PROFESSOR TOBIN WHITE
TO DELIVER JAN HAWKINS
ADDRESS
As the 2012 recipient of the American Educational Research Association’s 2012 Jan Hawkins Award for Early Career Contributions to Humanistic Research & Scholarship in Learning Technologies, associate professor Tobin White is giving this year’s Jan Hawkins address at AERA’s Annual Meeting in San Francisco. White will deliver his talk “Tensions and Dilemmas in Design-Based Research” on Sunday, April 28 (see schedule on p. 4 for details).

PROFESSOR PETER MUNDY TO SERVE AS ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR AUTISM RESEARCH
Professor Peter Mundy will begin a five-year term as associate editor for Autism Research, published by John Wiley & Sons, beginning in June 2013. Autism Research is the official journal of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR). For more information on the journal, visit: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com

UC Davis School of Education Professors Unveil Review of Research in Education (2013)

In April, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) released the 2013 volume of Review of Research in Education (RRE), co-edited by UC Davis School of Education professors Christian Faltis and Jamal Abedi. The volume, titled “Extraordinary Pedagogies for Working Within School Settings Serving Nondominant Students,” includes 10 informative chapters covering a broad array of sociocultural issues.

“Extraordinary pedagogies are not about ‘best practices’ or what might be the most effective method for teaching to the students’ learning needs,” explain Abedi and Faltis in the introduction. “In this volume, extraordinary pedagogies encompass larger sociocultural issues, bringing attention to how poverty, race, social class, and language interact with local practices in teaching and learning, and in the everyday lives of families, educators, children, and youth.”

School of Education associate professor Gloria Rodriguez wrote a chapter, “Power and Agency in Education: Exploring the Pedagogical Dimensions of Funds of Knowledge,” which begins by acknowledging “the racial/ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences that continue to exist between student populations and teachers in many educational settings. [These] produce an imperative to create teaching-and-learning environments that are characterized by mutual understanding among students and educators.”

A session at the 2013 AERA Annual Meeting (on Sunday, April 28) will examine the new volume and will feature comments by the editors.
Educators are always on the lookout for ways to engage students, particularly those who are more likely to drop out or be pushed out of school. For Angela Booker, assistant professor of education, the key is finding ways to forge meaningful relationships between and among students and adults in and out of school.

In a study Booker will present at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, the researcher explored how students used digital media during a summer program intended to help students move into middle school and high school, particularly vulnerable transitions for students who may be struggling academically and socially in school.

Her investigation, conducted in partnership with bel Reyes and Kindra Montgomery-Block of the UC Davis School of Education’s CRESS Center, narrowed in on the way that young people used digital media to develop connections among their peers and the adults in the program to engage in making changes in their community.

Booker’s study draws on a three-year data set that examined when and how young people worked alongside teachers, afterschool providers, and community partners to address a community concern. More than 170 youth participated in producing one of three kinds of media projects: 1) public service announcements, 2) dramatic videos, or 3) walk audits resulting in photo-based presentations. All were intended to draw attention to opportunities for local change.

“Engaging in social justice projects can help students figure out how to develop relationships and work collaboratively with peers and adults to make change,” said Booker. “Over time, they can develop a sense of collective agency to act on the things they know and to move toward the things they value.”

More importantly, Booker argues, when students begin to feel “ownership and adult respect for their knowledge and insights, doors open to who they are, and the adults in their lives begin to reveal themselves as well.” It’s this sense of shared purpose and trust that can open the doors to learning for students who are often overlooked by the formal education system.

Booker’s findings reveal that youth participants recognized they could participate in community change and “make a difference,” but most didn’t see possible connections to their coursework. Adult staff, on the other hand, “were really conscious of how what developed over the summer could be translated into the school year,” said Booker. “Teachers said summer program participants were more willing to share, provide their points of view, and ask questions—all essential practices for learning.”

Booker and PhD student Yanira Madrigal-Garcia will present “Youth Forging School and Community Connections: Three Forms of Media Production to Generate New Access” on Sunday, April 28.
Making School a Reality in Bangladesh
A LARGE-SCALE EVALUATION OF A NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

School is a fact of life for virtually every child in America, but in the world’s poorest countries, school is not a given.

For instance, nearly two million children in Bangladesh lack access to a formal classroom, so the government relies on international development organizations and corporate partners to provide nonformal education to their most marginalized citizens. But does this approach work?

Kevin Gee, assistant professor of education, recently conducted the first large-scale evaluation of one such program in Bangladesh to find out. (Gee partnered with Dr. Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Former Vice-Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University; Elizabeth Pearce, Education Director, Bangladesh Country Office, Save the Children; and Talat Mahmud, SHIKHON Program Director, Save the Children.)

Since 2007, Save the Children’s SHIKHON (“learning” in Bengali, the national language of Bangladesh) nonformal education program has reached over 155,000 children, aged 7-14, in 5,180 rural communities across Bangladesh. SHIKHON serves children who are effectively shut out of the formal education system because of gender, ethnicity, disability, or other obstacles such as annual flooding.

What makes this program different from the regular classroom-delivered education is a focus on bringing the school to the children. “In this program, parents and communities play a large role in establishing the school, and the teachers are local women who are trained but not formally certified by the government,” said Gee. “The schedule is accelerated and flexible, and children are not grouped by age.”

But the students do receive a similar curriculum and texts as other children in the country and are evaluated with a similar test. Gee’s task was to assess the SHIKHON students’ performance on the test given at the end of the four-year program.

Gee found that SHIKHON students performed on par with their formally educated peers in Bangladesh and concluded that the program can provide children with the skills to achieve national-level competencies for elementary education.

“Without SHIKHON, these children would not have otherwise attended school at all,” said Gee, who explained that Bangladesh’s “education for all” goal is aligned with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which call for universal primary education by 2015.

“At its core, education is a fundamental human right. This is what motivates my work and drives a lot of what I do,” said Gee, an expert in large-scale evaluations of education policies and programs and the role of school-based health policies on children’s health and educational outcomes.

Gee will present “Improving Educational Attainment for Marginalized Children in Rural Bangladesh via Nonformal Education” at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association on Wednesday, May 1.
SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Carrie Strohl
“Mitigating Barriers to Disciplinary Literacy in Space Science for Students With Learning Disabilities.” (Division C: Learning and Instruction/Section 1d: Science) – Parc 55/Cyril Magnin Foyer

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Yuuko Uchikoshi
“Transfer Across Writing Systems: The Role of Chinese Word Reading in Predicting English Reading Comprehension.” (Division C: Learning and Instruction/Section 1a: Literacy) – Hilton Union Square/Tower 3 Union Square 21

Matt Wallace
“Exploring Assessment Reform: Preservice Teachers’ Experiences with and Views of Assessment in Mathematics Teacher Education.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 5: Preservice Teacher Education Coursework) – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom B

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

10:35 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
Angela Booker & Yanira Madrigal-Garcia

Rosa Gomez Camacho
“Revisiting Theories of Parental Investment in Children’s Human Capital.” (Division G: Special Context of Education/Section 5: Context of Research on Schools and Communities) – Parc 55/Cyril Magnin I

Lisceth Cruz

Yanira Madrigal-Garcia
“Navigating Street Violence to Reach Educational Goals: Listening to the Voices of Latina Youth from Oakland, California.” (Division G: Social Context of Education/Section 5: Social Context of Research on Schools and Communities) – Parc 55/Cyril Magnin I

Rosa Manzo

Tobin White
“Tensions and Dilemmas in Design-Based Research.” (Jan Hawkins Award Address) – Westin St. Francis/California East

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Jamal Abedi (Chair)
“Poverty and Student Academic Performance: A Focus on Dropouts, Assessment and Policies.” (Invited Session) – Hilton Union Square/Continental 9

Joanne Bookmyer
“Leading a Teacher-Driven Professional Development Program.” (SIG: Teacher as Researcher) – Hilton Union Square/Tower 3 Mason

Jamal Abedi & Christian Faltis
“Review of Research in Education: Meet the Journal Editors” – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom A
3:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Vajra Watson

4:05 p.m. – 5:35 p.m.

Lee Martin, Tobin White, Angelica Cortes & WenYen Huang

Julie Orosco & Rebecca Ambrose
“Using Self-Selected Video in Teacher Professional Development to Encourage Productive Discussion.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 8: Teacher Professional Development: Impact on Teacher Practices and Student Learning) – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom B

Cynthia Passmore, Julia Svoboda Gouvea & Rich Hedman
“Modeling as an Organizing Practice for Science Education: From Professional Development to the Classroom.” (Division C: Learning and Instruction/Section 1d: Science) – Westin St. Francis/Yorkshire

MONDAY, APRIL 29
8:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Peter Mundy, Frances Holmes, Mary Gwaltney, Nancy McIntyre & Lindsay Swain

2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Shannon Marie Pella

TUESDAY, APRIL 30
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

“Examining How Teachers’ Understanding of Models Interacts With Their Beliefs and Intentions About Teaching Science.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 8: Teacher Professional Development: Impact on Teacher Practices and Student Learning) – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom B

Shannon Marie Pella
“Shifting the Paradigm for Professional Learning: Toward Participatory Teacher Professional Development Models.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 8: Teacher Professional Development) – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom B

Juliet Wahleithner
“Examining How Knowledge of Writing Instruction Impacts Teachers’ Abilities to Negotiate Policy.” (SIG: Writing and Literacies) – Sir Francis Drake/Empire
TUESDAY, APRIL 30

10:20 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Steven Athanases, Lisa Bennett & Juliet Wahleithner

“Teachers’ Evolving Conceptions of the Relationship Between Teaching and Teacher Inquiry.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 6: Field Experiences) – Parc 55/Cyril Magnin Foyer

Kerry Anne Enright & Joanna Wong

“Local Literacies and New Mainstream Tensions in English Language Arts.” (Division G: Social Context of Education/Section 2: Education in Multicultural Contexts Within and Across Subject Areas) – Westin St. Francis/Kent

Christian Faltis

“Teacher Education Quarterly: Meet the Editors.” – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom A

Laura Myers & Katherina Sibbald

“Tracking Content Literacy and Knowledge Across the Curriculum.” (Division G: Social Context of Education/Section 2: Education in Multicultural Contexts Within and Across Subject Areas) – Westin St. Francis/Kent

Daniella Torres-Torretti, Marguerite Wilson & Orlando Carreón

“Metaphors We Learn By: Student Participation and Literacy Practices in New Mainstream Mathematics Classrooms.” (Division G: Social Context of Education/Section 2: Education in Multicultural Contexts Within and Across Subject Areas) – Westin St. Francis/Kent

12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Jamal Abedi


2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Steven Athanases

“Mapping the Interface of Multiple Knowledge Sources in Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge.” (Division D: Measurement and Research Methodology/Section 3: Qualitative Research Methods) – Sir Francis Drake/Empire

Heidi Ballard

“Student Learning About Water as a Complex Environmental System and the Role of Place.” (SIG: Systems Thinking in Education) – Sir Francis Drake/Empire

Nicole Blalock

“Understanding the Impact of Context in Schools: Analysis of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Mathematics Achievement.” (Division B: Curriculum Studies/Section 1: Critical and Post-Foundationalist Perspectives and Practices) – Sir Francis Drake/Empire

5:05 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.

Amy Huang & Rebecca Ambrose

“Developing Multiplicative Thinking: Rectangular Arrays and Task-Solving in a Computer Environment.” (Division C: Learning and Instruction/Section 1c: Mathematics) – Hilton Union Square/Imperial Ballroom A

5:05 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.

Heidi Ballard & Anne Stephens

“Developing Environmental Literacy in a California Partnership Academy Model.” (SIG: Environmental Education) – Hilton Union Square/Tower 3 Sutter

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

8:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Steven Athanases, Juliet Wahleithner & Lisa Bennett

“Learning about English Learners’ Content Understandings through Teacher Inquiry: Focus on Writing.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 5: Preservice Teacher Education Coursework) – Parc 55/ Cyril Magnin Foyer

Kevin Gee

“Improving Educational Achievement for Marginalized Children in Rural Bangladesh via Non-Formal Education.” (Unit: International Relations Committee) – Hilton Union Square/Tower 3 Taylor

10:35 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

Steven Athanases

“Expanding Opportunities to Learn and Teach in School-Sponsored Activities Beyond the Classroom: Resources and Possibilities”; “Permeable Boundaries for Expanding Opportunities to Learn in Classrooms at an Urban High School”; and “Relationships Between School Organization and Settings for Teaching and Learning for Latina/o Student Success.” (Division A: Administration, Organization and Leadership/Section 2: School Organization and Effects) – Hilton Union Square/Yosemite B

12:25 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.

Angela Booker

“Ethical Commitments in Research with Youth in Community and School Contexts.” (SIG: Action Research) – Hilton Union Square/Tower 3 Taylor

George Sellu & Irina Okhrentchouk

“Teacher Readiness to Work With English Language Learners: Arizona Context.” (Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education/Section 9: Teacher Education Program Design and Innovations) – Hilton Union Square/Continental 3
Jamal Abedi, professor of education, is co-editor of AERA's Review of Research in Education, Vol. 37. Specializing in educational and psychological assessments, Abedi's research focuses on testing for English learners and issues concerning the technical characteristics and interpretations of these assessments. Abedi is the author of many publications in the assessment of and accommodations for English learners and serves on advisory committees for several major assessment organizations. He advises a number of states on testing for English learners and children with disabilities.

Rebecca Ambrose, associate professor of education, researches how children solve mathematics problems and works with teachers to apply what she has learned about the informal strategies children employ to differentiate and improve instruction in math.

Steven Athanases, professor of education, serves on the editorial board of AERA's Educational Researcher and is being recognized by AERA for the second year in a row as an Outstanding Reviewer. He researches issues of cultural and linguistic diversity and educational equity in teaching, adolescent learning, and teacher education, with a focus on literacy and English language arts.

Heidi Ballard, assistant professor of education, studies environmental education that links communities, science, environmental action, and learners of all ages. Ballard is particularly interested in what and how people learn through public participation in scientific research (PPSR) as a form of informal science education.

Arthur Beauchamp, director of the Sacramento Area Science Project, is an expert in the use of model-based reasoning in the teaching and learning of science. He is co-author of Success in Science through Dialogue, Reading and Writing and serves on California's review committee for the Next Generation Science Standards.

Angela Booker, assistant professor of education, studies youth civic participation, problem-solving across contexts (family, school, and community), and design thinking as a way to support learning. She is currently studying ways youth, families, and schools make use of media and technology for participation, learning, problem-solving and political development.

Joanne Bookmyer, director of collaborative projects in the School of Education's CRESS Center, is an expert on teacher-driven school reform and professional development.

Cynthia Carter Ching, associate professor of education, conducts research on learning technologies, designing innovative technology-rich curriculum and learning environments in schools, and providing how-to technology professional development online and face-to-face for K-12 teachers. She is the UC Davis School of Education's director of Undergraduate Programs.

Kerry Anne Enright, associate professor of education, researches the relationship between everyday uses of English and academic literacy. Her work focuses on how adolescents, both monolingual and bilingual, navigate various academic and social activities to increase their participation in the classroom and improve their language and literacy skills.

Christian Faltis, Dolly and David Fiddyment Chair in Teacher Education, is co-editor of AERA’s Review of Research in Education, Vol. 37. Faltis has a range of expertise in teacher education, particularly preparing teachers to work in classrooms and schools where immigrant children and adolescents are becoming bilingual, adding English to their language and learning experiences. Faltis is the director of Teacher Education in the UC Davis School of Education and editor of Teacher Education Quarterly.

Kevin Gee, assistant professor of education, researches the impact that school-based health policies have on children’s health and educational outcomes, he examines this issue globally, particularly within developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, as well as domestically in the United States. Gee also has expertise in conducting large-scale evaluations of education policies and programs using experimental and quasi-experimental designs.
Harold G. Levine is dean of the UC Davis School of Education. Levine’s research interests and publications focus on the study of a wide range of organizations and cultural practices using qualitative, observational methods. The settings for his work include schools, cultures (the Kafe of Papua New Guinea), youth groups and movements, mother-child dyads, corporations, manufacturing “shop floors,” and small businesses. In all of his work he has examined how individual action and decision-making both impact, and are constitutive of, cultural practices. Levine’s most current interests are in the area of education policy.

Lee Martin, assistant professor of mathematics education, studies people’s efforts to enhance their own learning environments, with a particular focus on mathematical thinking and learning. In everyday settings, he looks at the varied ways in which people assemble social, material, and intellectual resources for problem-solving and learning. In school settings, he looks to find ways in which schools might better prepare students to be more resourceful and flexible in fostering their own learning.

Al Mendle, lecturer/supervisor in the School’s elementary teacher credential/MA program, is an expert in in-service and preservice teacher learning, elementary and mathematics education.

Barbara Merino, professor of education, is an expert in language assessment and acquisition in bilinguals; bilingual and second language education; Latina/o education issues; literacy development through science; teacher action research; and teacher development and performance assessment.

Peter Mundy, professor in the School of Education and the School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, is an expert in education and social issues for children with high-functioning autism. A developmental and clinical psychologist, Mundy has been working on defining the nature of autism for nearly 30 years. He is associate editor of Autism Research.

Julie Orosco is the co-director of the UC Davis Mathematics Project and a PhD student in mathematics education. Her research is focused on the opportunities that students, especially English learners, have to engage in mathematical conversation and how they engage in those opportunities. She is also interested in helping teachers implement changes in practice through professional development.

Cynthia Passmore, associate professor of education, is an expert in K-12 science education with a particular focus on designing learning environments that provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic scientific reasoning. Her research examines student learning in classrooms designed around data-rich investigations that allow students to develop, revise, or apply scientific models. Additionally, she researches the design and implementation of teacher professional development. Passmore serves on California’s review committee for the Next Generation Science Standards.

Richard J. Pomeroy, lecturer/supervisor in the School’s science teacher credential program, is an expert in in-service and preservice teacher learning; interdisciplinary instruction; science education; secondary education; and technology in teaching and learning. He serves on California’s review committee for the Next Generation Science Standards.

Wendell Potter, senior lecturer in the Department of Physics, is a member of the Graduate Group in Education. His research focuses on physics/physical science learning at all levels, constructivist approaches to curriculum design and classroom practice, teacher preparation and professional development.

Gloria Rodriguez, associate professor of education, studies school finance/resource allocation and educational leadership from a critical, social justice perspective. Her research focuses on understanding notions of educational investment that reflect efforts to build upon community strengths in order to address community needs within and beyond educational settings. She also studies the educational conditions and trajectories of Chicana/o-Latina/o communities, other communities of color, and low-income populations in the U.S.

Julia Svoboda Gouvea, project scientist for the School’s Innovations in Science Instruction through Modeling (ISIM), earned her PhD in science education from UC Davis.

Yuuko Uchikoshi, associate professor of education, leads a research program that focuses on the language and literacy development of English learners. Uchikoshi’s research examines the literacy development of children in both their native and second languages. Uchikoshi is also interested in the use of media, including educational television, on literacy development.
Lisa Bennett is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Nicole Blalock-Moore is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Rosa Gomez Camacho is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Orlando Carreon is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Angelica Cortes is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in mathematics education.

Lisceth Cruz is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Yanira Madrigal-Garcia is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Maria-Cecilia Gomez recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Mary Gwaltney recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in learning and mind sciences.

Rich Hedman recently earned his MA in education. He is co-director of the Sacramento Area Science Project.

Frances K. Holmes is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Amy Huang is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in mathematics education.

WenYen Huang is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in mathematics education.

Arash Jamshidi is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in science education.

Rosa Manzo is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Nancy McIntyre is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in learning and mind sciences.

Laura Myers is a PhD student in Education, with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Mong Thi Nguyen recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Irina Okhremtchouk recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy and is an assistant professor of education at Arizona State University.

Shannon Pella recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

George Sellu is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in agricultural education.

Katherine Sibbald is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Anne Stephens is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in science education.

Shonte Stephenson recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in school organization and education policy.

Carrie Strohl is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Lindsay Swain is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in learning and mind sciences.

Daniella Torres-Torretti is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture.

Juliet Wahleithner is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture and a designated emphasis in writing.

Marguerite Wilson recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in language, literacy and culture. She is assistant professor of education at Binghamton University – SUNY.

Joanna Wong is a PhD student in education with an emphasis in language, literacy, and culture with designated emphases in second language acquisition and writing, rhetoric, and composition studies.

Lin Xiang recently earned her PhD in education with an emphasis in science education.

Matt Wallace, lecturer/supervisor in the School’s mathematics teacher credential program, researches how preservice math teachers in reformed-minded programs learn and deal with the challenges of teaching in a system which still values traditional teaching and assessment methods.

Vajra M. Watson is director of research and policy for equity in the School’s CRESS Center. Watson’s research focuses on holistic reform efforts for chronically under-performing schools in rural, suburban, and urban communities. Watson also founded and manages Sacramento Area Youth Speaks and the annual Equity Summit at UC Davis.

Tobin White, associate professor of education, is the recipient of the AERA’s 2012 Jan Hawkins Award for Early Career Contributions to Humanistic Research and Scholarship in Learning Technologies. White is an expert in the use of technology in teaching and learning and mathematics education. His current research investigates how collaborative problem-solving among students using portable devices can increase learning in algebra.
Parents Are Key to Latinos’ Path to College

Like most immigrant parents, Latino parents’ top priority is to provide their children with the opportunity for a better life, including the chance to attend college. But language barriers and a lack of knowledge about how to pay for college too often get in the way of Latinos realizing their dreams, according to Lisceth Cruz, a PhD candidate in the School of Education.

“Given the strong familial ties of Latino communities, parental engagement is central to understanding and addressing the disparities in educational attainment among Latinos,” said Cruz.

Cruz has focused her research on the ways Latino parents participate in the last two years of high school and the first two years in college – an important transition period, especially for first-generation college students. Four findings guide her understanding of the challenges facing Latino students and her recommendations for reaching out more effectively to their parents.

First, Cruz finds that networks are a key source of information and support. “Families deliberately extend themselves to include people who have experience with college,” as a way to gather information, she explains.

Another key finding is that parents often feel the need to rely on one person at their child’s school who will provide reliable information. “It can be a custodian, it just needs to be someone they are comfortable going to.” The role of siblings is also key. Once the eldest sibling has gone through the process, it becomes easier to go through the process again. “Knowledge accumulates,” Cruz said.

Perhaps the greatest barrier is a lack of financial literacy and knowledge about how much college costs and how to pay for it. Cruz cites several obstacles to parents’ understanding, from poor translations to basic differences in the way college works in their home countries versus the United States.

“In most of the parents’ home countries, college is free,” said Cruz. “There is no such thing as tuition, and high school is set up for college prep or technical training, so the path is clear.” In addition, not all immigrants read their native language, and those who do often struggle with the non-vernacular Spanish used in many translations coming from schools.

“We have to be really savvy about how we work with families if we are to increase the opportunity for more Latinos to pursue a college education,” said Cruz.

Cruz will present “From High School to College: Documenting Parental Engagement of First-Generation Latino College Students” at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association on Sunday, April 28.

Writing Instruction in the Age of Accountability

Most educators agree that writing is an essential skill for student success in school and in the pursuit of college and career. So the stakes are high for writing teachers. Unfortunately, often a lack of preparation and suffocatingly narrow policies of what and how to teach writing hamstring English teachers’ ability to prepare their students to master this critical skill, according to Juliet Wahleithner, a PhD student in the School of Education.

Wahleithner, whose expertise is in the teaching of writing and preservice teacher preparation, will present a study that took a deep look at two writing teachers and the strategies they used to navigate a system and set of policies to teach writing to their students.

“Teaching writing requires complex knowledge beyond knowing how to write,” said Wahleithner. But preservice English teachers are not required to take a specific course on writing instruction. Combine that lack of training with the pressure teachers feel, particularly at low-performing schools, to ensure their students score well on standardized tests, and Wahleithner found that a lot of teachers may be at a loss.

Compounding the lack of preparation is a reliance on standardized curricula aligned to high stakes assessments. According to Wahleithner, in all grades except fourth, seventh, and tenth, writing is assessed through multiple-choice items. Under pressure to raise test scores, many teachers focus on preparing them to pass the test rather than actual writing.

“Most teachers know they aren’t getting their students to write well, but they often don’t have the tools or strategies to get them to the next level,” said Wahleithner. In her
Most educators recognize the ubiquity of mobile devices in the lives of their students and too often see them only as competition to learning in the classroom. Two researchers at the UC Davis School of Education are exploring another possibility: that mobile devices have the potential to bridge formal and informal learning, particularly in mathematics, and can be leveraged to increase student engagement in learning math.

Lee Martin, assistant professor of education, and Tobin White, associate professor of education, will present their work on Sunday, April 28, at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in a talk titled “Integrating Mobile and Mathematical Practices Across Contexts.”

“We recognize a growing divide between the opportunities for active learning provided by digital technologies and the inflexible and standardized practices of schooling,” said White. “This gap robs students of opportunities for learning both at home and in school.”

Their study put loaned iPods in the hands of 19 students (grades 6-11) for two weeks. Students used Week 1 to familiarize themselves with the devices and to learn to apply a framework of four mobile practices the researchers provided:

- Capturing and collecting (e.g., taking photos and video)
- Communicating and collaborating (e.g., phone, email, messaging)
- Viewing, consuming, and analyzing (various media)
- Representing and creating (e.g., edited videos, slideshows)

In Week 2, small groups conducted empirical mathematical investigations, collecting data on a question of interest (e.g., surveying peers or conducting online research), sharing interim results, graphing data, and presenting findings.

“Students come to school with a lot of knowledge, skills and abilities and we need to build on what they already know to get them more engaged in mathematics,” said Martin. “For too many kids, math is merely a system of arbitrary rules with no purpose out of class. We know that it is beneficial to connect math learning with things students care about. We want to know if this approach will help them see math through more informed eyes.”

Martin is quick to point out that this study is small and exploratory but does provide some proof that mobile devices can build bridges in learning between formal learning in school and everyday practices. Martin said the students agreed, indicating that they found the experience “simultaneously fun, meaningful, and mathematical.”

Next, the researchers will conduct a longer study with a larger group.

comparison of two teachers from the same district, she found that the teacher who lacked training in how to teach writing too often focused on superficial issues, such as punctuation and grammar or whether the student has a good topic sentence.

But the researcher did find a teacher who figured out how to meet narrow district curriculum and testing requirements while also assessing students’ individual needs and adjusting her teaching to meet those needs. Because she had taken professional development workshops that prepared her with tools to teach writing, “she was able to use her knowledge of writing instruction to negotiate district policies while still instructing students in a way that met her professional standards,” said Wahleithner.

Wahleithner presents “Examining How Knowledge of Writing Instruction Impacts Teachers’ Abilities to Negotiate Policy” on Tuesday, April 30, at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

“Teaching writing requires complex knowledge beyond knowing how to write. But preservice English teachers are not required to take a specific course on writing instruction.”

– Juliet Wahleithner
School Researcher to Lead Visit to Local High School During AERA Annual Meeting

Vajra Watson, director of research and policy for equity in the School of Education’s CRESS Center, will lead an off-site field visit to Mission High School in San Francisco on Sunday, April 28. Watson, who is the AERA program chair for the Special Interest Group “Grassroots Community & Youth Organizing for Education Reform,” will be joined by colleagues Shawn Ginwright (San Francisco State University) and John Rogers (UCLA). Noting that Mission High School is the oldest comprehensive high school in San Francisco, Watson explained that the visit focuses on “building bridges between theory and practice, researchers and organizers, communities and schools.” The visit is open to all conference attendees and requires participants to register. Contact Watson at vmwatson@ucdavis.edu or Ginwright at shawng@sfsu.edu. See p. 5 for details.

Vajra Watson

The UC Davis School of Education is proud to celebrate its tenth anniversary.

For information on the School’s history and upcoming events and to learn more about how to contribute to our Power of 10 Scholarship Fund, visit: http://education.ucdavis.edu/power-10.