

### *Learning Is No Mistake*

**R**on Beghetto's race car was not winning. His well-intentioned elementary teacher had hoped to engage Ron and his third-grade classmates in math achievement by a "visual display of cars racing with math scores across the wall of the classroom," says

Beghetto, now an assistant professor in teacher education at the UO College of Education.

But to young Ron, the car was a daily embarrassing reminder, visible to all, that his efforts weren't winning the math car race. "Even though I had the ability, I was so focused on avoiding mistakes that I started exerting less and less effort," says Beghetto. "Until one day—thankfully—the car fell off the wall."

"That pretty much sums up that teacher's success with my improvement in math that year," says Beghetto, who now prepares college stu-

dents to become effective teachers. "But she might have done it differently, engaging my mistakes as learning opportunities rather than as a competition I was not going to win. I try to bring examples of these kinds of teaching and learning 'mistakes'—both my own and others'—to my teaching."

Beghetto has learned that—in the hands of a skillful teacher—mistakes can be fruitful opportunities rather than the source of embarrassment for learners. In fact he finds that, among his own students, those who have experienced learning difficulties are often better able to help their own students.

"All my students have clearly had some level of success in school—or they wouldn't be sitting in a university lecture hall," says Beghetto. "But each generally finds that some of their educational experiences weren't positive. What I find interesting about this is that students who have had some negative prior schooling experiences are much more likely to grasp the importance of promoting creative learning approaches in the classroom."

**B**eghetto's research—as an educational psychologist specializing in learning, cognition, and instruction—suggests that some classroom practices quash the most pivotal moments of learning for students. Trying to create environments for improvement, teachers sometimes communicate that mistakes are to be avoided at all costs.

"If we're not careful," says Beghetto, "some students learn to avoid several of our chief goals for them: behaviors and attitudes that involve seeking out challenges, intellectual risk taking, and creative thinking. They become so intent on avoiding mistakes that they are reluctant to make the effort necessary for learning and improvement. Ultimately they become expert at avoiding anything that threatens their ability to appear competent to others."

In contrast, Beghetto encourages students in his college classes to meet their learning head on, taking risks to find out what they don't know—to determine what they'll need to know to improve outcomes for their own future students.

"My students get to see for themselves how, as teachers, they can turn mistakes into learning opportunities," says Beghetto. And they get to see how teachers and students gain confidence from facing and examining mistakes.

"In a class of 150-200 students, it takes courage for students to come down to the front of the lecture hall and try out new instructional strategies, but I try to create an atmosphere where it is okay to make mistakes. Role playing makes it a comfortable environment. It's okay to not have all the answers; we are going to look for them together.



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UNIVERSITY  
OF OREGON



## Within Reach

THANKS TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF DONORS, alumni and friends of the college, we've nearly reached the halfway mark in private gifts necessary to launch the UO College of Education building project. With almost 12 million dollars in private donations, we've got our sights set on a total of 24 million in gifts required to secure a legislative match in G-Bonds for the project.

Oregon's legislative session is now in full swing, and the project is currently under review by state lawmakers. Advocates Keith Thompson and Ozzie Rose with Oregon University System (OUS) Chancellor George Pernsteiner unveiled the project's conceptual design for the Ways and Means special subcommittee on capital construction March 17th. Deliberation on the project will continue until the end of this session.

You have the power to help create this modernized teaching and learning center. Your letters to the leaders of the Ways and Means Committee urging their support of the UO College of Education building project will help demonstrate its importance to Oregon's schools and communities: You can contact the committee leaders at 900 Court Street NE, Salem OR 97301:

- **Senator Kurt Schrader**  
Committee Co-Chair: Room S-209
- **Representative Wayne Scott**  
Committee Co-Chair: Room H-295
- **Senator Richard Devlin**  
Education Subcommittee Chair: Room S-316

Also, consider contacting your own Oregon legislators about this important project. If you are not sure who your state legislators are, you can find their names online at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/>

With a match from the Oregon legislature, we'll not only have a new building, we'll also be within reach of a much loftier goal: helping our students achieve their greatest potential. With new specialized teaching and learning spaces, College of Education faculty will finally be able to fully use what they know about the critical stages of professional development—and our students will be well equipped to be accountable to the high expectations of professional practice.

*Martin J. Kaufman*

Martin J. Kaufman  
Dean, College of Education



*“With a match from the Oregon legislature, we’ll not only have a new building; we’ll be within reach of a much loftier goal.”*

Marty Kaufman

## Gay and Judi Davis Build on a Generous Tradition

The Davis family has a habit of supporting programs that have been instrumental in their lives. In keeping with this generous tradition, University of Oregon Foundation trustee Gay Davis '68, history, and his wife, Judi Darling Davis '70, applied art, have pledged \$75,000 to the College of Education building project for a teaching performance studio. The Davises have designated the gift in honor of their daughter Marie, who received her teaching license and master's degree in educational policy and management from the College of Education. Marie graduated in 2001 and now lives in San Francisco, teaching first grade at Baywood Elementary School in San Mateo.

In addition to supporting a teaching studio as part of Campaign Oregon, the Davises have also endowed a dean's scholarship for an outstanding freshman student who intends to be a teacher.

“We both feel that education is so vital, and we are proud to support an institution that is a national leader in that field,” says Judi Davis. “We have seen first hand, with our daughter Marie, how competent and well-prepared teachers are who have graduated from the UO College of Education. It is especially important that we do everything we can to make sure that this program remains strong.”

### PRACTICE STRENGTHENS PERFORMANCE

Teaching performance studios are work spaces built to strengthen professional practice. Whether preparing teachers are designing lessons, delivering them in a simulated environment, or collaborating in groups to review and critique lessons, a performance studio allows focus on the development of effective practices. Like student athletes, preparing teachers need space dedicated to performance review. Athletes spend hours studying nuances of game tapes, reflecting on improving performance and getting guidance from coaches. Similarly, architecture students use design studios to model constructions and test designs for errors. So too, preparing teachers need to try out their plans and presentations in spaces designed to help them learn from their mistakes and observe areas needing improvement. When students practice to develop skill and confidence—before their mistakes have real consequences for children—this strengthens teaching in a very practical way.

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"It becomes an intense apprenticeship of observation. Within the process—making mistakes, confronting unknowing and doubt, continually testing out methods they've been taught, reapplying their developing understanding, searching for instructional solutions—students get it. They begin to understand what learning is about: how we bring students to a place of wanting to know something, encouraging them to the point that they are willing to be persistent or to take risks to learn more."

#### THE NEED TO KNOW MORE

"I try to give prospective teachers an espresso shot of contextualized experience in teaching,"

says Beghetto. "In the classes I teach, we use micro-teaching activities. I divide the class into small groups and distribute them to three or four separate locations. And I plant students among them with random roles and responses to the 'teacher.'

"In this activity, one of their 'students' privately draws a card that says, 'My parents just told me last night that they are getting a divorce.' Another has a card that says, 'I missed all of last week with the flu, and I don't know what we're doing.' Another says, 'I always sit in the front row and answer every question, sometimes even before the teacher calls on me.' Another, 'I have hearing loss.' Another, 'I have a physical disability that prevents me from manipulating the paper by myself.' And so on. Those role playing the students respond to the lesson within the possible range of difficulties or realities their role presents. The teacher doesn't know what the roles are and is responding with his or her own lesson plan—but having to adapt instantly in a live situation. This is what teachers face every instructional day in the classroom."

Beghetto's students not only take risks in role playing instructional solutions, in some instances they videotape themselves while they're doing it and then review their own and their classmates' teaching performance.

They're asked to "select the section of tape that makes them absolutely ill to watch," says Beghetto. "We go deeply into this as they create a reflective

presentation: about what they learned in playing the role of teacher or a student who has challenges. What were the big surprises? The challenges? What's the place they most need improvement, where they've reached the end of knowing, where they're not sure anymore?"

#### HABITS OF MIND

"That's where the potential unfolds for the greatest learning for the preparing educator, after we've created a need to know. The exercise exposes where they've got genuine doubt about what's going to be the best teaching or learning response," says Beghetto, who believes that micro-teaching prac-



tices not only rehearse the habits of instructional delivery, but also help students understand what's required of them as they develop professionally.

"Here in the college, we have such great students—bright, creative students who absolutely want to make a difference. But when students initially prepare to become teachers, they don't necessarily approach it with a lot of analysis. They often don't understand to what degree their own initial experiences in classrooms heavily influence their beliefs about teaching and learning. Educational psychology teaches us that taking time to examine our assumptions is key in getting beyond simply replicating what we experienced as learners ourselves—and improves our ability to support the diverse learning needs of our own students.

"They learn how to cultivate their own development as teachers in a way that has the potential to be ongoing. There is a science to it, and it's not about continual, recursive revisiting of what we already have mastered; it is an ongoing journey of some effort into things we don't yet know."

**Ron Beghetto:**  
Mortar Board  
Winter 2004–5

### *Professor of the Term*

Mortar Board is a national college senior honor society dedicated to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service to college and community.

Each term, Mortar Board selects a department, whose students then choose a professor to honor. Education majors voted overwhelmingly for Ron Beghetto in recognition of his inspiration as a teacher.

## THANK YOU!

*It is an honor to acknowledge the alumni, friends, corporations, and organizations that have so generously donated to the College of Education during the past fiscal year. Although space limitations prevent listing every donor, we are grateful for every gift to the College of Education. Together we form a partnership that transforms the lives of children and families.*

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## Making Dreams a Reality

Beginning with an extremely generous commitment from the HEDCO foundation, the College of Education is on its way to creating a \$48 million facility. Our goal is to raise \$24 million in private funds and garner matching funds from the legislature through the sale of state bonds. Through the generosity of alumni and friends, we are nearly halfway to our goal! As of December 31, 2004, donors had given more than \$11 million toward the project, and additional gifts have been received since then. Every gift counts. The options below are only a few of the many opportunities to turn dreams of realizing our potential into reality.

### A gift of . . .

**\$5,000,000** can build the integrated clinic.

**\$1,000,000** can purchase a gathering place for students and faculty to meet at the college.

**\$500,000** has purchased an interactive classroom. A gift this size can also help provide the technology resource center or instructional computing room.

**\$250,000** can purchase the curriculum design center, audio visual room, or an office suite in the teaching, special education, or counseling psychology programs.

**\$100,000** can provide a classroom, garden space linking existing and new buildings, or an office suite in the early intervention program.

**\$75,000** has purchased specialized resources for math and science methods rooms. Such a gift can also provide a teaching performance studio or a language methods room.

**\$50,000** will remodel classrooms in the original college building, where old-style rooms use wrap-around desks and lack basic technology.

**\$40,000** can provide therapy rooms for marriage and family therapy, counseling psychology, and communication disorders and sciences.

**\$25,000** can purchase a faculty office. A gift this size can also provide student study centers and small conference rooms.

For more information on how you can be part of this project, please contact

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For details of the project, see our website at  
<http://education.uoregon.edu/building>

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## Eavesdropping . . .

**W**hat's the first thing you said after you finished today?" Sammie McCormack asked Kelly Thex about practice teaching.

"I'm in the right profession!" said Thex. "I'm looking forward to the next time, so I can relax a little more. I was trying so hard to cover everything without overwhelming the students."



McCormack—a veteran teacher and administrator herself—could certainly relate: Teaching is a practice that presents both great rewards and challenges. "And the students who give us the greatest challenges sometimes give the greatest teaching rewards," said McCormack.

"I can see that already," said Thex. "There's one student in particular. He's not the best student, but he has strong insights, things to contribute in our discussions. But he's really struggling with reading. When he didn't get any points on the homework, he shut down. I'm afraid if I single him out for extra instruction, he'll be embarrassed. Then I won't be as effective with him."

"When I was a principal," offered McCormack, "some of my best counseling of students happened at lunchtime. I wonder if some private encouragement would allow you to suggest an extra study session? A time to say 'I really believe in you; I want you to be successful. But there are some things we could try to help you be a stronger reader. Will you work with me?'"

"That seems just right," said Thex. "He was excited to learn. I really want to build on that . . ."

*Sammie Barker McCormack met with preparing teacher Kelly Thex last fall at the UO student union to discuss Kelly's first week of language arts teaching. McCormack is a UO Foundation trustee and College of Education alumna who sponsors a scholarship that supports Kelly's studies.*

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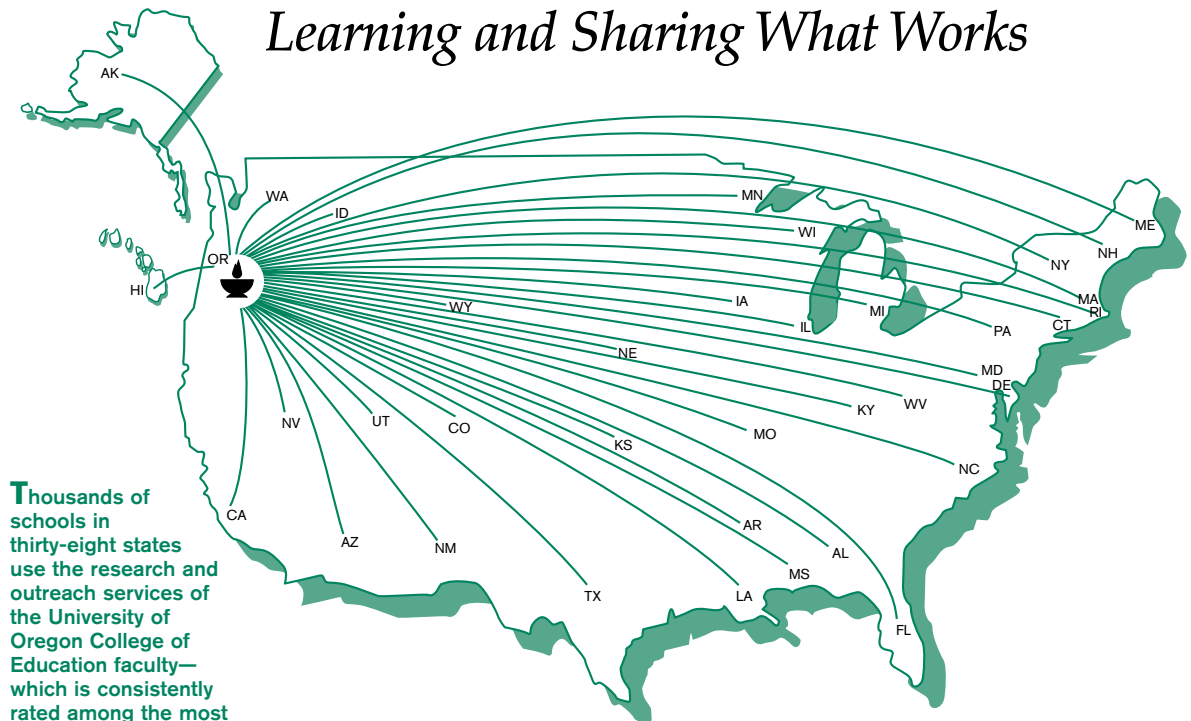
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## Learning and Sharing What Works



**Thousands of schools in thirty-eight states use the research and outreach services of the University of Oregon College of Education faculty—which is consistently rated among the most productive education research faculties in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.**

**The influence of faculty expertise supports the success of each child in the classroom and of school districts, state departments of education, and federal agencies working to advance educational services across the nation.**

- UO special education faculty members travel the country to provide instruction for educators who are implementing schoolwide **positive behavior supports**. Currently 2,674 schools in thirty-two states use the behavior system to create positive school culture. In Illinois alone, 499 individuals in 444 schools have been trained to help develop local programs.
- The foremost literacy researchers in the country are headquartered at the UO College of Education, where the federal Reading First technical assistance center provides assistance to states to implement essential components of **reading instruction**. The center serves 22 states from Hawaii to Wisconsin and Alaska to California.
- The DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) **reading assessment** system is used by 6,292 schools nationally across 1,940 districts in 49 states and Canada, serving more than 1.35 million K-3 students. Developed by College of Education faculty, DIBELS provides a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development.



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