

THE EDUCATION FORUM

A Newsletter for the School of Education, New York Campus

*“...take advantage of the
Opportunitas in your
life and don’t be afraid
to take risks.”*

—*Enrico Mayuga*



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Enrico Mayuga Bids Farewell to School of Ed

The Forum asked Enrico to reflect on his time at Pace, and his plans for the future.

This is the year of the Rooster. That’s what I told Dean McDonald right before announcing I was leaving. In the Chinese calendar my birth falls under the Rooster, and good things are supposed to come my way. Well, in the past year, I’ve been blessed by a happy marriage, a new condo, my wife recently landed her first job as an attorney, and I was offered the job that’s leading me away from Pace.

The past 5½ years have been exciting and exhausting. I’m very proud to have been part of the NCATE process, and to have seen the SOE develop along the way. The business of training teachers is an every day challenge, but as Frederick Douglas said, “Without struggle, there can be no progress.”

I’m happy to see my first class, the one I’ve been with since their freshman year, graduate from the five-year program. I’ve always had a weird sense of obligation to these students and it’s been a privilege to “raise” them (as one of them once put it). I still remember several of them saying years ago that I couldn’t leave until they had graduated. Well, here we all

are, and I’ll see them at Radio City in May.

As for the future, I’ve been selected to work with the New York City Department of Education as an educational consultant assisting with their teacher recruitment efforts. I’ll be assigned to the Summer Teaching Experience Program, which recruits out-of-state certified teachers to teach in shortage areas. It’s a seasonal position, April through September. I’ve been picked as the person to “hand-hold” the incoming STEP teachers from the time they’ve been recruited until the fall.

Ever since I shared the news of my departure with colleagues, the first thing they ask is “What are you going to do at the end of September?” I don’t know if I have an ideal job in mind, but I do know that I want to continue to work with education students to make sure they explore every opportunity to succeed, discover their hidden talents and blossom. I’ve always been interested in working with immigrants and children of immigrants, especially considering my own parents’ struggles coming to New York in the sixties. I may even want to explore a side career as a life coach and motivational speaker. Of



course I know I wouldn’t be able to take these risks without the support of my wife, family and friends.

The SOE faculty and staff (Donna’s been there for me from Day One) have been a wonderful group to work with, and I’ll always be grateful that Jan took a chance on me right out of graduate school. Thanks Jan! Anybody who would like to keep in touch and chat about education, traveling, salsa, tango or capoeira, look me up and let’s have coffee or ice cream. I’d like to tell all SOE students to take advantage of the *Opportunitas* in your life and don’t be afraid to take risks. We may come across each other as future colleagues. It’s funny how life is, and how we all come to full circle.

Education in Action: AmeriCorps Brings English as a Second Language Instruction to Chinatown

By Lisa Wong Macabasco

During the daytime this room of Dr. Sun Yat Sen Middle School is a sixth grade science classroom. On this Thursday night, the students are mostly adult women of various ages, identifying the letters and sounds of the English alphabet and figuring out how to pronounce words with those sounds. Teacher Erik Laby points to a letter on a poster where the alphabet is written, and the class yells out the letter. Tonight the class is having trouble with the letter "r".

"Rrrrrrrrr," Laby says, listening to the class repeat the sound. "Rat. Rat."

A few in the room giggle. In a neighborhood with an infamous sanitation problem, Laby uses words that are familiar to the class.

The workshop is basic English, but the program's coordinators say a better name would be Level Zero. They recently created the workshop after finding that many students were below level one, the lowest of four literacy levels of English the program offered. Many cannot read and write in their native Chinese.

"We basically have to teach them English and Chinese," said Dana Chow, one of the program's coordinators.

This workshop is part of a growing English as a Second Language (ESL) program for adults at MS 131 funded and run by the Community and Volunteer Mobilization AmeriCorps program. The program is one of the few free ESL nighttime programs offered in Chinatown for Chinese-speaking adults.

They serve over 600 adult students each year, and this quarter they had to turn students away.

Chinatown's demographics show a large need for adult ESL classes. Language proficiency numbers are far below citywide levels, especially for those over 65 years old. According to the Asian American Federation of New York, 62 percent of Chinatown senior citizens had limited English Proficiency, which the census defines as speaking English "not well" or "not at all", compared with 49 percent of the citywide senior population. Forty-two percent of Chinatown adults, compared with 26 percent of adults citywide, spoke limited English.

They definitely know the word 'overtime'. Some fall asleep during class. They are so tired, but they really want to learn English

Rachel Brill, who teaches level two, said because Chinatown is so isolated, many longtime residents never learned English.

"Most have been here for 10, 20 years, and their English is broken," Brill said. "These people are so secluded. It's like a Little China. It's a self sufficient community. You can speak Cantonese and get along perfectly fine."

AmeriCorps started the program after 9/11, when English-speaking police and fire officers found themselves unable to give instructions to Chinatown residents immediately after the attacks,

according to Chow. She hopes learning English will help these students in future emergency situations.

"At the very least, when another emergency comes, this time they'll know what to do," Chow said.

It wasn't until last April that Chow and the other AmeriCorps members reorganized the program from a disorganized tutor session into a five-level system of classes and workshops, complete with entrance exams to gauge English levels and exit exams that assess the program's efficacy. Students attend two-hour classes twice a week, but Chow said some students have such passion to learn English that they want to attend classes Monday through Friday. Students have a range of educational backgrounds, but some did not even finish elementary school. Almost three quarters of the Asian adult population in Chinatown did not hold a high-school diploma from their home country, according to the 2000 census. Within that group, three quarters had less than a ninth grade education, comprising almost half of the total adult population in Chinatown. This is three times the rate for adults citywide.

Students range in ages from 18 to over 60, with the majority being 30-50 years old. The overwhelming majority speak Cantonese. Some students are undocumented, although the program does not ask students for that information. Most of the students are women. Chinatown's Asian community shows a gender

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DATES TO REMEMBER

SOE Presents the Third Annual Distinguished Educators Lecture Series:

"Schools That Work for Urban Students"

at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts Theater.

APRIL 4

What It Takes to Leave No Child Behind in New York City: Confronting the Urban in Urban Education

Pedro Antonio Noguera, PhD

Director, Metro Center for Research on Urban Schools and Globalization

APRIL 11

No Indifference Allowed: Creating Engaging Schools for Students, Teachers, and Administrators

Shelley Harwayne, PhD

Former superintendent, Community School District 2

APRIL 18

Topic TBA

Linda Darling-Hammond, PhD

Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University

All programs 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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EDITORS' NOTE

The editors of the Education Forum welcome and encourage submissions from all members of the School of Education Community, students, faculty, and staff. We are actively seeking open letters, field trip ideas, favorite websites, upcoming event announcements, and articles on education both on and off the Pace campus for our next issue. Please email submissions to soeforum@pace.edu, attached in Word format, and including name, contact information and a brief description of your role at Pace. In-person submissions may also be made at 41 Park Row, 4th Floor to Dr. Kathryn De Lawter or Mr. Bryce Cahn.



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The New York Campus of the Pace University School of Education prepares educators who promote justice, create caring classroom and school communities and enable all students to be successful learners.

Chinatown

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gap in education, with 73 percent of Asian women lacking a high-school diploma compared with 66 percent of Asian males, according to the census.

Neither Chow nor the other coordinators had any experience with teaching ESL, but they built the entire program from the ground up. Their teaching staff of five AmeriCorps members expanded in the past seven months to ten members and eight volunteers, and the number of students doubled to 150 students this quarter.

"It's really grown," said Chow, noting all this is due to work-of-mouth advertising and the fact that the classes are free. This quarter the program did not even do any publicity because of lack of time.

"We have no problem recruiting," said Chow, laughing.

The lower-level classes, where students learn English names of foods, the weather, how to fill out applications, and how to go to the bank and the post office, are especially popular.

"Our goal is to help them learn to communicate on a

daily basis," said Chow.

Brill tries to organize field trips to show students other parts of New York, which many have never seen.

"Literally, many have been out of Chinatown only a few times in their years there," Brill said. "They have definitely never been out of New York City except when they came from China."

Chow said a low level of English is likely to correspond with a low income background, and she tries to be accommodating to students' demanding work lives. During the day, students put in long hours in Chinatown restaurants, supermarkets, hotels, garment factories, and bakeries. Teachers do not chastise students for arriving late after work.

"They definitely know the word 'overtime,'" Brill said. "Some fall asleep during class. They are so tired, but they really want to learn English."

Brill said students cannot afford to take advantage of many of New York's cultural riches, such as museums or Broadway shows. Many have never visited Central Park. Brill recalled attempting to

discuss movies in class, but some students had never seen any movies, even Chinese movies.

"I couldn't do the lesson because they didn't have any movies to talk about," Brill said. "That was eye-opening for me."

Because students are older, it takes them longer to progress, and it is harder for them to learn.

"We do a lot of repetition, and it still doesn't get to them," Chow said, slightly exasperated. "We haven't seen much level advancement. But, we're still new."

This quarter the program offered level four, its highest yet. Tonight students in the level four class wrote sentences describing their homes. Boo-Ni, one of the more advanced students, wrote her sentence on the board. While she may not know English very well, certain things seem to be universally known.

"I cannot speak Spanish neither Chinese, but I am happy to live here [in Manhattan] than the Bronx."



Become part of the Teachers of Tomorrow Summer in the City Internship Program!

Work with Yonkers Public School teachers and students to gain field experience in your future area of certification (all grades K-12 in all subject areas). Eligible students will receive up to \$2000 stipend for a five week period during July and August 2005.



Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, resume including all previous summer school experience, and one letter of recommendation from your college or university by **Wednesday, March 30 2005.**

Placements will be based on your college major and the needs of the district.

For eligibility requirements contact:
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