New Study Examines Learning Outcomes of the Bank Street Teacher Preparation Model

As the debate surrounding teacher preparation continues to pick up steam, the question remains: how do we best develop the high-quality teachers children deserve? A recently released study by the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) sheds light on one highly effective approach: the teacher preparation model here at the Bank Street Graduate School of Education.

Commissioned by Bank Street to determine the impact of its teacher education program, SCOPE’s "Teaching for a Changing World: The Graduates of Bank Street College of Education" study examines the quality of the Graduate School’s teacher preparation, the instructional practices of program graduates, and the influence graduates have on their students’ learning. Findings take a closer look at how the College’s developmental-interaction approach blends mandatory fieldwork, advisement, and coursework to connect theory and practice to deepen the learning outcomes of graduates and, in turn, the students they teach in real-world settings.

"At Bank Street, we help students develop the skills necessary to create rich, challenging learning environments that inspire a lifelong love of learning," said Cecelia Traugh, Dean, Bank Street Graduate School of Education. "Through this study, we are pleased to see concrete evidence that our master's level

Online Child Life Program Expands Developmental-Interaction Approach

By Genevieve Lowry

To teach at Bank Street is to live the credo of Lucy Sprague Mitchell—to teach and practice in a way that exemplifies a zest for life, to be a life learner with the flexibility to relinquish patterns that no longer fit, and to work unafraid in the face of new needs, new problems, and new ideas. These are just a few of the points considered when we were approached by the administration to create a fully online Child Life program.

Initial reactions were of fear and trepidation and we were full of questions. Faculty wondered about constructing an interactive, hands-on community in an environment where no one would be in the same room at the same time. We began with an examination and dissection of the science of teaching, taking a hard look at the methods by asking, "What is it that we want our students to experience and know about this work?” and, more importantly, “How will we know if they have the knowledge and expertise to engage in this delicate practice with vulnerable populations?”

We quickly realized we could not “cut and paste” the face-to-face curriculum and syllabus into an online format. Instead, we took a careful look at the course goals, learning outcomes, and individual student learning styles to shape our content, presentation format, and choice of
The new Bank Street Occasional Paper Series #35, titled “Progressive Practices in Public Schools,” launched today to provide educators with a closer look at progressive programs and pedagogy that are too often hidden from view.

The series contains nine papers examining how teachers and administrators are modeling rich and compelling alternatives to what many reformers offer within the constraints of the contemporary moment and takes a deep dive into several progressive practices currently at play in k-12 settings.

Co-editors Jonathan Silin, GSE ’70, and Meredith Moore, GSE ’06, share their thoughts on how the latest issue came together and the ways in which the papers can help inspire a dialogue among educators about how to better meet the needs of children in public education settings:

Q: How did you decide the time was right for a series dedicated to progressive practices in public schools?

Silin: We live in a time when intense pressure has been brought to bear on educators at all levels to “fix” a broken system. We wanted to shed light on teachers and programs that have survived and thrived in difficult times for progressive educators. And we wanted to counter the myth that progressive education only works in middle-class, independent schools. Given the growing resistance by parents and teachers towards the increasingly narrow curriculums offered in public schools, we had little doubt that “now is the time” for progressive educators.

Q: What do you hope readers take away from Occasional Paper Series #35 Progressive Practices in Public Schools?

Moore: Some of the practices described in the essays look very different from the typical practices the term “progressive” brings to mind. Through the series, we see that the racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students who fill many schools today need more than a child-centered classroom—they need a curriculum designed to understand where children come from and to affirm students’ and families’ place in the world. While this may require us to critically examine our practices in ways that may be uncomfortable, it is a necessary step in reimagining progressive education in today’s world. The collection also highlights the key role that parents have played in advocating for progressive schools and in fighting against district and state policies that threaten schools’ progressive missions. We hope that readers will recognize the potential of parents as allies in the struggle to reimagine public schools.

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Bank Street Bids Farewell to Dean Wright

At the end of June, the Bank Street community will say goodbye to a beloved colleague and dear friend, Alexis Wright. Alexis will depart Bank Street in a few short weeks after seven years as Dean of Children’s Programs to become Head of School at New City School in St. Louis.

As Dean, Alexis has made a profound and meaningful impact on our community and Bank Street’s work to nurture the cognitive, social, and emotional growth of its students. When he first came to Bank Street, Alexis said that he would become a student himself to acquire the knowledge needed to push the envelope and affect change both at Bank Street and in the wider world of progressive education.

“Alexis has challenged all of us to have articulate conversations about what progressive education looks like today and how we can continue to build on the values set forth by our founders,” said Laura Guarino, Associate Dean of Children’s Programs. “His passion is inspiring and his energy is contagious, and he will truly be missed.”

During his tenure at Bank Street, Alexis’s contributions to Children’s Programs grew to become invaluable. He was a tireless champion for the School for Children endowment, a wildly successful campaign that allowed the school to not only expand, but to admit students who are more racially and economically diverse. This accomplishment not only set the School for Children on strong financial footing, but aligns deeply with the very fabric of Bank Street’s mission by supporting children to be sensitive to and respectful of the diversity in our own community and beyond.

Alexis also led the College’s launch of the Brain-Based Research Team, which was inspired by his own fascination with recent research on brain development and how it impacts education. The team includes School for Children and Graduate School of Education faculty members who engage in professional development around brain-based research and work to infuse new learning into Children’s Programs curriculum and activities. The initiative, which took two years to implement, promotes important collaboration across divisions of the College with different areas of expertise while providing Bank Street with access to data and research that we can use to build on our own progressive model.

The community is truly grateful for Alexis’ dedication in shaping the direction of Children’s Programs. In his work, he has stood out as an (continued on page 6)
Bank Street Awards Dr. Ofelia Garcia with Honorary Doctorate

During the Graduate School of Education commencement ceremony this May, Bank Street awarded Dr. Ofelia Garcia, professor in the doctoral programs of Urban Education and of Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages at CUNY Graduate Center, with a Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, to recognize the tremendous scope of her life’s work with multilingual learners.

Dr. Garcia has spent her career as an educator, researcher, and leader and has demonstrated exceptional community-building skills to strengthen classrooms with emergent bilingual students. Preceding the bestowal of her honorary doctorate, Bank Street hosted a roundtable conversation with Dr. Garcia where members of the Bank Street community had the opportunity to listen to her insights, ideas, and expertise and have a conversation about children’s language learning.

The discussion provoked deep thinking about some of the misconceptions around language development in children and the often-counterproductive methods of teaching used with emergent bilinguals. Dr. Garcia has spent most of her life challenging these misconceptions and digging into productive ways to nurture language development in children. She has championed the use of translanguaging, a dynamic and flexible use of language that allows multilingual students to work with every means of self-expression at their disposal, in any language or blend of languages that feels comfortable to them.

“Dr. Garcia has made dynamic contributions to second language learning,” said Cecelia Traugh, Dean of the Bank Street Graduate School of Education. “Her work on translanguaging has been transformational and, given the landscape of our country, something we all need to consider in our work. She pushes the envelope by exploring the ways in which her work can influence and change teachers, classrooms, and schools.”

Coming from Cuba to New York when she was only 11 years old, Dr. Garcia had the ability to understand what her students were going through. Born from her own experiences was a career dedicated to enhancing a very delicate area of teaching and learning while working to encourage responsive learning environments with educators prepared to nurture children.

The conversation faculty had with Dr. Garcia provided them with the chance to come to terms with their own misconceptions of language learning and hear from an educator who has made remarkable strides within a complex area in the field of education.

Amazon Smile

Bank Street is participating in Amazon Smile, a fast and easy way for online shoppers to support Bank Street without spending any additional money on items purchased. Simply shop through smile.amazon.com to access the same Amazon you know and love, but with the added bonus of activating an automatic donation from Amazon to the charitable organization of your choice.

Welcome to Bank Street

Yanil Perez is the new Development Assistant for the School for Children Endowment Fund, working out of the Development and External Relations Office. Prior to Bank Street, Yanil was a Theater Education Specialist for Partnership With Children, a nonprofit organization, and also has experience in advertising and marketing. She currently serves as an ambassador and community board member for Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Yanil holds a BA in Communication from the City College of New York (CUNY).

Grace Abanavas joined Bank Street as a part-time reference librarian in the Library. She simultaneously works as Library Assistant at the Arthur W. Diamond Law Library at Columbia University. While earning her master’s in library and information science from the Pratt Institute, Grace interned at New York Public Library’s map division archives. She holds a bachelor’s degree in European and Middle Eastern history from the University of San Francisco.

The Bank Street Education Center welcomed Marisa Campbell as Project Director of the Gates New York Network. Prior to joining Bank Street, Marisa was senior manager of professional development design in the Office of Teacher Effectiveness at the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). In her role, she was charged with designing professional learning experiences to support educators in successfully implementing the teacher evaluation and development system. Before joining the NYCDOE central offices, Marisa was an assistant principal, literacy coach, and English language arts teacher at middle schools in the Bronx. She holds a BS in English Education and an MA in International Education from New York University and an MEd in Educational Leadership from Bank Street’s Principals Institute.

Amy Wang has joined the Bank Street Education Center as a new analyst to support the NY Network Gates Project. Prior to Bank Street, Amy worked at Teachers College as a research assistant at the Survey Research Initiative (SRI), a center that provides survey services to schools and charter management organizations. She also conducts separate research with the professor who runs SRI in an ongoing project that focuses on intentionally diverse charter schools, where she writes specifically about the internal school-based practices that manifest in such schools. Amy graduated from Teachers College this past May with an MA in Education Policy.

The Development and External Relations Office welcomed Chris Kyriakou as its new graphic designer. Chris began his career as a graphic designer at Polyplastic Forms, where he designed logos and websites and ensured that clients’ artwork was ready for print. Most recently, he was a graphic designer at Schoolwide, an educational company, where he designed banner ads for the website and was responsible for the total revamp of the company’s Zing! homepage. Chris has an associate’s degree in applied science in graphic design from Briarcliffe College and his BFA in Graphic Design from Briarcliffe College.

If you are interested in writing publicly about a topic related to Bank Street, please reach out to communications@bankstreet.edu. We’d love to work with you to get your ideas published in the press or as an article on the website or the next newsletter.
In early May, Bank Street supporters gathered at the American Museum of Natural History for the College’s Centennial Trustees’ Dinner, a celebratory evening designed to help raise awareness and support of Bank Street’s many initiatives influencing positive change in the world of early education.

The event, which was attended by over 300 guests including trustees, donors, faculty, staff, and friends of Bank Street, honored Vincent Mai, CEO and Chairman of the Cranemere Group and Chairman of the Board of Sesame Street Workshop, for his longstanding philanthropic support of children’s causes.

“Thanks to Vincent, the evening was a tale of two streets—Bank Street and Sesame Street,” said Yolanda Ferrell-Brown, Dinner Co-Chair and Bank Street Board of Trustees Chair. “With a deep commitment to advancing early childhood education and three grandchildren at the School for Children, Vincent was the perfect centennial honoree for this year’s Trustees’ Dinner.”

After mingling during the cocktail hour in the museum’s Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda, guests enjoyed a meal under the big blue whale in the Milstein Hall of Ocean Life. The evening’s program included remarks by Yolanda Ferrell-Brown, Dinner Co-Chair and Master of Ceremonies Richard Parsons, Bank Street President Shael Polakow-Suransky, GSE ’00 and special guests Jennie Taco and Joan Odusanya, two Bank Street Early Childhood Urban Education Initiative graduate students who shared moving and personal reflections on their experiences as both educators and Bank Street graduate students.

Guests were also surprised with a special visit from Elmo himself. The beloved Sesame Street character appeared on stage to join Parsons in introducing and thanking Mai. After a few rounds of playful banter and human-to-puppet fist-bumps, Mai’s granddaughter Lucy Mitnick took the stage to introduce her grandfather and help present Mai with the Bank Street President’s Medal.

“The evening was a true celebration of Bank Street’s legacy and an inspiring reminder of the College’s commitment to addressing the early education challenges faced in every era,” said Polakow-Suransky. “It is an exciting and important time for the Bank Street community as we continue to lead a new generation of students, educators, leaders, and visionaries toward a second century of innovation, support, and meaningful practice.”

The event also featured a video presentation highlighting 100 years of Bank Street’s impact in helping children and teachers meaningfully connect learning and teaching to the outside world. To view the video and read President Polakow-Suransky’s Centennial Trustees’ Dinner remarks, please visit bankstreet.edu/trustees-dinner-remarks.
New Haven
(continued from page 1)

partnership with the school districts we support and that we tap into the knowledge that lives within the institution,” said Davia Brown-Franklyn, GSE ’97, Senior Director of Partnerships at the Bank Street Education Center and lead on the New Haven project. “Access to different perspectives from different community members made the entire collaboration much more powerful. It allowed us to think about how we can respectfully bring our practice to the outside world.”

The Education Center’s work leveraged Bank Street’s deep understanding of how children develop emotionally, socially, and cognitively to create and execute a carefully designed diagnostic review of the district’s early education practices. In partnership with New Haven team members and Graduate School faculty and alumni, the process included a deep dive into the district’s data and supports through document review, classroom visits, interviews with central office staff, educators, parents, volunteers, and community partners, and an analysis of the observations, information, and reflections collected. The work culminated in the creation of key learnings and recommendations to help inform next steps within the district’s early education programs.

Participants began with a visit to the School for Children to try out a classroom review tool and protocol designed for New Haven. During the process, team members got to know each other better, gained a deeper understanding of what it means to make low-inference observations, and developed new insights on how to debrief a classroom visit with an unfamiliar partner.

Once on-site in New Haven, each Bank Street team member paired with a staff member from the district’s central office for classroom visits, interviews, and reflection activities. The process was designed to build from the strengths that already exist within the district and provide opportunities for everyone involved to learn together about what is working and what needs to be improved in New Haven classrooms.

Nancy McKeever, GSE ’76, acting chair of the General Teacher Education Department for the Graduate School, lent her expertise on early childhood development and qualitative research to the project. She partnered with Allyx Schiavone, GSE ’94 and current Executive Director of the Friends Center for Children in New Haven, to observe and reflect on classroom practice in the district’s early education classrooms. “New Haven has a deep history with Bank Street—going back to our work together as part of Project Follow Through in the 1970s and 1980s. This project provided an exciting opportunity to leverage my background in research and evaluation while continuing to help improve early childhood practices in the New Haven community,” McKeever said.

The Education Center is currently working with New Haven leadership to identify next steps in this project. Recommendations included deepening collaboration with key stakeholders to develop a clearly articulated vision for early childhood classrooms across the district; creating a plan for implementing a district-wide vision through pre-K curriculum, assessment supports, and aligned professional learning expectations and structures; and strengthening relationships with families and existing community partners to embed best early childhood practices and build capacity district-wide.

The Education Center’s team members are excited to continue collaboration with Bank Street faculty and educators and would like to encourage others who are interested in learning more about their work to reach out. “The more we work together, the more we can bring our practice to the outside world. In a way, the Center’s work is the lived experience of Bank Street beyond the walls of our school—together we get to see what we do well play out in classrooms beyond Bank Street and help others who may not have the same access or resources that we do,” said Brown-Franklyn.

For more information on how to work with the Bank Street Education Center, please contact Doug Knecht.

The Bank Street Education Center team would like to thank the following Bank Street faculty and staff for their dedication and support during this project: Noelle Dean, Gabriel Guyton, Nancy McKeever, Betsy McKenna, Kristina Satchell, GSE ’13, and Shannon Vazquez.

Occasional Paper Series
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Q: You received more submissions than ever before. What factors did you consider when deciding what to publish?

Silin: We were thrilled to receive so many submissions and we think it is a testament to the strength of progressive practice in public school settings as well as the need—and desire—to share what’s working well. The Occasional Paper Series is a blind peer-reviewed journal and, in the end, the essays represent a range of perspectives from teachers, administrators, students, and families in k-12 classrooms across diverse school environments.

Q: What were some of the most surprising findings highlighted in the series?

Moore: A revealing theme running through these essays is the pushback that progressive educators experience in the current climate of accountability. In these essays, educators speak to the pressure from school districts that impose mandates narrowing the curricula and from parents who worry that their children are not learning necessary skills. The pressures are compounded by teachers’ anxieties that others will judge them negatively on the basis of their students’ performance. Clarity and commitment to progressive principles empower educators to succeed in the face of these pressures.

Led out of the College’s Division of Innovation, Policy and Research, the Occasional Papers Series is a forum for work that extends, deepens, and challenges the progressive legacy on which Bank Street College was built. The bi-annual series seeks to promote discussion about what it means to educate in a democracy and to meet the interrelated demands of equity and excellence.

Silin and Moore’s professional relationship goes back a decade to when Silin acted as an advisor to Moore during her studies at Bank Street Graduate School of Education. They collaborated on this project to help inspire educators everywhere to continue advocating for more just, engaging, and child-friendly classrooms for all.

To read Occasional Paper Series #35 Progressive Practices in Public Schools, please visit bankstreet.edu/ops-35.
Bank Street Bids Farewell to Dean Wright

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inventive, engaging, and intelligent leader, but what the community will miss most is the man behind the suit—the warm, easygoing, passionate guy with a sharp sense of humor and a feisty inner child.

In fact, Bank Street students view Alexis as their buddy. Many of them have voiced their excitement over having the chance to spend time with him during Lego lunches and pizza Fridays. Alexis speaks to young children in the same way he speaks to adults—he has real, honest conversations with students, and the children see him as accessible.

Parents too feel a deep connection to Alexis. They describe him as a person of action—someone who will not only listen, but also follow up and investigate in order to prompt change. They identify with him as a parent and trust him to understand the challenges they face on a daily basis.

"Alexis is a generous leader who has supported the work of the Family Center with his time, thoughtful feedback, and consistent commitment to finding ways to help us reach our goals. We will miss him greatly!" said Jeannette Corey, Director of the Bank Street Family Center.

The Bank Street community—colleagues, friends, team members, and program partners—know Alexis as the thoughtful, sensitive, and approachable man that he is. We know him as the enthusiastic Lego nerd who, on one hand, is thrilled when hot dogs are on the menu in the cafeteria but is also on a quest to try all the fine steakhouses in New York City. We know him as a person who listens to the Hamilton soundtrack whenever he has a chance. We know him as an irrepressible joker who loves to sing (mostly the Hamilton soundtrack). And we know him as a dedicated husband and father to his wife Ali and their two daughters, three-year-old Avery and eight-year-old Morgan.

"Alexis' vision and thoughtful leadership have helped to strengthen the learning experiences of our students and foster a deep sense of community across the College. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Alexis and we wish him continued success in his new role as Head of School at the New City School in St. Louis," said Shael Polakow-Suransky, President of Bank Street College.
certification programs provide teachers with the tools needed for high-quality classroom practice after graduation.”

The following highlights select findings from the study:

- Bank Street graduates report higher confidence in content area preparation than their peers from other schools in science (18% higher), English language and literacy (20% higher), and in math (23% higher).

- When asked about the ability to plan, create, and maintain effective learning environments, Bank Street graduates were significantly more likely than comparison teachers to report they were “well” or “very well” prepared to develop curriculum that builds on students’ experiences, interests, and abilities (86% vs. 54%), use knowledge of learning, subject matter, curriculum, and student development to plan instruction (86% vs. 60%), develop a classroom environment that promotes social/ emotional development and group responsibility (86% vs. 58%), and develop students’ questioning and discussion skills (83% vs. 51%).

- Overwhelmingly, 90% of respondents of the employer survey indicate that Bank Street graduates are “well prepared” as teachers.

- Bank Street graduates enter and remain in the field of education at high rates, with 87% remaining in the field of education and 57% reporting that they were working as a P-12 classroom teacher (across a survey of one dozen years).

The multi-year, multi-phased study incorporates analysis of graduate and employer surveys, large-scale administrative data on student learning in New York City public schools, in-depth classroom and school observations, and interviews of graduates, principals, and College faculty. As part of the process, SCOPE researchers observed classroom practice at three Bank Street-affiliated schools in New York City: Midtown West School, Brooklyn New School, and Community Roots Charter School. By creating expanded case studies of teacher and student interaction in these schools, researchers were able to closely examine how Bank Street’s teacher preparation model shapes what teaching and learning look like upon graduation and in real-world settings.

The study found that in each school, “supporting the whole child means providing them with developmentally-oriented learning experiences that meet the child where they are” and that teachers trained at Bank Street “appreciate the value of closely observing children.”

In SCOPE’s case study on Midtown West, a teacher explains the process: “Children are learning through their best way, and they’re really creating meaning with our support... We really value where the child is and bring them up to that next step at their own pace in their own time.” Another teacher adds, “I wear two hats. I take the role of observer and facilitator... I sometimes see myself as a wandering shadow, picking and choosing when to step in and when to step out. I make my decisions by observing, and if I see a pattern, we try and create space to talk about it—what worked, what didn’t work.”

The study’s authors conclude, “Such child-centered learning, which caters to the needs and interests of individual children as they develop cognitively and socially, is regarded as necessary to make learning meaningful for students... Teachers who graduated from Bank Street design learning experiences that involve play, emphasize the process, and ultimately strive to develop young children as intellectual, curious scholars who eagerly interact with the world around them.”

To review the full study and learn more about how classroom practice is enhanced through high-quality teacher preparation, please visit edpolicy.stanford.edu/bankstreet.

Essay Featuring SCOPE Study Published in Independent Teacher

Compelling findings from the SCOPE study were incorporated as supporting data in a recent scholarly article titled “Progressive Practices: Building Blocks of Effective Teaching and Learning.” Written by Bank Street’s own Peggy McNamara, GSE ’78, Jackson Kytle, and Shael Polakow-Suransky, GSE ’00, for Independent Teacher, the essay explored what progressive education looks like in the classroom of a Bank Street graduate, with a particular focus on the context of the relationship between the teacher and student.

Noting Stanford’s analysis, the authors wrote of Bank Street’s teacher preparation model: “These findings speak to the power of an integrated teacher preparation. When intensive, clinically rich supervision is integrated with academic studies weekly, teachers develop the knowledge, skills, disposition, and stamina to build a teaching practice for a long and productive career.” Read the full article by visiting bankstreet.edu/in-the-news.
Welcome to Bank Street

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Darlene Perry-O’Neill has joined the Bank Street Education Center as Director of Implementation and Operations. Prior to Bank Street, Darlene worked as an operations manager for Students for Education Reform, Achievement First, and Global Community Charter School. She holds a BA in Communications from The College of New Rochelle and is currently finishing up her MA in Urban Studies from the CUNY School of Professional Studies with graduation set for December of 2016.

The Division of Innovation, Policy and Research has added Brigid Fallon as its new program analyst for the Sustainable Funding Project. She brings to her role almost a decade of experience in research and analysis from both the nonprofit and public sectors. Brigid holds an MPA from Baruch College, where she specialized in policy analysis and evaluation.

Erica Wong has joined the Bank Street Education Center as a Knowledge Sharing and Communications Manager. She most recently managed the communications and outreach for The New Press, a nonprofit book publisher, and previously worked in youth development and educational publishing. Erica graduated from Swarthmore College with a BA in English Literature.

The Development and External Relations Office added Sarah Stern as its new Associate Director of Communications. As a journalist, writer, editor, and communications specialist, Sarah has spent her career writing, editing, and implementing public relations strategies for various publications, colleges, universities, and nonprofit institutions. Most recently, she has worked at the EastWest Institute and The New School. Sarah is a graduate of Barnard College and Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. She is also the author of two books of poetry, But Today Is Different and Another Word for Love.

Natalia Fernandez has joined Liberty LEADS as a College Success Advisor with over 15 years of experience in several areas of higher education including student affairs, advising, and admissions. Natalia is a passionate organizational development and leadership professional with demonstrated capabilities in strategy, analysis, problem solving, and implementation to improve organizational effectiveness, employee engagement, and productivity. Her specialties include leadership development, advising, relationship management, strategic planning, assessment, staff development, public speaking, and collaboration.

The Division of Strategy and Operations has welcomed Reva Gorelick as its new Director of Strategic Initiatives. Reva comes to Bank Street with experience in education operations and non-profit financial management, most recently at Uncommon Schools. Reva holds a BS in Applied Developmental Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Ayette Jordan has joined the Development and External Relations Office as the Director of Development and Alumni Relations for the School for Children. Prior to joining Bank Street, Ayette was the Director of Development for the Metropolitan New York region for Syracuse University, where she generated significant financial support by initiating and nurturing relationships across a broad spectrum of SU supporters. She also created and managed a high-level volunteer council of dedicated young alumni and co-managed a parent executive committee. Before joining Syracuse, Ayette worked in the Office of Advancement at the University of Rochester as a Leadership Gift Officer for their Annual Giving Program. She is currently matriculating in the Executive Masters in Communications Management program at the Newhouse School at Syracuse University.

The Graduate School of Education has welcomed Niurka Jimenez-Jailall as its new assistant registrar. Prior to Bank Street, Niurka worked as a research assistant for the Fashion Institute of Technology. She has an MSEd in Higher Education Administration from Baruch College of the City University of New York.

Debbie Knight has joined the Development and External Relations Office as Director of Annual Funds. Debbie brings a myriad of fundraising experience to this position, having served at the helm of stewardship and donor relation initiatives at NYU School of Law and Barnard College – Columbia University. Prior to working in academia, Debbie created, planned, and executed direct-marketing campaigns for a portfolio of blue-chip clients and specialized in account management and client services.

Laura Zadoff joined the Graduate School of Education as the new Instructional Designer for Online Learning and will be working with faculty members on the online elements and design of their courses. Laura has worked as an instructional designer and online coach for programs such as WIDE World, a teacher professional development program of the Harvard Graduate School of Education; and the Educational Portal of the Americas, of the Organization of American States. She holds an EdM in Instructional Technology and Media from Teachers College.

Ramón Hidalgo is the newest member of the Food Services team at Bank Street. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Ramón spent the earliest years of his career working in the kitchens of various restaurants there, including Hotel Continental, Puerto Plata, and Hotel Escuela Montelmar. Later, Ramón made the move to New York, where he drove a taxi for more than 12 years before deciding to return to the food services industry and joining the team at Bank Street.
Online Child Life

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Online platforms and tools. By reframing the challenge into a question, we created a space that allowed us to build a new method of interactive, hands-on learning that was not driven by digital tools, but by the developmental-interaction approach. We discovered that learning is less about the physical space in which we teach and more about how we choose to create a learning environment that supports critical thinking, inquiry, and discourse. By maintaining a focus on community engagement, building relationships, and fostering reflection, now students from all over the country are able to participate, learn, and obtain a Bank Street education—one that upholds the principles of Lucy Sprague Mitchell.

In 2015, the first fully online group of Child Life students began the master’s program. Eighteen students and nine instructors began teaching the online courses, using Google Plus as the LMS and Google apps for education. Students, adjuncts, and faculty dove into the process to look for additional tools to engage each other, find strategies for community building, and exploit platforms like video, Twitter, and podcasts. We quickly learned that by moving online, students could not hide behind more vocal participants and that, in actuality, each student felt empowered to find their own voice and platform in which to share their thoughts and ideas.

Group projects, which are an integral component of the Child Life program, led to true collaboration and the development of communication skills, teamwork, and the building of a meaningful portfolio of student work. These essential projects prepared students for future work as certified child life specialists and students recognized that they were learning invaluable skills they would later need in a professional setting.

“We fed off of each other’s ideas, and each of us did our part to add information to each section of the assignment. This is good practice for working in the hospital because we have to collaborate with other members of a team,” said one student about her experience in the program.

Online students are also given the opportunity to ruminate about ideas before responding to a post, fostering both discussion and deep reflection. “I liked to see how the conversation developed, and my viewpoint changed while concurrently learning new facts and information,” said another student as she explained how she “listened” to the thoughts of others, analyzed and synthesized new information, and built her understanding of the material while scaffolding new knowledge.

As we enter the program’s second year, there are 25 students enrolled in the 2016-2017 Child Life program. They come from all over the country. The process of developing the program has not been easy and it continues to adapt and change as we learn more about teaching strategies, online tools, and instructor training. However, as long as the central focus continues to be the examination of individual student learning, community engagement, and fostering reflection, then—even online—the Child Life program will stay true to its roots while offering students across the country an opportunity to achieve a Bank Street education.

Genevieve Lowry M.Ed, CEIM, CCLS is the Interim Director of the Child Life Program. The author would like to acknowledge the work and contributions of Troy Pinkney Ragsdale MA, CCLS, Director, Child Life Program, and Deb Vilas MSW, CCLS, Faculty Instructor and Advisor, Child Life Program, who were integral to the program’s development and success.