

The Church of San Francisco of Acatepec, near Cholula, Mexico, where Jimenez is conducting his study. The church is an architectural example of the mixing of European and Indian cultures from the 16th century. Jimenez' study deals with the cultural influences on literacy acquisition.



## FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

# Lessons in Literacy from Mexico Could Aid U.S. Schools

*Christopher Harris, Communication Specialist*  
Robert Jimenez, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, and an AT&T Faculty Fellow, was named a Fulbright Scholar in the fall. Jimenez, one of only three recipients from the University of Illinois, earned the award for his proposal to study literacy acquisition in Mexican culture. The project began in January with his move to Mexico where he is conducting field research and teaching at the University of the Americas.

Jimenez, who has worked extensively in the area of literacy acquisition in Latina/o populations, is studying how Mexican elementary students learn to read, write and speak Spanish in a society where it is the primary language. He believes cultural influences and philosophies on developing literacy skills play a significant role in student learning.

In particular, Jimenez is looking at four classes in two different schools near the town of Cholula, trying to understand the uses of literacy, and the ways of thinking about it in the two schools. He hopes the study will lead to new ways of teaching Mexican students in the United States.

"I think this work has the potential to inform U.S. educators and researchers of the important differences, as well as similarities across the two contexts," Jimenez said.

Latina/o populations in U.S. schools are growing quickly and studies continue to show that these groups are lagging behind their classmates in academic performance. Jimenez believes that a key to improving this might be found in examining differences in learning and teaching across cultures. If, in fact, these differences are found and understood, it would allow educators to develop methods and curricula that would better fit learning styles of these populations and improve performance.

Fulbright grants are intended to provide noted scholars and professionals the opportunity to lecture, teach and conduct research abroad and to foster international scholarship and cooperation. The U.S. Department of State is the major sponsor of the program with funding decisions made by the Presidentially-appointed J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Jimenez is on sabbatical leave completing his data collection and working with his University of the Americas graduate students and faculty peers to provide a preliminary report on their findings. He returns to the Urbana campus later this summer.



Jimenez (far left) at the entrance to one of the Mexican schools where he is collecting data.

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# On-Line Mentoring: College Program Working to Help Beginning Teachers Become Career Teachers

*Cari Klecka, E-mentoring Coordinator*

Of the 6,500 new teachers entering Illinois schools this fall, nearly half of them will have left the field of education within five years. With crisis-level teacher shortages threatening programs across the state, retention of new teachers is a major issue. The Novice Teacher Support Project (NTSP), centered at the College of Education, aims to take a bite out of this huge attrition rate.

Mentoring is frequently mentioned as an important component of the support new teachers need as they enter the demanding profession. In large schools or school districts, mentors may be matched with novice teachers based on their knowledge and expertise in content area or grade level instruction. In smaller schools and districts, particularly in rural districts, matching is difficult, if not impossible.

The NTSP has begun to address the challenge posed by providing mentors for teachers in smaller districts by creating an on-line learning community in which new teachers are able to "talk" with experienced teachers around the state. In Fall 2000, College of Education and other University of Illinois alumni agreed to participate in what was, at that time, a novel experiment in on-line communication.

This year, over 40 mentors and nearly 100 new teachers have developed a series of useful, and even exciting, conferences that allow both new and experienced teachers to discuss classroom experiences, ask questions, share resources, and reflect on their practice within password-protected electronic conferences (e-conferences) on the Novice Teacher Support Project website ([ntsp.ed.uiuc.edu](http://ntsp.ed.uiuc.edu)).

The NTSP, now in its fifth year of providing professional development and support for beginning teachers in East Central Illinois, is a partnership among the University of Illinois, the regional offices of education in Champaign, Ford, Macon, Piatt, and Vermilion counties, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Illinois Education Association and over 40 school districts. The NTSP serves first, second, and third year teachers in the five county region in East Central Illinois.

If you are interested in learning more about the NTSP E-Mentoring project, please contact Cari Klecka, E-mentoring Coordinator, at [klecka@uiuc.edu](mailto:klecka@uiuc.edu), Renee Clift, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, at [r-clift@uiuc.edu](mailto:r-clift@uiuc.edu), or Jane Quinlan, Director of ROE Schoolworks in Champaign-Ford and Vermilion counties at



NTSP participants: Leslie Denny, Clela Terhark, Sue Smith, and Tina Steidl meet and discuss the NTSP program.



Nick Dalrymple, Pat Brown, Kathleen Smith, and Brenda Bowen serve as electronic mentors for new teachers.

The **point** of Learning is published twice a year for alumni and friends of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Education.

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*The NTSP would like to individually recognize those electronic mentors (e-mentors) who have contributed to the project through their participation and by providing their invaluable feedback.*

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Sue Volk  
Donna Zvonar

# Welcome

The College of Education is pleased to introduce you to a few of our new faculty members who joined the ranks in the 2001-2002 academic year. In the next newsletter we will introduce even more new faces that have joined the College this year. For a complete list of faculty members and their research initiatives, please visit: <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/facstaff/>.



## Curriculum & Instruction

**Eurydice Bauer**, Assistant Professor Ph.D., Curriculum & Instruction, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1996; M.A., Education, University of Iowa, 1990; B.S., Education, University of Iowa, 1986. Professor Bauer's research interests concentrate on pre-service teacher education, bi-literacy development, and alternative assessment. Her teacher education research focuses on the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural knowledge needed by teachers who find themselves in multicultural classrooms.



## Educational Organization and Leadership

**Stephen Earl Lucas**, Assistant Professor Ph.D., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2001; M.A., Educational Administration and Supervision, California State University, Fresno, 1998; B.A., Speech Communication, Point Loma Nazarene College, 1984. Dr. Lucas' current research interests lie in collaborative, administrator-teacher school site leadership, transformational leadership for systemic school improvement, and the middle school principalship.



## Educational Policy Studies

**Louis Mirón**, Professor Ph.D., Politics and Policy in Education, Tulane University, 1986; M.A., Secondary Education, Louisiana State University, 1981; B.A., English Literature, Tulane University, 1972. Professor Mirón is an outstanding senior scholar who has done work on the politics of education, urban school reform, multicultural education, Chicano/Latino Studies, educational inequality, critical race theory, school reform, and issues of race and identity in schooling. He is one of the nation's leading scholars in the application of

interpretive and postmodern theory to educational issues and a powerful national voice on urban schooling, educational policy and interpretive theory.



## Educational Psychology

**Lydia Buki**, Assistant Professor Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, Arizona State University, 1995; M.A., Psychology, California State University, Sacramento, 1992; B.S., Accounting, Golden Gate University, 1986. Dr. Buki's research has included a community-based cancer control project funded by the Center for Disease Control to increase the rate of early screenings for cancer in midlife and older Latinas. She has also examined the strengths and needs of Mexican and American grandparents, collaborated in quantitative and qualitative studies addressing values and sexism in the field of psychology, and assisted in the implementation and evaluation of a pilot rehabilitative program for inmates at a state prison.



## Human Resource Education

**Angela Benson**, Assistant Professor Ph.D., Instructional Technology, The University of Georgia, 2001; M.S., Human Resource Development, Georgia State University, 1997; M.S., Operations Research, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1984; B.S., Mathematics, Spelman College, 1982; B.S., Industrial Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1982. Professor Benson's research interests are distance learning, instructional design, technology integration, and educational change.



## Special Education

**Stacy Dymond**, Assistant Professor Ph.D., Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2000; M.Ed., Special Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1990; B.S., Special Education, State University of New York at Geneseo, 1986. In her research, Dr. Dymond has served as coordinator co-principal investigator for a state-wide cooperative teacher licensure program in severe disabilities among five universities in Virginia. She also has been co-principal investigator for a study requested by the Virginia General Assembly to determine services available to students with autism and pervasive developmental disorders.

## Shirley Fryer, the Voice and Face of EOL Retires

*Chris Harris, Communication Specialist*

"I came here with the building," says Shirley Fryer, staff secretary in the Educational Organization and Leadership Department (EOL). Then she corrects it, "Actually, I came here before the building." About six years before the building, actually, in 1958. Now, 30 years of "active duty" later, (she doesn't count the 14 years she left to raise a family and only worked part time) Fryer is retiring at the end of May.

Staff secretary doesn't really do justice to her responsibilities over the years. By all accounts, heart of the department might be a better description. She is a vocal and eloquent fan of the College, her department, her faculty and her students. Her departure really is the end of an era, and the loss of a walking history of the College.

"She has just an incredible knowledge of this place, of the department and the College," says Richard Hunter, EOL department head. "She is just so well-respected by our students and our faculty. You just can't replace someone like Shirley."

And, students, past and present agree. Sue Knight (Ed.D. 1994), the Superintendent of Giles and Leigh Public Schools in Norridge, Illinois, recalls Shirley as the first person she met in the department and, as she went through the program, as the person to turn to for just about anything. "She just really did know it all."

If 30 years in the same College seems unusual, in Fryer's case it seems like it was predetermined. Her first apartment after her marriage was at 51 Armory. It was an apartment she had to leave when the University bought the building to house the College of Education. "I was evicted by the College," she jokes. Now she's retiring from it. Obviously, Fryer isn't one to hold grudges.

In fact, far from it. Her retirement plans are still a bit unclear. "I have so much to finish, I'm not sure I can get it all done before I leave. I expect I'll have to come back for a while to wrap it all up."

And, even beyond that service, Fryer says she will be available when the department needs her.

"I told them, I'm just ten minutes and a phone call away."

"We're going to try not to bother her too much," says Hunter.

Then, a moment later, he adds, "But I know we're going to call her."



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### AUGUST

Monday, August 26, 2002

#### **Illini First Night**

Memorial Stadium

6:00 - 7:00 PM

### SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, September 4, 2002

#### **Welcome Back Reception**

College of Education Lobby

2:00 - 4:00 PM

Thursday, September 26 - Saturday, September 28, 2002

#### **University of Illinois Foundation**

#### **Fall Gathering**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### OCTOBER

Saturday, October 26, 2002

#### **Homecoming Football Game**

#### **Pre-Game Reception**

#### ***Illinois vs. Indiana***

College of Education Courtyard

2 hours before kickoff

Saturday, October 26, 2002

#### **Reunion Weekend**

#### **Class of 1952**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Alumni Association

### NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 2, 2002

#### **Education Alumni Association**

#### **Fall Meeting**

College of Education

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Saturday, November 9, 2002

#### **Student Recognition Banquet**

Hawthorne Suites Conference Center

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



*If you would like more information about any of these events, please email us at [ed-alumni@uiuc.edu](mailto:ed-alumni@uiuc.edu) or call us at (217) 244-7228.*