often-untapped resource that can help students to accomplish academic goals, including specific aspects of the Common Core State Standards that most states have adopted to some degree.

“The Common Core is asking students to think about how to change language for particular audiences and how to construct language in ways that present yourself for particular purposes,” says Flores. “Our study shows that young children from bilingual homes are already doing this.”

### Bringing Best Bilingual Practices to the Classroom

To demonstrate how teachers can formally engage bilingual students’ language insights to meet classroom goals, Flores developed a special reading unit about the children’s picture book *Abuela*. Written by Arthur Dorros and illustrated by Elisa Kleven, the book tells of a magical journey that a little girl and her *abuela* (grandmother) take together, flying hand in hand over New York City. The book is written primarily in English, but the grandmother says a number of phrases in Spanish.

The unit, which Flores wrote with two Educational Linguistics alumnae—Holly Link, GR’16, and Swarthmore College professor Elaine Allard, GR’10—uses the book to help teachers lead students through Common Core-aligned reading and writing activities. To test its practicality, Flores asked Carolena Lescano, then a bilingual teacher, to pilot it with her second-grade class at a Philadelphia public school.

“It was a high-quality lesson that I really enjoyed teaching,” says Lescano, now a literacy coach in The School District of Philadelphia. “My students loved it, and we had so many good conversations. They know they’re bilingual, but it’s not so often that we’re using their bilingualism as a fun tool for writing and sharing stories.”

Flores, who formerly taught in the District himself, finds that working with teachers keeps him in touch with the realities of a classroom. Lescano’s feedback, he says, helped him to refine the unit. “I like working with schools because teachers are always going to push for practical tools they can use,” he says.

Flores lost no time in stepping forward to work with District schools on a larger scale when he joined Penn GSE in 2012. The result has been a collaboration over the past four years to support the District’s initiative implementing dual-language programs in six schools: Lewis Elkin, Cayuga, Alexander K. McClure, Hon. Luis Muñoz-Marín, Bayard Taylor, and Southwark.

The first five schools are located in North Philadelphia neighborhoods with predominantly Latino communities. Most of these

had “transitional bilingual education” programs, meaning Spanish-speaking students were taught English, but their Spanish skills were not maintained. In response to research on the benefits of bilingualism, changing demographics, and interest expressed by parents, teachers, and administrators, Muñoz-Marín had begun piloting a dual-language program, and the District decided to do the same in the other four schools.

“We were really seeing the need to continue with Spanish literacy, with the goal being both English and Spanish literacy,” says Allison Still, GED’10, deputy chief in the District’s Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs. “We had more families who were third or fourth generation, so they were coming from bilingual homes and weren’t qualifying as English language learners.”

The change alters how Spanish-speaking students’ skills are valued in the classroom, according to Flores. “Transitional programs



↑ This portrait shows renowned scholar Dr. Dell Hymes, dean of Penn GSE from 1975 to 1987. He founded the Educational Linguistics division to address the intersection of education, linguistics, and anthropology.

are remedial programs that treat bilingualism as a deficit, while dual-language programs are enrichment programs that treat bilingualism as a resource that should be developed for all students,” he says.

Southwark School, in South Philadelphia, did not have a transitional program, but launched a dual-language program in response to high community interest. “There was a lot of excitement and interest among both Spanish-dominant and English-dominant students,” says Still.

## The District decided to shift from transitional to dual-language programs.

Flores has offered professional development for language teachers in the programs, helping them identify and pursue specific literacy goals for both languages. Because Pennsylvania does not offer a bilingual certificate for teachers, the training fills a gap for the District. “Most of our teachers don’t come in with training in bilingual instructional practices,” says Still. She notes that Flores’s background as a District student and teacher has been an asset. “He’s immediately able to connect with the school communities

and get a lot of buy-in,” she says.

As part of Flores’s team, Dr. Link (who contributed to the *Abuela* unit) and Penn GSE doctoral student Sofia Chaparro spend time in classrooms with teachers to help them implement Flores’s recommendations. Both draw upon years of experience as bilingual teachers.

Often, they find, it’s the logistics that teachers need the most help with. Lesson planning, class time, materials, and testing all must be approached from the standpoint of two languages.

At one of the schools, for example, the two languages are taught by separate teachers in most grades. Link and Chaparro observe and consult to help the English and Spanish teachers for each grade level connect their efforts.

“As a teacher, you may feel like you have to cover everything in your language every day,” says Link. “But if you can find time to consult with your partner who teaches the other language to the same students, you may discover that you don’t have to cover everything, or find ways to reinforce what your partner does.”

That kind of collaboration is often unfamiliar to teachers, Chaparro notes. “It’s not necessarily what teachers are trained to do,” she says.

Additional insight can come when partner teachers review students’ work together. Chaparro says, “A child’s ability in one language is not always obvious to the teacher of the other language. We want to help teachers to see the children as a whole.”

The two also work one-on-one with teachers to offer guidance in teaching approaches, such as reading with students in small

**“I think the kind of sustained, focused, yearlong support we’re providing can make a big difference for a teacher.”**

groups and leading writing workshops. Such customized attention can be rare for a teacher, Link points out. “As a teacher I had professional development, but it was usually a one-size-fits-all approach for a large number of people. I think the kind of sustained, focused, yearlong support we’re providing can make a big difference for a teacher.”

### Looking to the Future of Bilingual Education

The District aims to offer the dual-language programs throughout elementary school. Adding them to one grade level per year with the help of Flores’s team, it has implemented the programs from kindergarten through third grade so far.

From Still’s standpoint overseeing programs for the District, the success of Flores’s team is evident. “When we started, every school and classroom was figuring out how to implement the programs



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

↑ Penn GSE Professor Betsy Rymes, chair of the Educational Linguistics division, welcomes students, alumni, and other scholars to the 26th Annual Nessa Wolfson Colloquium in October. The event honors the memory of Dr. Nessa Wolfson, founding director of the division’s degree programs.

year for two of the programs so children living outside the school neighborhoods can participate. “I think a lot of people are really interested in bilingual education and understand how important it is, but they may not realize these programs are available in public schools,” she says.

Flores hopes families will take a broad view of the programs’ benefits. In addition to increased academic achievement and the empowerment that comes from building on their existing language skills, he explains, students from Spanish-speaking families gain the opportunity to continue communicating in Spanish with their parents, and their parents gain ease in communicating with the school. Students whose primary language is English gain a second language, and all students may learn about diversity.

“I hope seeing bilingualism treated as normal in the classroom helps children understand that diversity is not something to be afraid of,” Flores says. “Learning to navigate diversity and see it as just a part of life is something that all students would benefit from.”

Looking ahead, Flores hopes his work can establish an even broader perspective for bilingual education—one that addresses obstacles, such as racism and poverty, that many students in bilingual programs face outside of school. To this end, Flores is exploring how to use research from another field, urban planning, in his work. While such an interdisciplinary approach may not be typical for a scholar of bilingualism, Flores knows that Penn GSE’s Educational Linguistics division—born of Dell Hymes’s combination of linguistic anthropology and education—is the right place to attempt it.

“The faculty here have always understood that the issues we face require a multifaceted toolkit,” he says. “When I tell my colleagues I’m thinking of bringing in another disciplinary perspective, they don’t say, ‘No, we’re only education scholars, we’re only anthropologists. They say, ‘Sure, why wouldn’t you do that?’” ■

on its own,” she says. “Nelson and his team have really been able to help us establish some consistency across the different schools and classrooms.”

Parents have the option of enrolling their children in the programs, and at Southwark this has resulted in a wait list. At the schools in North Philadelphia, Still says, the enrollment is moving closer to the District’s goal of a balance of Spanish-dominant and English-dominant students. The District plans to open up a citywide admission process next

## Celebrating 40 Years of Educational Linguistics

Now celebrating its fortieth anniversary, the Educational Linguistics division at Penn GSE has a national and international reputation of excellence. In addition to Rymes, Hornberger, and Flores, the division’s core faculty include Associate Professor Yuko Butler, Lecturer Junko Hondo, Senior Fellow Diane Larsen-Freeman, Assistant Professor Yumi Matsumoto, Senior Lecturer Robert Moore, Senior Lecturer Anne Pomerantz, and Senior Lecturer Santoi Wagner. The division’s degree programs are among the longest standing at the School:

### *Educational Linguistics (Ph.D.)*

This program focuses on language learning and teaching, and the role of language in learning and teaching. It is situated in educational policy and practice and connected to linguistics, anthropology, psychology, sociology, history, and other fields.

### *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (M.S.Ed.)*

This classroom-oriented teacher preparation program stresses the role and function of English language teaching in relation to the political and social climate of today’s world.

### *Intercultural Communication (M.S.Ed.)*

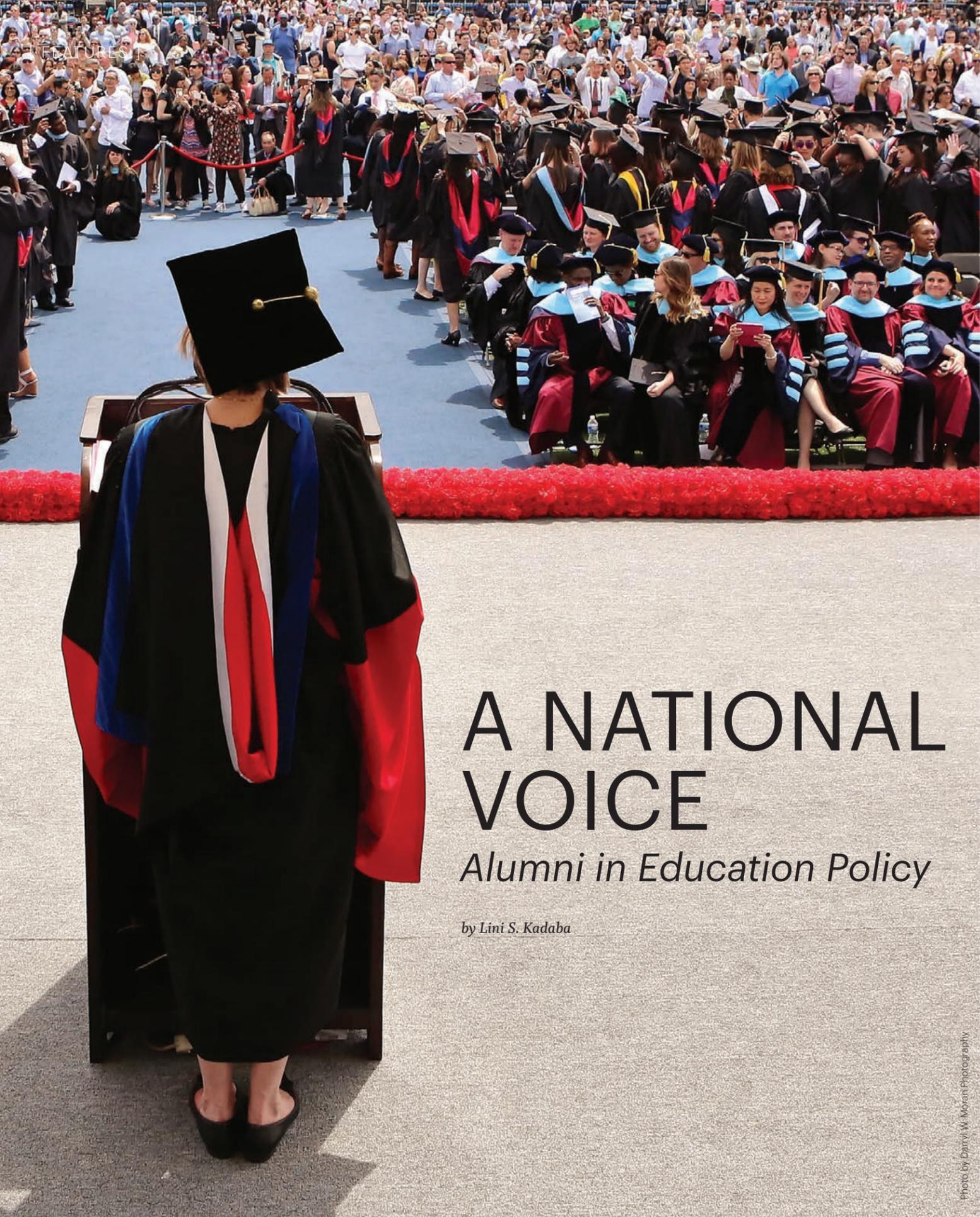
Providing a solid foundation in linguistic and discursive approaches, this program explores communication across linguistic, social, racial, ethnic, national, gender, and other groupings.

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/elx](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/elx) to learn more about the division’s faculty and programs.



Lewis Elkin Elementary in North Philadelphia is one of six schools where The School District of Philadelphia has implemented dual-language bilingual education programs.

Photo by Ginger Fox Photography



# A NATIONAL VOICE

## Alumni in Education Policy

by Lini S. Kadaba

Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

As the country begins a new era under a new administration, the challenges and opportunities facing education continue to be many—and how they are addressed could have a profound impact on K-12 and higher education for years to come. Penn GSE alumni are playing a transformative role in shaping the national education landscape. Graduates in government, research, and leadership roles have plenty of innovative ideas on how to tackle some of the nation’s most pressing educational challenges, whether by offering affordable college options, ensuring data-driven decisions, expanding educational access, or valuing the liberal arts. Here, four leaders share their insights.

### Keeping Costs Down through Community Colleges

For many, the cost of higher education is a major hurdle to attending and finishing a degree. The new administration has said it will work with Congress on reforms that encourage colleges and universities to reduce costs in exchange for federal tax breaks and dollars. According to Peter Jordan, GRD’08, community colleges are an important—and often overlooked—player in holding down price tags.

As president of the Tarrant County College South Campus in Fort Worth, Texas, Jordan says that he’s “constantly trying to get students and their parents to think of how they can save money by getting a two-year community college degree and going on to a university, where many of our students transfer and get nice scholarships.”

At Tarrant County College, a community college system with six campuses, the per-credit cost is \$59 for locals. Taxes, both local and state, contribute to supporting the school. Jordan also credits strong management and thoughtful investment decisions by the college’s board and administration with helping to maintain a lean bottom line.

Since Jordan took the helm at Tarrant in 2012, the college has opened two buildings without accruing debt. The 80,000-square-foot Center for Excellence for Energy Technology allows for growth in the college’s degree and certificate programs in heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration as well as the development of new

programs in renewable energy. Early College High School, housed in a 28,000-square-foot space, offers motivated high schoolers access to a college curriculum plus the opportunity to earn their associate’s degree and high school diploma simultaneously. Credits can transfer to the University of Texas or other state higher education institutions in Texas, potentially allowing students to begin college as juniors. “It’s about making sure not only that you’re not ending up with enormous college debt,” Jordan says, “but also that you’re getting a tremendous academic foundation.”



Photo by Glen Ellman

Peter Jordan  
GRD’08

He thanks Penn GSE and its rigorous dissertation requirement for giving him “the confidence to pursue a college presidency.” To complete his Ed.D. in Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, he produced a dissertation researching successful African American male students at an urban community college.

Today Jordan takes great pride in touting Tarrant’s relevance from “cradle to cane.” Besides the traditional associate’s degree and early college program, the campus serves K-12 students through after-school and summer programs and offers senior citizens a variety of learning opportunities, from fine arts to social media.

“When you make your institution or campus part of the community,” he says, “you change the life of the community.”

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the individuals featured and do not necessarily reflect the views of the individuals’ employers or Penn GSE.

## Using Data to Guide Policies

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed in 2015, is poised to fully roll out in 2017 to replace the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It has the potential to significantly change K–12 education—and whether ultimately that’s for better or worse depends largely on the deft use of research and assessment to guide decisions, argues Irma Perez-Johnson, GR’08.

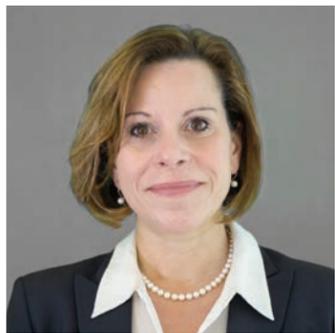
“There will be lots to track and study,” says Perez-Johnson, a vice president at American Institutes for Research (AIR) specializing in research and evaluation. AIR, a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization based in Washington, DC, conducts behavioral and social science research domestically and internationally in the areas of health, education, and workforce productivity. It is one of the largest organizations of its kind in the world.

“The locus of control and decision-making is moving away from the federal level, or at least the federal level will have a more limited role,” Perez-Johnson says of ESSA. “States and local districts will have broader discretion on a host of policies.”

Will they stick with current Common Core State Standards? Or try “challenging state academic standards,” which can include subjects beyond math, language arts, and science? What will individual states emphasize for students to learn and master? Which strategies will states—or even individual principals and teachers—use to intervene in low-performing schools and make improvements?

Examining what happens next will be key to ensuring data-driven decisions in the years ahead, according to Perez-Johnson. “We have not uncovered any silver bullets that will help us immediately transform education,” she allows, “but we have found some things that

help us make progress. It would be a pity if we failed to build on the knowledge base that has been established.”



**Irma Perez-Johnson**  
GR’08

Photo courtesy of Mathematica Policy Research

Looking ahead, Perez-Johnson also says that U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos’s expected emphasis on vouchers to expand school choice to private schools should receive close scrutiny. Evidence on the effectiveness of different types of schools—public, charter, or private—is limited and mixed, with wide variability, she says. “Widespread use of vouchers would represent a bold change in education policy,” she states. “It would be very important to study the effects of such an approach.”

For more than twenty years, Perez-Johnson has built a career using data to figure out what works and what doesn’t. At Mathematica, a nonpartisan,

international research organization where Perez-Johnson was a senior researcher and board member, she focused on the evaluation of labor and educational initiatives. She looked at why gaps in student achievement persist and examined the effectiveness of Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants, as well as data-driven instruction.

Perez-Johnson says that earning her Ph.D. in education policy at Penn GSE bolstered her understanding of new research methodologies. “It was wonderful to be embedded within the Graduate School of Education among individuals who thought about education from different angles,” she says.

The experience left her as committed as ever to policy making guided by proof. “Ultimately, that’s the best way to invest resources,” she says.

important,” he says. “Technology is one tool, one way to improve equity.”

A whopping eleven of the fifteen fastest-growing occupations through 2024 will require postsecondary education, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. “We need more students to get through college that is affordable, high quality, and meets their needs,” Soo says. “For some students, it will be an analog experience. But for most, it is going to incorporate some aspect of technology.”

One novel experiment that Soo has helped lead during his more than five years with the Department of Education is the Educational Quality through Innovation Partnerships (EQUIP). Launched in 2016 at eight pilot sites, it encourages colleges and universities to create



**David Soo**  
GR’11

Photo by Denis Langeron

## Educational Opportunity through Technology

The mission of the U.S. Department of Education includes “ensuring equal access”—a goal that has too often proven elusive. David Soo, GR’11, views technology as a key tool for supporting equal opportunity.

Coding boot camps, apprenticeships, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and other technological innovations have the potential to increase the number of students who gain access to college and complete degrees, asserts Soo, a senior policy adviser in the Office of Educational Technology within the Secretary’s Office at the U.S. Department of Education.

“It is imperative to innovate to ensure that education is available to all students. How we choose to do that innovation is going to be very

innovative partnerships. EQUIP links nontraditional training providers to academic institutions, thereby allowing students—particularly those from low-income backgrounds—to access federal financial aid for the first time.

As part of the program, Colorado State University’s Global Campus plans to join with start-up Guild Education to move working adults from low-wage jobs into supervisory roles. Students will enroll in a one-year certificate program in management fundamentals that combines online lectures, role playing, simulations, and capstone projects. Similarly, Northeastern University in Boston intends to offer an accelerated bachelor’s degree program in advanced manufacturing, with online courses and interaction for students as well as face-to-face experiential learning through General Electric.

Just as important as innovative efforts, Soo adds, are processes that evaluate the initiatives’ outcomes to establish best practices. Indepen-

dent, third-party organizations are set to assess outcomes and monitor how students fare with jobs. “If we’re not intentional about it,” he cautions, “technology can exacerbate some of the economic disparities.”

Soo traces his career trajectory into higher education innovation straight back to his experience at Penn GSE. While working on his Ph.D. in higher education, he obtained an internship at the U.S. Department of Education with the help of Professor Matthew Hartley. Soo, whose early career was in student life, soon caught the policy bug through his practical experience in Washington. He says his doctorate also gave him a broad and deep understanding of higher education governance and structure, which he believes is critical to creating programs that have real impacts.

“We need to continue to work with academic institutions to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the chance to pursue a complete education,” Soo says.

## Making the Case for the Humanities

To Margaret “Peggy” Plympton, GRD’11, a liberal arts education—regardless of one’s career path—represents a timeless foundation for success. But in a higher education environment of limited resources and increasing focus on workforce preparation, the study of traditional liberal arts subjects such as the humanities, social sciences, and abstract math and science can prove a tough sell.

And therein lies the challenge for educators, says Plympton, deputy chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. “How do we make the case that these are investments worth making?” she asks.

One clear answer comes through the daily work of Plympton and others at NEH, an independent federal agency that funds programs in language, literature, history, philosophy, archaeology, ethics, and other humanities subjects around the country. The agency’s website claims a central role for these disciplines in the life of the nation: “Because democracy demands wisdom, NEH serves and strengthens our republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans.”

Appointed to her post in January 2015, Plympton oversees operations, with a budget of \$150 million and 160 employees. In her role, she says, she looks to build partnerships that advance the humanities while getting the most bang for the taxpayer buck. Some of NEH’s hundreds of grants have sought to support cultural institutions, strengthen teaching and learning of the humanities in both schools and colleges, and encourage original scholarship.

Plympton has embraced the value of the humanities and the larger sphere of the liberal arts since her undergraduate days as a Latin major at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. “It’s a role for higher education writ large to be able to help people understand, ‘Why does

it matter?’ Why is it worth it for students, but also why is it worth it for all of us?” she says. “The value of a liberal arts education lies

in critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, an understanding of the historical context of our world today, the ability to understand and appreciate the worldviews of others, and the capacity for lifelong learning.”

Her own career, largely spent in higher education finance and administration, has taught her firsthand the benefits of these habits of mind. “Just learning accounting might get you your first job, but it’s absolutely not going to equip you for a career,” she says.

Plympton applauds schools with professional programs that still demand a holistic approach to education. She cites her previous employer,

Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, which encourages future engineers to develop a broad, multidisciplinary perspective. After all, they will need to understand client needs and communicate ideas to those in other fields, she says.

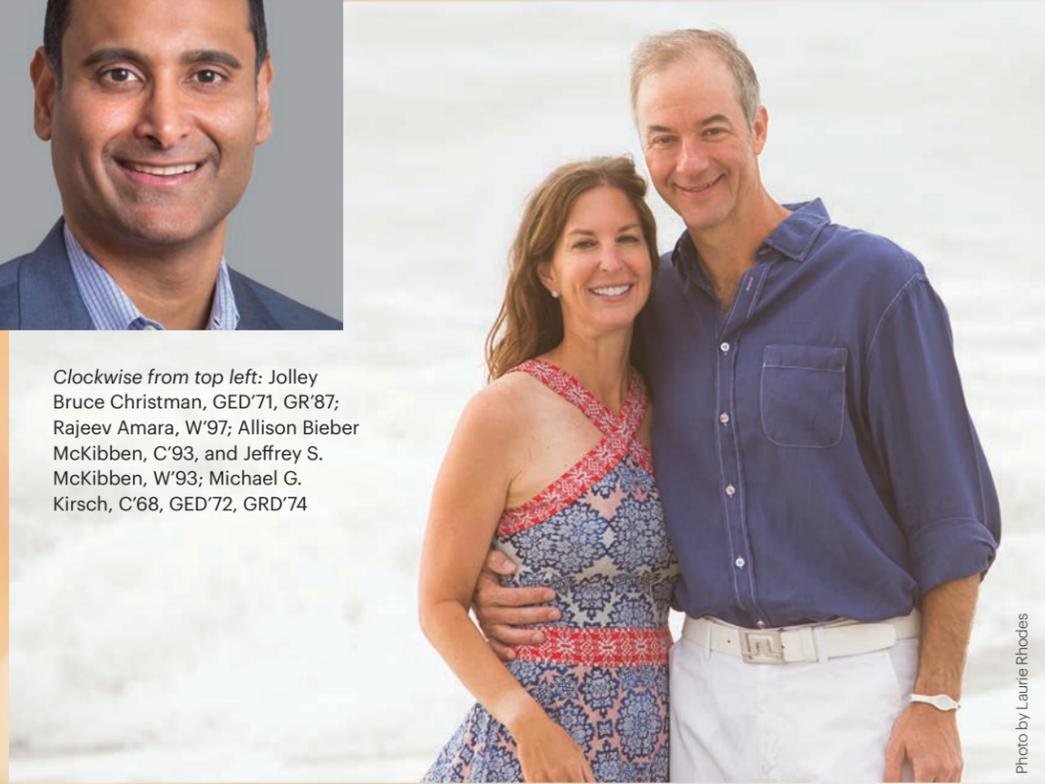
At Penn GSE, Plympton honed her skills in the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, earning her Ed.D. while picking the minds of a “cadre of fellow travelers”—her cohort of twenty-five classmates progressing through the program together. “My cohort members were instant supporters and sources of information,” she says. “I really think that’s the most important part. We still keep in touch.”

After a stint as an executive search consultant, Plympton got the dream opportunity at NEH. Education, she says, is the thread that runs through her career and drives her work. “I care deeply about how our nation prepares college graduates,” she says. “Helping colleges and universities provide educations that matter is what gets me up in the morning.” ■



**Margaret Plympton**  
GRD’11

Photo courtesy of NEH/Chris Flynn



Clockwise from top left: Jolley Bruce Christman, GED'71, GR'87; Rajeev Amara, W'97; Allison Bieber McKibben, C'93, and Jeffrey S. McKibben, W'93; Michael G. Kirsch, C'68, GED'72, GRD'74

Photo by Laurie Rhodes

# Faces of Philanthropy

by Juliana Rosati

**Across the country and around the world, education offers the promise of knowledge, skills, growth, and something more—a vital path forward for individuals and societies. As Penn GSE continues to expand education's reach and boost its effectiveness, striving to realize the vision Dean Grossman has set forth, support for the people and programs that make this work possible will continue to be vital. Here are four stories of alumni and friends whose engagement is helping Penn GSE bring opportunity to a broad range of learners and communities.**

## Advancing Thought Leadership in Education

From his vantage point managing investments in industrial sectors for a private equity firm, Penn GSE Board of Overseers member Rajeev Amara, W'97, foresees technological changes that will alter how education must prepare Americans for the jobs of the future. And he envisions Penn GSE under Dean Pam Grossman leading the way to unleash the power of education for the next generation of students.

"It is my belief that over the next ten to fifteen years, free immediate access to an infinite amount of factual knowledge and the inevitable penetration of automation into our daily lives will create many new professions we can't even imagine today," Amara says. "It will also result in the loss of many of today's jobs. These forces will also make obsolete many of our current teaching methods and content. Educators and educational institutions will have to transform their curricula for the next generation of teachers to focus on

topics such as problem solving, creativity, and design thinking."

Amara cites Dean Grossman's vision and energy as the source of his confidence that Penn GSE is poised to make a critical difference in preparing the next generation of educators. "Penn GSE is one of the top schools in education, led by a visionary, forward-thinking leader," Amara says. "My confidence that Pam and her team are uniquely positioned to take on the challenges we are facing is the main reason I chose to support the School."

By establishing the Amara Endowed Fellowship Fund to provide financial support for Penn GSE students, he aims to help the School prepare the graduates who will transform the nation's education landscape. "Penn GSE has a multiplier effect," he says. "The School is producing people who are going to make thousands and thousands of people successful."

## Creating a Legacy for Educational Equity

A love of contributing to their adopted city of Philadelphia and a passion for educational equity brought together Jolley Bruce Christman, GED'71, GR'87, and her late husband, Steven S. Goldberg, GR'85, when they first met. Today their mutual sense of purpose is becoming a legacy at Penn GSE through two gifts the couple planned before Goldberg's death.

"Steve and I shared a commitment to doing what we could to forward social justice in our community," says Christman. She was founder and principal of Research for Action, an independent, not-for-profit educational research organization focused on issues of equity, and previously taught at the West Philadelphia Community Free School. Goldberg, whose scholarship focused on special education law, taught school administrators and law students and advocated for mediation as a way of resolving conflicts between parents and educators. The couple served as associate faculty at Penn for many years, Goldberg at Penn Law and both he and Christman at GSE. "We inspired and supported one another in giving our best to our chosen work," says Christman.

Their generosity establishes a new biannual lecture series in education law and recognizes graduating doctoral students at Penn GSE for their work in urban education through the Steven S. Goldberg and Jolley Bruce Christman Lecture in Education Law Fund and the Jolley Bruce Christman and Steven S. Goldberg Annual Award for Best Dissertation in Urban Education Fund. The first award will be given in May 2017, and the first lecture is scheduled for this fall.

Christman hopes that this support inspires others to contribute to the aims she and her husband shared. "Our goal in establishing these funds was to encourage and recognize astute and unflinching analysis of social justice issues in education, coupled with hopeful and pragmatic recommendations for moving equity forward," she says. "I have every confidence that Penn GSE will be a wonderful steward of our gifts."

## Helping Fellow Educators Improve Children's Lives

As a school principal for forty-two years, Michael G. Kirsch, C'68, GED'72, GRD'74, never tired of learning and promoting new approaches to teaching and leadership. His commitment to professional development for educators began at Penn GSE, where as a student he supported the efforts of Dr. Matthew Pillard and

the Philadelphia Suburban Study Council, now known as the Center for School Study Councils.

"I worked with almost a hundred school districts to assist in planning professional development programs for administrators and superintendents," says Kirsch. "Later, as a principal, I was always thrilled to learn new ways of working with students."

Kirsch recalls the changes in education and the world that made professional development a necessity during his forty years as a principal in the Chappaqua Central School District in New York and two years leading an elementary school in Haverford Township, Pennsylvania. "There were no computers when I started my career," he says. "Over the years, ways of teaching reading and math changed a lot, as did the issues society was facing."

During those same four decades, Kirsch became a loyal donor to the Penn GSE Annual Fund, contributing nearly every year since 1977. A member of the Penn GSE Benchmark Society, which recognizes consistent giving, Kirsch cites the same motivation for his support of the Annual Fund that he does for his career. "I always told teachers, we're not here for us, we're here for the students," he says. "I think Penn GSE is a very worthwhile institution that has made a difference for a lot of children through wonderful teachers and administrators. My continued involvement with the School is about supporting teachers and administrators in making the lives of children better."

## Supporting Professors as the Bedrock of the School

Ensuring a strong teacher workforce for the future means supporting the faculty who will prepare those teachers for their careers, according to Allison Bieber McKibben, C'93, and Penn GSE Board of Overseers member Jeffrey S. McKibben, W'93.

"We feel strongly that a dedicated, talented, and diverse group of faculty is the bedrock of what makes Penn GSE so special to its students," says Jeff, who, with Allison, is contributing to endowed faculty support at Penn GSE. One of the top priorities of the School under Dean Pam Grossman, faculty support allows Penn GSE to retain and recruit the finest scholars around the globe. "It is critical to preserve and enhance the ability of the School to retain the talent we have and attract new talent for growth," says Jeff.

Love of Penn and the desire to give back drew the McKibbens to support GSE. During the twenty-four years since their graduation from Penn, the two got engaged on campus at their fifth reunion and over time increased their involvement with the University, seeking an area in which to focus their support. "With Penn GSE, we have found an area of outsized potential," says Jeff. "The School has a number of competitive advantages relative to its peers—urban geography, programming breadth, and doctoral opportunities—to name a few."

The promise and power of teacher preparation appeals particularly to the couple, who credit education with changing their own lives and express gratitude for those who made it possible. "Penn GSE is a fulcrum that enables the rise of teacher talent in the urban environment of Philadelphia, across the United States, and internationally," says Jeff. "Ultimately, the impact is realized by the multitudes of students who are taught by Penn GSE graduates today, tomorrow, and in the future." ■

Photo by Brooke Slezak Photography

Background by iStock.com/beerphotographer

# Fostering Civic Engagement

interview by  
Juliana Rosati

## Two Penn GSE Professors Work to Close a Gap

What helps a child become an adult who votes? What can educators do to produce active citizens who voice their opinions to elected officials, volunteer for charities and community organizations, or even run for office? During the past three years, Penn GSE's Professor Sigal Ben-Porath and Assistant Professor Rand Quinn have been studying civic engagement among students at two West Philadelphia high schools, working to understand how differences in school environments can affect students' opportunities to develop as citizens. We sat down with Drs. Ben-Porath and Quinn to learn how their study, supported by the Gregory and EJ Milken Foundation, aims to inform teachers, researchers, and policymakers.



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

Professor  
Sigal Ben-Porath

### What prompted your study?

*Ben-Porath:* There has been a larger effort in education to try to understand some of the additional factors beyond academic achievement that should be considered when we assess school success and the ways that students are prepared for life after high school. One of these factors is civic engagement, meaning the capacity that students develop to be productive and contributing members of their communities and their society. It includes their sense of themselves as having something to contribute, as well as their trust in public institutions.

Many studies show that it's not primarily the content you learn—in a social studies or government class, for example—that influences your civic behavior. More important are the ways in which schools are engaging with students' perspectives and preferences, as well as teaching them about boundaries and expectations through disciplinary practices. To what extent is the school recognizing the voices of students—for instance, by incorporating discussion time into class, or responding when students organize to start a club? How do rules allow students to learn about interacting with peers and authority?



Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

Assistant Professor  
Rand Quinn

*Quinn:* There's reason to believe that the civic engagement of young people has implications for their engagement in adulthood. In addition, there is a civic empowerment gap that many have written about. Young citizens from communities of color, low-income households, or immigrant backgrounds tend to be far less civically engaged and have far fewer civic opportunities than their counterparts who are white, middle- and upper-class, or native-born. Sigal and I wanted to study civic opportunities in two different school communities to try to understand the relationship between school context and civic engagement.

### How did you conduct your research, and what were you looking for?

*Quinn:* Sigal and I worked with a team of Penn GSE doctoral students to study two West Philadelphia high schools. Though the schools are only about two miles from each other, they are very different. One is a neighborhood school that enrolls students who live nearby. The other is a charter school that exhibits elements of a "no-excuses" model, meaning there is a regimented form of behavior management. Some of its students have chosen to enroll from outside of the neighborhood. Our doctoral students observed spaces throughout the school—classrooms during core content classes, certainly, but also the hallways between periods, the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch, and areas used for after-school activities. We also interviewed and surveyed the high school students. We wanted to document various behaviors and assess the extent to which

### What kinds of civic opportunities were you looking at, and why is school an important place for students to encounter them?

*Ben-Porath:* School is the one institution that is really open to everyone and is the most longstanding in young people's lives.

students felt that their voice mattered, or that they were able to have a say in discussions.

**What have your findings shown so far, and what impact do you hope the study will have?**

*Ben-Porath:* We are still in the process of analyzing our data, but we can say that we found some differences in civic engagement between the two schools, and we do believe that both school models can learn from each other. The ways in which teachers allocate their main resources in the classroom—their space, time, and attention—can have a significant effect on students’ civic engagement. This doesn’t require additional resources, just knowledge of particular practices. We have been developing a paper and toolkit for teachers to use in different school contexts to promote civic opportunities for students. We also want to look at broader policy implications for the non-academic assessment tools that schools are expected to develop. (See “*Tips for the Classroom*” below to learn more about Ben-Porath and Quinn’s tools for teachers.)

*Quinn:* There are some very practical, policy-relevant, actionable practices that school districts, particularly those that are under-resourced, can employ to broaden

# “Teenagers are going to try to find out what kind of boundaries they can push and what kind of power they can exert.”

opportunities for students to engage civically. We also want to help researchers and others study civic engagement and participation in the classroom, so we developed a classroom observation tool that can be used to track the nature and tenor of a classroom in regard to these issues. It was published on [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org), the website of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University.

**Why do you believe this work is important?**

*Ben-Porath:* Teenagers are going to try to find out what kind of boundaries they can push and what kind of power they can

exert. It’s natural developmentally, especially in an institutional context. We need to understand what they are learning about whether their efforts make a difference, whether systems listen to them, what rules and expectations mean, and how to be resourceful.

*Quinn:* Researchers often focus on academic achievement as an important educational outcome, but civic engagement is also important. Just like closing or narrowing the academic achievement gap, reducing the civic engagement gap is ultimately beneficial to society. ■

## Tips for the Classroom

*Ben-Porath and Quinn offer these practical ideas for teachers of any subject who are hoping to introduce their students to civic engagement:*

**Let students speak.** The way students learn to engage with issues and ideas in the classroom can become a model for how they engage in the community. Create opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning and formulate their own opinions and views. This will help students foster a sense of themselves as valuable members of their society.

**Be flexible.** When a student brings up a personal experience that is relevant to your lesson, create space for him or her to share this with the class, either at the moment or at a later time. A key aspect of learning to be a civic actor is the ability to consider a topic and analyze it based on one’s own opinions and experiences. It’s OK to deviate slightly from your original lesson plan.

**Rethink your room.** Consider grouping desks together, or arranging them in a circle instead of rows, so that students will interact with each other in addition to you. Bring children of different abilities together. This can encourage a sense of a learning community. Civic engagement is not just about listening to one person and responding; it’s also about sharing and learning with peers.

These tips, written with doctoral student Jacquie L. Greiff, are adapted from *The Educator’s Playbook*, a monthly Penn GSE newsletter for K–12 educators. Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/) subscribe to sign up.



# Producing Lifelong Learners

## The Penn Literacy Network Continues a Legacy

by Juliana Rosati

Reading, writing, and communication are at the core of a student’s ability to learn any subject. Yet too often, schools are not equipped to teach these skills in ways that research has proven effective. For over thirty-six years, the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) at Penn GSE has worked to change this through practical professional development to help preK–12 educators improve their methods of teaching literacy. The program has worked with more than 36,000 educators since its founding.

“We’re changing a generation,” says PLN Executive Director Bonnie Botel-Sheppard, GED’76, GRD’81. “When I think of the number of children we ultimately serve through the educators we touch, it’s overwhelming.”

### Interactive Learning Experiences for Educators

Schools and districts partner with PLN to provide onsite credit and noncredit professional development and coaching for faculty and administrators. This work is grounded in the research-based approach of the renowned late Penn GSE professor Morton Botel, ED’46, GED’48, GR’53, who created “Four Lenses of Learning” and “Five Reading, Writing, and Talking Processes” that underpin PLN’s course offerings. The goal is to help teams of educators use literacy practices in multiple subject areas, including English, math, social studies, science, and the arts, so that students become more productive and reflective learners. During the courses, PLN works collaboratively with educators. “We ask them to bring their own materials to the course sessions so that they can construct their own version of what literacy looks like in the classroom,” says Dr. Botel-Sheppard, who is Morton Botel’s daughter. PLN’s coaching likewise helps teachers incorporate new approaches into their everyday work. “Our coaches work closely with teachers to observe and support their instruction and provide feedback,” says PLN Associate Director Lara Paparo, GED’06. “To have someone in the classroom to work with them is a powerful thing.”

### A Growing Network

PLN has expanded its reach carefully over time, seeking to work with schools on a long-term basis. Having launched originally in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, today PLN also works in Delaware, New York,

Vermont, Florida, California, Ireland, Scotland, China, and India. Alumni of GSE and Penn have played a valuable role in increasing PLN’s capacity both regionally and nationally. Penn GSE alumna Tara Novell, GED’97, a public school teacher in Tampa, Florida, has worked as a PLN facilitator and helped PLN connect with educational venues in her area. “My collaboration with PLN allows me to remain connected to GSE and the Penn community,” Novell says. “I have found it incredibly rewarding. Though I have participated in numerous professional development opportunities, I have yet to experience one as rich and relevant as PLN.”

### Skills for Families in Need

Taking its work beyond schools to realize one of Botel-Sheppard’s dreams, PLN recently established the Family Success Coaching Initiative to address how poverty and homelessness affect children’s opportunities to learn. Through a pilot program, “Good Eating/ Good Reading,” PLN brought its literacy workshops and coaching to homeless women and their children at the People’s Emergency Center in West Philadelphia. There, PLN taught literacy skills and healthy eating habits simultaneously through books about nutrition. “We provided activities for parents and children to do together to jump-start children’s learning,” says Botel-Sheppard. “Parents are building their literacy skills as well and certainly their confidence.” The goal is to instill habits and skills that will help families move out of poverty. Botel-Sheppard hopes to expand the program across the city and the nation. “We want to provide a sustainable model for homeless shelters and other family-focused organizations,” she says.

Though PLN reaches thousands of people each year, Botel-Sheppard says she thinks about the program’s impact in terms of individuals. “What is one child in one teacher’s classroom experiencing?” she asks. “One mom who has been homeless—what does she gain? That’s what I focus on.”

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/pln](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pln) for more information about PLN’s programs. To learn more about becoming a local PLN facilitator, contact [gsepennlit@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:gsepennlit@pobox.upenn.edu) or 215-898-1984.

Photos by Darryl W. Moran Photography

Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

A Ph.D. candidate in Penn GSE's Higher Education program, Andrés Castro Samayoa has written a social history of national postsecondary education surveys. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography



# RESEARCH and JUSTICE

PH.D. STUDENT WORKS FOR **EQUALITY**  
AND **DIVERSITY** IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by Stephanie Berrong

For someone growing up in a town near El Salvador's capital city, the study of American higher education was not the most practicable career path. For Andrés Castro Samayoa—a Ph.D. candidate in Penn GSE's Higher Education program who will join the faculty of Boston College's Lynch School of Education in September—the choice has always been a matter of following his heart.

As a Harvard freshman he discovered, firsthand, the critical infrastructure that universities set up to support students and ensure that they succeed. "I had a tumultuous transition from El Salvador to the U.S.; it was a lot to process," Castro Samayoa says of his freshman year. He joined a welcoming and inclusive community at the Harvard College Women's Center, where he worked throughout his undergraduate years. He found that administrators, too, were invested in his success, and as a Student Life Fellow, he worked with the Dean's Office to support diversity on campus. "It's not just about giving access to students like myself who really would not have been able to go to college without assistance; it's also about making sure that once they're there, they feel like they belong to a community and can thrive," he says.

Castro Samayoa had planned to study biochemistry, but found an academic home when he took a Science, Gender, and Sexuality course taught by a Guatemalan professor with whom he felt a kinship. He went on to earn a master's degree from Cambridge University as a prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholar. Today his research at Penn GSE continues the exploration he began in the Harvard course, investigating how diversity and equity are supported in educational settings.

At Penn GSE, Castro Samayoa says he has found a place where "people were not only interested in developing and cultivating me as a researcher, but also as someone who is committed to doing work that matters."

His mentor, Marybeth Gasman, professor of Higher Education at Penn GSE, calls Castro Samayoa "intellectually breathtaking and beautifully humble," saying that the faculty on his dissertation committee gave him the uncommon advice to save some of the ambitious work that he has planned until he becomes a professor.

Gasman also praises the deep sense of integrity that Castro Samayoa brings to his work. "Andrés has a large capacity for work and research and always gives everything he does his very best effort," she says. "He's not concerned about being popular; he's concerned about being on the right side of justice."

## Preparing to Create Change

Castro Samayoa's dissertation at Penn GSE is a social history that focuses on how race and gender are considered on national postsecondary education surveys, which are important instruments for determining federal initiatives and funding, including the eligibility for funds that support Minority Serving Institutions. He has interviewed government officials, professors, leaders, researchers, and others to study the changes that have unfolded from the

1970s to the present.

One example is a U.S. Office of Management and Budget directive put in place in the 1990s that required ethnicity (Hispanic or non-Hispanic) to be reported independent of race. Previously, race and ethnicity was a smorgasbord of categories that varied by federal agency. The change, Castro Samayoa says, reflected the efforts of grassroots organizations in the 1970s that promoted the term "Hispanic" as a politically advantageous term, but the result has been a more limited ability to understand racial diversity within the group identifying themselves as Hispanic.

Rather than ask if the current method of data collection is better or worse, Castro Samayoa is focused on understanding the political undertones of the choices that are made and explaining how various stakeholders determine what kind of data is valued.

He hopes to use his work to encourage others to consider categories of race and ethnicity, gender identity, and sexuality as products of an era rather than objective truths. He points to nonbinary and transgender communities as another example. "Most of our ways of collecting information at the federal, state, and institutional levels continue to have a binary way of understanding people's experiences," he adds. "I think that we have a missed opportunity there to make members of our community legible, make them visible."

By identifying who historically has not had a space on the survey or a "seat at the table" and asking why, Castro Samayoa hopes he will help effect concrete change.

According to Gasman, who compares Castro Samayoa's writing to that of a historian, he is already well on his way to having an impact. "His dissertation is masterful in scope, depth, and intellectual rigor," she says. "I predict he will influence the field in compelling ways."

## Honing the Tools for Success

During his five years at Penn GSE, where he was a recipient of the Carmen T. Middleberg Scholarship, Castro Samayoa enjoyed a flexible program that allowed him to learn multiple research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, and pursue questions from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In addition to rigorous courses in educational theory at GSE, he took content analysis at the Annenberg School for Communication, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at PennDesign, and oral history at Penn Arts & Sciences. The latter, he says, provided important tools for his dissertation.

"The program allowed me to branch out in terms of the tools that I was putting in my toolbox to go and do work," he says. "My mind just doesn't work in a way that is confined to one particular disciplinary tenet."

His coursework and research also informed his teaching. He served as a teaching assistant and primary instructor of History of American Higher Education as well as a survey course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program at Penn Arts & Sciences. "In my undergraduate course, I ask students to tell me what gender means to them, and we hammer out answers to the



“By identifying who historically has not had a space on the survey or a ‘seat at the table’ and asking why, Castro Samayoa hopes he will help effect concrete change.”

↑ As a staff member at the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions at GSE, Castro Samayoa works with Professor Marybeth Gasman (center) and Paola “Lola” Esmieu, GED’13 (right). Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

question throughout the entire course.”

Across all of this work, Gasman notes, Castro Samayoa’s commitment to scholarship and justice has shone through. “He cares deeply about research and teaching and the humanity of students. He makes me immensely proud.”

### A Better World

Castro Samayoa is not alone in his belief that education can provide a path to forging a more just world, and he has put theory into practice at the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). As the assistant director for assessment and senior research associate, Castro Samayoa works closely with Gasman, the Center’s founding director, to advance research and policies that help to strengthen colleges and universities receiving Title IV federal student aid as MSIs.

He notes that an institution’s ability to receive the MSI designation—and the funding that goes along with it—is primarily based on the enrollment of students identifying as African American, Native American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American. It is just one example of how survey data that ignores diverse gender or racial identities could have real consequences.

At the Center, Castro Samayoa shares the lead research role with Gasman on a project that examines the role of MSIs in minority teacher education, which is supported by a \$750,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. He also co-leads a program called Pathways to the Professoriate, aimed at increasing the number of Latino professors working in the humanities at U.S. colleges and universities. Pathways to the Professoriate is supported by a \$5.1 million

grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

In addition to working at the Center, Gasman says, Castro Samayoa was also instrumental in its creation. He helped her write a budget, brainstorm locations, organize staffing, and finalize the Center’s mission and goals.

### Making the Professional Personal

Castro Samayoa’s personal connection to his work and his colleagues sets him apart in academia, says the Center’s associate director for programs, Paola “Lola” Esmieu, GED’13. “He’s a fifth-year doctoral student, in the middle of the job search, working on his dissertation,” she says. None of this has distracted him from his responsibilities at the Center, Esmieu notes. “He’s never not there for us.”

Esmieu, who calls Castro Samayoa her mentor, is a full-time employee of the Center as well as a part-time student pursuing an Ed.D. in Higher Education. She credits Castro Samayoa with challenging her professionally, providing insight on what it’s like to be a doctoral student, and advising her on courses. Raised in California by parents who were both born in Guatemala, she says she feels like Castro Samayoa is family. “He’s a home away from home for me,” she adds.

As he prepares to join the faculty of Boston College, Castro Samayoa reports that a key to his success at Penn GSE has been the sense of balance he has found through teaching. In research, he explains, academics face a delayed reaction to what they share with the world. In the classroom, there’s “the immediate gratification of being able to create a learning space with people and having them question some of their most deep-rooted assumptions,” he says. “I invite students to see the world differently, and that’s pretty exciting.” ■

## UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY TOUR

### Dean Grossman Visits Six Cities to Share Her Vision

Alumni and friends gathered in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, during 2016–2017 for Dean Grossman’s Unlocking Opportunity Tour. Dr. Grossman shared her vision for Penn GSE, describing how the School’s legacy in four areas—equity and access, practical knowledge, powerful partnerships, and innovation for impact—will grow during Penn GSE’s second century. “Education is the key to unlocking opportunity,” she said. ■



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# Alumni Notes

## 1950s

**Joyce Sloan Anderson, ED'51, GED'52**, began her blog *Dimensions* in 2014. Her latest book, *The Critical Eye* (Xlibris Corporation, 2010), is a collection of writings on American lifestyle, culture, and politics.

**Harriet Cranmer Long, ED'52**, retired from fifteen years of volunteering in a public school. She delivers Meals on Wheels, serves on her church's care committee, and spends time with family.

## 1960s

**Phyllis Young Murray, GED'61**, authored poems that were highlighted at the opening of the Clara Francis Gallery in Manhattan alongside the inaugural exhibition "Haile King Rubie: Speaking Colors."

## 1970s

**Michael Bentley, GED'72**, and coauthor Stephen Fleury presented their paper "Developing Dewey's Sociocultural Vision: Toward Educating Citizens in the Twenty-First Century" at a conference at the University of Cambridge.

**Paul Dickler, W'70, GRD'76**, is associate director of the Wachman Center at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, PA. He has brought U.S. teachers to South Korea and Japan through grant funding.

**Steve Korner, GR'77**, is leading an initiative to change the special education code in New Jersey to reflect best practices in neuropsychological theory.

**Daniel Lipowitz, GED'76**, digitalized a CD of children's songs he wrote, *Music for Little Humans*, performed by The All Animal Band.

**Michael R. Mantell, GR'76**, is director of transformational coaching at Premier Fitness Camp at Omni La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, CA, where he offers positive psychology behavior coaching.

**Susan Marcus, CW'71, GED'73**, retired to California after a lifetime on the East Coast. She spends time with family, volunteering, and taking classes in history, Talmud, current events, art, and music.

**Rachel Glassman Ragland, CW'74, GED'75**, was promoted to professor of education after twenty years at Lake Forest College. She is chair of the Education Department and head of the teacher preparation program.

**Ryda Dwarys Rose, CW'50, GRD'71**, recalls the wonderful years from 1967 to 1999 when she taught in Penn GSE's teacher education and human sexuality programs and developed a health professions program.

**Eric R. White, GED'67, GRD'75**, coauthored a chapter on academic advising for the fifth edition of *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* (Charles C Thomas Publisher LTD, 2016).

## 1980s

**Ellen J. Brooks, GRD'81**, received a mini-grant from the New York State English Council for her project "Teaching Nonfiction Writing: An Arts Approach."

**Anne-Marie Cunniffe-Hesser, GED'89**, works in educational consulting at Greenwich Education Group in Connecticut. She previously worked as a television producer and in museum education.

**James Meredith Day, GR'87**, professor at the Universite Catholique de Louvain in Belgium, recently published articles including "Religion and Adult Development: Are There Postformal Stages in Religious Cognition?" (*Behavioral Development Bulletin*, January 9, 2017).

**David Dormont, C'84, GED'84**, was elected to the executive committee of Montgomery County Development Corporation in Pennsylvania. For twenty years he has focused his legal practice on complex commercial and bankruptcy-related litigation.

**Kathleen Egan, GR'86**, earned a certificate in spiritual direction as an outgrowth of her previous role as hospice chaplain. She works with individuals in her new home of Ocean City, NJ.

**Marc Epstein, C'84, GED'89**, teaches World History, AP U.S. Government, and International Politics at The Pennington School in Pennington, NJ, where he has worked since 2010 after twenty-one years at another school.

**Albert Giovenella, GR'87**, an adjunct assistant professor at the Perelman School of Medicine at Penn, is developing a teaching model to connect scientists with college and graduate students for health care webinars.

**J. Robert Kelley, C'85, GED'86**, was promoted to assistant head of school at St. John's School in Guam after serving as director of college guidance for sixteen years.

**Leslie Nicholas, GED'85**, visited Cuba as a guest of Teaching Partners to study the country's educational system. He studied Brazil's educational system in 2013 as a Pearson Foundation Global Learning Fellow.

**Katheryne J. Narkevitz McGettigan O'Connell, CW'67, GED'75, GRD'87**, is remarried and enjoying retirement. She spends time playing with her grandchildren, traveling, and making pottery and quilts.

**Charlene Polio, C'83, GED'84**, a professor at Michigan State University, was appointed coeditor of *TESOL Quarterly* with her colleague Peter De Costa.

**Jeanne H. Smith, GED'82**, wrote "Teaching Reading Beyond Dyslexia," a post that was shared on the blog of the International Literary Association.

**Ana Celia Zentella, GR'81**, is professor emerita at the University of California, San Diego. She received the 2016 Public Outreach and Community Service Award from the Society for Linguistic Anthropology.

## 1990s

**Carladenise Armbrister Edwards, C'92, GED'93**, relocated to Seattle, WA, and joined Providence Health and Services as chief administrative officer for population health. She also leads programs at Providence St. Joseph Health System.

**Patricia Freeland, GED'91**, taught English as a second language and teacher training, received a master's degree in marine affairs from the University of Rhode Island, and currently writes for Educational Testing Service tests.

**Eboney Kraisoraphong, GED'92**, is vice president of strategic quality management at NorthEast Treatment Centers. She lives in the Manayunk neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA, with her husband and daughter.

**Jon Lasser, GED'94**, cowrote the children's book *Grow Happy* (American Psychological Association, 2017) with Sage Foster-Laser.

**Winifred Lloyds Lender, GED'91, GRD'95**, is a psychologist in private practice in Santa Barbara, CA. She also consults with schools about technology use and serves on boards of educational institutions.

**Andrea Lewis, GED'98**, professor and chair of education at Spelman College, published her first book, *Preservice Teachers, Social Class, and Race in Urban Schools: Experiences and Strategies for Teachers* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

**Kara Weiss Maser, NU'84, GED'91**, returned to management in higher education after working in the medical and retail fields. She is donor relations coordinator at Columbia University School of Social Work.

**Christine Kerlin Nasserghodsi, GED'97**, is director of innovation for GEMS Education and serves on the Forbes Technology Council. She has lived in the United Arab Emirates for eight years with her family.

**Fran Pelham, GRD'93**, received a 2015 Gelett Burgess Children's Book Award for coauthoring *Sophie and Jack: A Pirate Adventure* (Archway Publishing, 2015). Her essay "Fanny Kemble: Abolitionist" appears in *Sisterly Love: Women of Note in Pennsylvania History* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).

**Polly Van Raalte, GED'74, GRD'94**, was honored by the Hunter College writing program and named employee of the month as a reading specialist in the Lawrence Public Schools in Lawrence, NY. Her photojournalism appears in the *South Shore Record*.

**Jeanne Stanley, GED'87, GR'93**, and **Theodore Burnes, GED'01**, wrote *Teaching LGBTQ Psychology: Queering Innovative Pedagogy and Practice* (APA Books, 2017), offering practical information and resources for teaching about LGBTQ sociocultural issues.

**Diane Wynne, GED'95**, recently relocated to the Charlotte, NC, area.

**William J. Zee, GED'98**, was invited to present "Developing Effective Responses to Inappropriate Sexualized Conduct and Behaviors Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences" at the 38th Annual LRP's National Institute on Legal Issues of Educating Individuals with Disabilities.

## 2000s

**Theodore Burnes, GED'01**: See entry for **Jeanne Stanley, GED'87, GR'93**, above.

**Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, GR'01**, wrote *Imperfect Tense* (Whitepoint Press, 2016), poetry celebrating bilingualism. She has completed fifteen years at the University of Georgia and two National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grants.

**Richard Carreño, GED'04**, wrote *Lord of Hosts: The Life of Sir Henry 'Chips' Channon* (Writers Clearinghouse Press, 2011).

**Sydney Hunt Coffin, GED'00**, teaches at Edison High School in North Philadelphia and serves on the Teacher Advisory Committee of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Anthony Conrad, G'95, GR'05**, was designated a National Endowment for the Humanities Scholar. He continues anthropology studies and research at Kellogg College, Oxford University, and works with students in Bucks County, PA.

**Dennis DePerro, GRD'06**, is dean of the Purcell School of Professional Studies at Le Moyne College in Syracuse and has been named twenty-first president of St. Bonaventure University, effective June 1, 2017.

**Kim Glassman, GED'01**, has joined Equal Measure in Philadelphia, PA, as director to provide evaluation and philanthropic services to major private and community foundations, national and regional nonprofits, and government organizations.

**Teppey Hayashi, GED'07**, moved to Tokyo, Japan, after working at Oregon State University. He is now an academic advisor for Temple University, Japan Campus.

**Stefani Hite, GED'95, GRD'05**, cowrote *Intentional and Targeted Teaching: A Framework for Teacher Growth and Leadership* with Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2016).

**Francis M. Hult, GR'07**, was inducted into the Lund Research Society (Vetenskapssocieteten i Lund) at its 2016 meeting. The society's members advance research in the humanities, social science, and theology.

**Alan Johnson Joss, GED'04**, moved to California to manage an immigration team at Google for Berry Appleman and Leiden LLP. He previously worked at Princeton University and debuted an independent movie, *The Observer Effect*.

**Kendra Quincy Knauf, GED'05**, joined the Guild for Human Services, a special education school in Concord, MA. A mental health counselor, she works with individuals and groups and serves as students' case manager.

**Jennifer Kuter, GED'02**, has spent her career working at residential treatment facilities. She now works with intellectually disabled clients as associate program director at PATH, Inc. (People Acting To Help).

**Huei-Chuan Lin, GED'09**, is an English teacher and cofounder of Teach Taiwan Recruiting Center, which recruits foreign English teachers overseas to teach in public and private schools in Taiwan.

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**Tracy Paskiewicz, GED'00**, was hired as a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, in the Counseling and School Psychology Department.

**Tanja C. Sargent, GR'06**, a guest professor at Shanxi Normal University, continues to work on research regarding education reform in China.

**Sarah Shaw, GED'08**, accepted the role of coordinator of the Wachovia Education Resource Center at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

**Shuai Shen, GED'08**, is China program liaison and Western Canada liaison for the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) at Penn GSE. She helped PLN develop a new parenting program for Chinese families.

**Christine Stellar, GED'04**, has completed two years as director of institutional advancement for SquashBusters, a sports-based, after-school youth development program in Boston that includes academic enrichment and community service.

**Gregory J. Vincent, GR'04**, was elected to the board of trustees of his undergraduate alma mater, Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He will serve on the Academic Affairs and Compensation and Human Resources committees.

**Karen Weaver, GRD'09**, presented her research on college sports media rights and the changing media landscape to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in Washington, DC, last fall.

**Kelly Wissman, GR'05**, cowrote *Teaching Global Literature in Elementary Classrooms: A Critical Literacy and Teacher Inquiry Approach* (Routledge, 2016). She received the 2016 President's Award for Excellence in Teaching from the University at Albany and was selected as a coeditor of *Language Arts Journal*.

**Jacqueline Zavitz, GED'07**, joined the professional services firm Heidrick and Struggles as head of the education presence in Philadelphia, PA. She assists higher education institutions with leadership transitions.

**Regina Zurbano, GED'03, CGS'04**, works as a house principal at Santa Monica High School in California. She spent nine years as a science teacher before completing her Ed.D. at the University of Southern California in 2011.

## 2010s

**Sarah Ames, GED'13**, is in her third year at Success Academy Charter Schools in New York City as associate director of talent. She got married last year.

**Stephen G. Barber, GED'16**, accepted a position as special projects manager in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at Johns Hopkins University.

**Sharee Bookman, GED'16**, is instructional facilitator at the Camden Corps Plus Program supported by Rutgers University, Camden, which helps youth obtain high school diplomas and prepare for employment.

**Thomas Bullock, GRD'10**, with the support of his ExecDoc Cohort 7 colleagues, launched LEADERS, Inc. (Leading Educational Advancement by Developing Entrepreneurial Readiness and Skills). This nonprofit supports under-resourced college students.

**Yifeng Troy Cai, GED'15**, was admitted to the Ph.D. program in anthropology at Brown University. His research focuses on LGBT rights, public health, gender and sexuality, and men's sex work in contemporary China.

**Ya-Han Chang, GED'14**, is a school psychologist in an international K-12 school in Shanghai, China, where she works on various projects dedicated to holistic student development.

**Yuzhi Chen, GED'13**, is an instructor in China at the School of Foreign Languages, Ningbo Institute of Technology, Zhejiang University. She enjoys using skills and experiences gained at Penn GSE.

**Carlo Cinaglia, GED'16**, teaches English as a second language with Penn's English Language Programs. He also teaches undergraduate classes in linguistics and second-language composition at his alma mater, Saint Joseph's University.

**Adriana Vetrano Cornell, GED'13, GED'14**, moved to Nairobi, Kenya, with her husband and enjoys working in a global environment as a school counselor and careers advisor at an international high school.

**Paul A. D'Avanzo, GED'13**, is project director at New York University's Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies, where he oversees programs addressing health and mental-health needs of sexual and gender minorities.

**Marian Dossou, GED'10**, started KakeMi 90 Second Cake, a line of dessert mixes for making cake in ninety seconds. She works with the Wharton Small Business Development Center to grow the business.

**Lauren LaRusso Drago, GED'11**, started a private practice, Lauren Drago Therapy, which provides collaborative client-centered therapy over the phone and by video to clients located in Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut.

**Nick Esposito, GED'16**, gave a talk for TEDxUtica, "We Need to Rethink the Way That We Teach Our Students About Poverty," based upon his work as a teacher, nonprofit founder, and Penn GSE student.

**Rachel Factor, GED'14**, manages a project for Refugee Services of Texas aimed at offering technological resources and training to refugees. The project is a randomized controlled trial in four cities.

**Diana Finesmith, GED'16**, is a counselor at Kensington Heath Sciences Academy (KHSa) in Philadelphia, PA, contributing to efforts related to KHSa's designation as a community school by the Office of the Mayor and a field practice site of the Penn Futures Project.

**Joe Forsyth, GED'12**, joined Penn Wood Middle School in Darby, PA, as an English and reading teacher. He received a grant from the William Penn Foundation to enhance his classroom library.

**Christine Galib, GED'13**, is wellness director and entrepreneurship instructor at The Village School in Houston, TX. She founded consulting firm Plan My Plate and runs Bridges to Wealth with **Jill Bazelon, GED'04, GR'09**, and Dr. Keith Weigelt of The Wharton School.

**Kait Ginder, GED'10, GED'11**, works at Freire Charter High School in Philadelphia, PA, as director of college counseling, twelfth grade academic advisor and team leader, test coordinator, and National Honor Society advisor.

**Miles Goodloe, GED'12**, wrote *Self-Education is Greater than Higher Education* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), a guide to help undergraduates live their college experience with purpose and passion.

**Kelly (Joy) Gregg, GED'14**, a reading specialist in Cambridge, MA, is finishing a master's degree in international relations. She plans to move to Chicago with her husband and connect with Penn alumni there.

**Jacqueline Hain, C'12, GED'13**, teaches sixth grade math at Universal Vare Charter School in Philadelphia, PA. She received the President's Academic Excellence Award, presented by Kenny Gamble, chair of the Universal Companies Board of Directors.

**Christine Hernandez, GED'10**, received the Mid-Level Professional of the Year Award from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Commission for Student Involvement.

**Allison Hill, GED'16**, accepted a position as learning designer at Real Time Cases, a Washington, DC, edtech startup working out of the AOL Fishbowl Labs. She is eager to contribute to experiential learning.

**Paul Kakupa, GED'16**, is a faculty member in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the University of Zambia.

**Matt G. Kinnich, GRD'10**, completed his first year as CEO of Language Stars in Chicago, IL, leading early-childhood development through language education for over ten thousand students in Chicago and Washington, DC.

**Marc Mancinelli, GED'07, GED'08, GRD'14**, founded and directs the South Jersey Data Specialists Partnership, a professional organization for educators working in data. He lives in Collingswood, NJ, with his family.

**Kiernan Mathews, GRD'13**, was appointed lecturer on education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. He will continue as executive director and principal investigator of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education.

**Philip McAdoo, GRD'15**, is an openly gay educator who fiercely advocates for the rights of LGBTQ youth, families, and educators. He is director of equity, justice, and community at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC.

**Charlie McGeehan, GED'12**, and colleague Joshua Kleiman wrote "What's Your Story: Student Identity on the Walls in Philly," the cover story of *Rethinking Schools* (Volume 31, Issue 2, Winter 2016-17).

**Kate Miller, GED'13**, a physics teacher, traveled to Antarctica in January with PolarTREC (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating) to be a teacher-researcher on the IceCube South Pole Neutrino Observatory.

**Katherine Mortimer, GR'12**, received the 2017 James E. Alatis Prize for Research on Language Planning and Policy in Educational Contexts from TIRF (The International Research Foundation for English Language Education). The award honors her article "Producing Change and Stability: A Scalar Analysis of Paraguayan Bilingual Education Policy Implementation" (*Linguistics and Education*, Volume 34, 2016).

**Michael Nauen, GED'14**, is in his third year at Council Rock High School South in Southampton, PA, where he teaches math, special education, and history and coaches the chess team.

**Samantha Neugebauer, GED'11**, won the Best Practices in International Education Award from NASPA International Education Knowledge Community for the first-year seminar program she directs at New York University, Abu Dhabi.

**Kathleen Overly, GRD'12**, and her husband, **Matt Stephenson, WG'11**, launched Code2College, a nonprofit based in Austin, TX, that aims to increase the number of students of color entering STEM degree programs and fields.

**Rasheda Randall, GED'15**, works with detained youth as a special education and science teacher. She enjoys learning how to differentiate her instruction to best meet each student's educational goals.

**Jon Roberts, GED'13**, is in his second year teaching sixth-grade math at an international school in Colombia. He previously worked for an international educational travel company.

**Donna Sabella (Monheit), GR'10, GNU'12**, is contributing to a new book. She is Seedworks Endowed Associate Professor for Social Justice at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, College of Nursing, as well as cofounder and associate editor of the *Journal of Human Trafficking*.

**Erica Silbiger, GED'10**, accepted a position as director of admissions at the Metropolitan College of New York. Previously she was associate director of admissions at Columbia University School of Social Work.

**Zahava Stadler, GED'15, LPS'15,** continues to work as manager of policy and research at EdBuild. She enjoys being part of an organization that helps disadvantaged students receive the resources they need.

**Xiaofei Tang, GED'10,** is in the Ph.D. program in second-language acquisition at Carnegie Mellon University. Her interests include second-language pragmatics, teaching Chinese as a foreign language, and task-based and technology-enhanced language teaching.

**Amber Touch, GED'13,** earned the CompTIA Network+ and Security+ professional IT certifications and is currently studying for the Cisco CCNA certification with the goal of obtaining a job in information security.

**Nicole (Ruixin) Wang, GED'11,** is in a dual-titled Ph.D. program at Penn State, where she received a Research Initiation Grant for a data visualization project. She is cochair of the Penn Alumni State College/Altoona Interview Program and hopes to develop a regional alumni club.

**Mia Weiss, GED'12,** and **Danny Wittels, GED'12,** married in September in Philadelphia, PA, with several members of their Penn GSE family in attendance. The couple met at Penn GSE and have lived and worked in Philadelphia ever since.

**Rachel (Beazley) Wirt, GED'15,** teaches kindergarten in The School District of Philadelphia. She and her husband, **James Wirt, SP2'15,** are moving to Kosovo this summer to work in education and community development with the Peace Corps.

## Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/alumni-notes](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/alumni-notes) to tell us your latest professional updates.

**Wei Yu, GED'14,** enjoys applying what she learned at Penn GSE to her current position in business as vice president of operation at G&F Products in Philadelphia, PA. ■

*Submissions have been edited due to space constraints and magazine style guidelines.*

# TIPS FROM The Educator's Playbook:

## MAKING THE MOST OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN YOUR TEACHING



Educators have more access to computers, software, and apps than ever before. A crucial step in maximizing these tools is to use them not just within a learning environment, but to *design* a learning environment. To accomplish this, educators must think about how technology can support broad goals for learning, according to Penn GSE's Barbara "Bobbi" Kurshan, executive director of academic innovation and senior fellow. Dr. Kurshan helps educators become technology-fluent through GSE's Virtual Online Teaching Certificate Program (VOLT), the first online certificate for online teaching, and through her leadership of the Education Design Studio, Inc. (EDSi), which supports edtech entrepreneurs.

A challenge for any teacher is that lists of the best digital teaching products are quickly outdated. Rather than provide such a list, Kurshan has developed a set of key questions to ask yourself when considering a new digital tool for your classroom:

### 1 Does it boost your engagement with students?

When leading a class of thirty students, it can be challenging to stay engaged with each individual, let alone follow the dynamics of six different groups when students are assigned collaborative projects. Think about how technology can keep you better informed about your students' learning. For example, sharing documents with Google Docs—a simple and free app available to anyone with an Internet connection—can connect you to all your students' work in real time.

*(continued on next page) →*



Photo by Daniel Burke Photography

# CREATE YOUR LEGACY AT PENN GSE



"The importance of education could not be more clear to me. As the daughter of educators and as a parent, I know education is the foundation of civil society. It is how we produce citizens who are prepared to lead and to succeed in the jobs of the future. Penn GSE is a best-in-class institution whose graduates will truly take education forward. That is why I established a bequest to support the School."  
—Lisa Green Hall, W'87, Member, Penn GSE Board of Overseers

Many alumni and friends like Lisa have harnessed the power of their wills to create a Penn GSE legacy with a bequest. A bequest in your will is a powerful way to make an impact on the future of Penn GSE and education by providing the financial resources needed to support student financial aid, professorships, faculty research, and programs.



To learn more about bequests and other ways to join the Casterter Circle of legacy donors to Penn GSE, please contact:

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# 2

## Does it track student participation and progress?

In group projects, how do you make sure students are doing their share of work and truly mastering material? An effective tech tool can help. For instance, since Google Docs tracks who does what, teachers can use it to gain a better understanding of each student's progression, thought processes, and possible misconceptions. A product like Smart Sparrow, which provides real-time data generation on student progress, can be invaluable for adapting instruction to students' needs and interests.

# 3

## Does it fuel momentum outside of class time?

How do you continue the learning opportunities presented in a project when a class won't meet again for a few days? With a good tech tool, class and group discussions are no longer limited to a class period, and students who are less confident speakers can provide thought-out responses without having to speak out loud in class. To continue the Google Docs example, a shared document can provide a forum for a conversation that extends beyond the bell.

# 4

## Does it help you build a learning community?

Strive to use technology to help students create long-term communities for sharing knowledge. In Google Docs, you could encourage students to post links to additional resources, videos, and websites related to the topic. In Penn GSE's VOLT program, students create and share video reviews on a platform called Screencast.com to help expand their classmates' knowledge of digital tools for teaching. This kind of collaboration is invaluable for learning difficult concepts, and with a good digital home it can continue well after a course or program is finished.

### Want more advice for educators?

These tips are adapted from *The Educator's Playbook*, a monthly Penn GSE newsletter that distills faculty research into useful advice for K-12 educators. Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe) to sign up.

Find Dr. Kurshan's *Forbes.com* blog and learn more about her contributions to academic innovation at <http://scholar.gse.upenn.edu/kurshan> under "Links."



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Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

# ALUMNI WEEKEND with Penn GSE

We hope to see you back on campus for two special Penn GSE events on Saturday, May 13. Join us to celebrate education and GSE alumni. Stay for other Penn Alumni Weekend events from May 12 to 15.



## Voices in Education Featuring George A. Weiss, W'65, HON'14

Saturday, May 13, 2017  
3:30-4:30 p.m.

Join Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman and Penn Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W'65, HON'14, founder and chairman of Say Yes to Education, for a conversation about education. Founded thirty years ago, Say Yes to Education is a nonprofit that works with communities and high school students to increase access to colleges and other post-secondary opportunities through scholarship.

## Celebration of Educators & Education Alumni Awards

Saturday, May 13, 2017  
4:30-6:30 p.m.

Penn GSE invites you to honor the 2017 Education Alumni Award honorees at a reception featuring an address by Dean Pam Grossman. Join fellow alumni, friends, faculty, and staff for this annual tradition that celebrates and recognizes the incredible impact of our community and educators around the globe.





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