

EARTH DAY/DISCOVER FEST 2019

by *Kantrelle King*



Kantrelle King, a Holmes Scholar in the Office of School Partnerships at UA, taught unplugged coding to 1st and 2nd grade students at **Woodland Forrest Elementary School** as a part of Earth Day/Discover Fest 2019.

Ms. King used Future Coders Poppin' Pictures and Bunny Trails to engage students in unplugged pre-coding skills such as sequencing, problem-solving, and logical thinking.

PARTNERS-IN-EDUCATION COUNCIL

The Partners-In-Education Council held its third meeting this academic year, which took place on April 30th. The meeting included representatives from the College of Education at The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa City Schools, and Tuscaloosa County Schools. These meetings serve as the next steps following the creation of a strategic plan that was developed in February 2018 with another group of representatives from the three entities. Plans moving forward include strategic communications to inform partners

and the community-at-large of the education partnership, and recruitment for task forces to implement partnership collaborations. The vision for the partnership is as follows: A collaborative partnership between the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County Schools and the College of Education at The University of Alabama that is built upon open, reciprocal communication, shared responsibility, and mutual resources for overall student success and well-being.

GREENE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL INTERVIEW DAY

In order to better prepare his students on how to conduct themselves during an interview, **Larry Burnette**, a COE graduate who teaches 12th grade economics at Greene County High School, started Interview Day. This event started in 2012 with COE faculty and is currently being coordinated by **Dr. Lisa Matherson**. Mr. Burnette's idea was to provide students with a better understanding of ACS standard 8: Understanding the impact of the labor market on the US economy, while providing them with a much needed skill. He felt by preparing students for career and college program interviews, he could help them be prepared for the workplace or college.

The interviews this year were conducted by Dr. Matherson of the College of Education, Holmes Scholars April Caddell and Kantrele King, and Graduate Research Assistants Cheng Hua and Akeisha Young. The students began preparing for the March 8th event in January. They practiced handshakes and eye contact daily. A week before the event the students participated in practice interviews. Many of Mr. Burnette's past students said the training and practice for the interviews and mock interviews conducted were some of the most beneficial experiences of their senior year.



WELL WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

Holmes Scholar and doctoral candidate **April Caddell** will be ending her fellowship under the Office of School Partnerships this academic year. She served as a Holmes Scholar from 2016 – 2019. She will now be completing her doctoral studies with a Social and Cultural Foundations of Education concentration in

Instructional Leadership. The working title of her dissertation is “A Critical Genealogy of Posthumanism.” Ms. Caddell obtained her M.A. in Gender and Race Studies from The University of Alabama and her B.A. in Women’s Studies from Spelman College. We wish her well on her future endeavors.



WOODLAND FORREST STEM ACTIVITIES

by *Kantrelle King*

Dr. Lisa Fowler, in conjunction with **Diana Marchant**, Woodland Forrest STEM Coordinator, and 36 pre-service elementary teachers from The University of Alabama's College of Education, prepared and taught STEM lessons to 4th and 5th grade students at **Woodland Forrest Elementary School**. These projects were interactive and ranged from designing an athletic shoe prototype to testing a rainforest shelter to creating a structure that would keep an egg from cracking during the egg drop challenge. The goal of these projects was to get students excited about science/STEM in the classroom, which will hopefully guide them towards science and STEM careers in the future. Another goal was to give undergraduate pre-service teachers experience teaching authentic inquiry-based science/STEM lessons in hopes that this type of teaching will carry over into their future classrooms. This is such a big deal that ABC 33/40 (Birmingham), Fox 6 (Birmingham), WVUA (Tuscaloosa), and the Tuscaloosa News covered the event displaying and testing the projects.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. TRACEY HODGES

Dr. Tracey Hodges received the Excellence in Community Engagement Faculty Award for her research project with writing and teacher professional development in Hale County at the Council on Community Based Partnerships Award Luncheon.



SOUTHVIEW ELEMENTARY FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

by April Caddell



On the evening of Wednesday, March 6, UA faculty and students collaborated with **Southview Elementary School** to host a Family Literacy Night. An estimated 200 family members and children attended and were highly engaged with literacy activities facilitated by over 60 of UA's CEE

365 (Block 2) students. The event included complimentary refreshments, including pizza, for family members and children. The event was led by **Dr. Cailin Kerch** and **Dr. Holly Swain** of Curriculum and Instruction. The Office of School Partnerships at UA served as a collaborator.

MORGAN SERVES AS DIRECTOR OF INSERVICE CENTER



Dr. Holly G. Morgan currently serves as the Director of The University of Alabama/University of West Alabama Regional Inservice Center based at The University of Alabama. Prior to this role, Morgan has previous experience as a classroom teacher, instructional coach (at both local and state levels), curriculum director, university project administrator, and university director of community education. Morgan previously led The University of Alabama's Parent Teacher Leadership Academy, the STEM Entrepreneurship Academy, and the Swim to the Top Program while serving as Director of Community Education. She has published and presented collaboratively with Drs. Elizabeth Wilson and Blake Berryhill regarding school, family, and community partnerships. In 2018, the Parent Teacher Leadership Academy was recognized as a national Outstanding Partnership Organization from the National Network of Partnership Schools.

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RESEARCH IN ACTION: SUPPORTING MATHEMATICS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by Stephanie Saclarides

Dr. Evtchokia Stephanie Saclarides is currently working on two projects with **Hoover School District**. In general, Dr. Saclarides explores how coaches support the teaching and learning of mathematics in elementary schools.

Project 1: As teachers seek to learn new instructional practices, they often ask a more experienced other to model for them, or show them how the instructional practice works. Dr. Saclarides is partnering with two coaches as they model instructional practices during mathematics instruction for elementary teachers. She is particularly interested in better understanding teachers' learning opportunities during the model lessons. Do the coaches intentionally create opportunities

for the teachers to learn about mathematics and pedagogy while they are modeling instruction?

Project 2: It is important for school districts to provide high-quality professional development to coaches if they are to be effective in their positions. Dr. Saclarides is examining the professional development that is provided to 10 mathematics coaches over the course of one semester. In particular, she is interested in coaches' learning opportunities about mathematics and pedagogy during the professional development.

Next year, Dr. Saclarides will launch a longitudinal study in partnership with



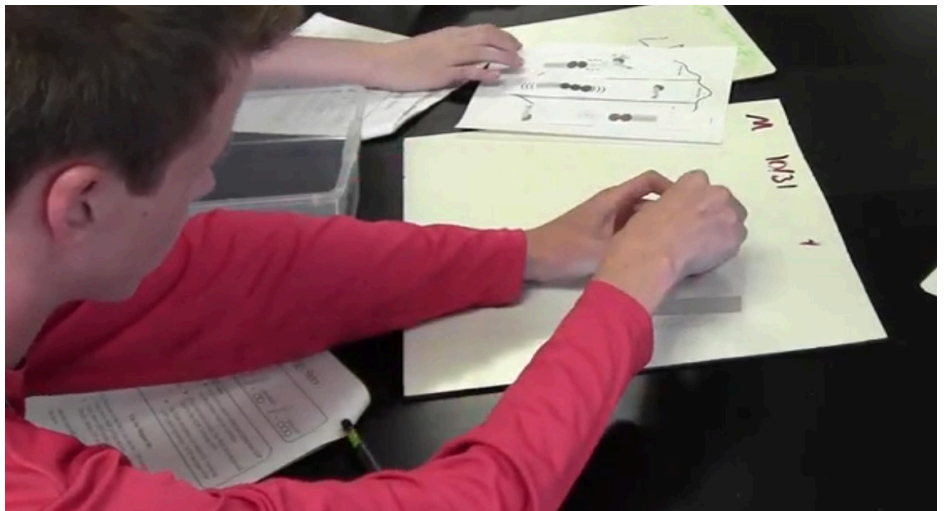
Tuscaloosa County School District and the **Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI)**. Specifically, she will explore how AMSTI specialists support elementary teachers to analyze their own student data, as well as teachers' learning opportunities during these data meetings.

RESEARCH IN ACTION: PARTNERING TO DISCOVER NEW WAYS OF TEACHING SCIENCE

by *Jonathan Shemwell*

This past fall, Tuscaloosa County biology teachers **Komanci Love** (Northside High School) and **Renea Richardson** (Holt High School) partnered with **Dr. Jonathan Shemwell** of the College of Education to carry out a learning research study. The study was part of an NSF-funded project that Shemwell conducts jointly with **Dr. Daniel Capps** of the **University of Georgia**. Its goal is to develop new and improved ideas for teaching science with modeling instruction.

Last fall's study featured a model-based approach to teaching cellular respiration, a difficult topic in the biology curriculum. In the "world premier" of this approach, Ms. Love and Ms. Richardson had their students use hands-on materials to construct energy models of chemical reactions in cellular respiration. The students then used their models to learn about cellular respiration via texts and diagrams. Assessments showed that constructing models helped students discover and interpret information in the texts and diagrams much more effectively than otherwise, leading to better understanding of concepts and easier transfer to novel science



topics than when using the hands-on materials without constructing models. The research team submitted an article about these findings to an academic journal so that others will be able to use the ideas behind them. In parallel, Ms. Love and Ms. Richardson partnered with the research team to give a workshop about the cellular respiration unit at the annual meeting of the Alabama Science Teachers Association (ASTA). In the coming year, the partners plan on traveling to Boston to give their presentation at the National Science Teachers Association. They also plan to continue their research and innovation on science teaching. Their focus this time? How to leverage modeling instruction to aid struggling readers.

With modeling, students developed better understanding and more easily transferred to new domains than when using the same materials without modeling.



RESEARCH IN ACTION: A-PLUS IN MATH

by *Jeremy Zelkowski*

The University of Alabama's Practitioner Leaders for Underserved Schools in Mathematics (A-PLUS in Math) is a National Science Foundation (NSF) Master Teaching Fellowship, Grant #1849948, with an award of \$2.84 million. **Dr. Jeremy Zelkowski** serves as the principle investigator. Co-principle investigators include Drs. Jim Gleason, Philip Westbrook, and Martha Makowski, and doctoral student Tye Campbell. A-PLUS in Math is a collaborative partnership between The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa City Schools, Tuscaloosa County Schools, the Alabama Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and Texas Instruments.

A-PLUS in Math seeks to improve the educational experiences for students by providing intense and continuous professional development for mathematics teachers and a 3-day summer summit annually for administrators of the teaching fellows. The broader impacts include a 50-mile radius from UA campus, approximately 30,000 students

(35% racial and ethnic minorities, and more than 55% qualifying for the free or reduced lunch program). Over the next ten years, the estimated impact will directly and indirectly benefit 50,000 to 75,000 students.

The fellowship is open to full-time teachers teaching grades 6 - 12. The project will include two cohorts, starting in June 2019 (teachers without a Master's degree) and June 2020 (teachers with a Master's degree). Mathematics teachers in the greater Tuscaloosa region will be selected to participate in the project in order to fully develop 24 mathematics teacher leaders through May 2025. The selected fellows receive full tuition support for graduate education, professional travel to regional and national conferences, and a \$12,575 annual salary supplement to compensate teachers for their commitment of time to the project's professional development towards accomplishing the project goals. More information, including the goals of the project, can be found at aplusmath.ua.edu.



SPACEREX STEM OUTREACH AT WOODLAND FORREST ELEMENTARY

by April Caddell

Woodland Forrest Elementary School

was chosen as the site for a group of senior mechanical engineering students, who comprise the mechanical engineering group at The University of Alabama, and their NASA outreach program in collaboration with **Diana Marchant**, the STEM Coordinator



at Woodland Forrest Elementary. The partnership outreach included presentations to three classes of fifth graders. The final project, SpaceRex, will compete in the NASA Microgravity Challenge in May 2019.

Several mechanical engineering students brought tools and special gloves to show students at Woodland Forrest what it would be like to work outside of a space station to fix a mechanical problem. Other senior engineering students brought cans of various weights to simulate mass and weight based on the gravitational pull of each planet. Fruits and vegetables of various sizes were used to demonstrate the size differences of the planets, and their distances apart in our solar system. The students greatly enjoyed the presentation and activities. This partnership features a special connection as one of the engineering students, **Ross O'Rear**, is a former Woodland Forrest Elementary School student.

