



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE EDUCATION STUDIES PROGRAM

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VOLUME 1

2018-2019 IN REVIEW

Whether this is reaching you across town or across the country, we want to keep in touch and share updates about our program, students, and alums. As the academic year concludes we have a lot to celebrate, including the contributions of Professor Claudia Cooper as she heads into retirement, as well as our graduating seniors. We hope you enjoy our first newsletter!

PROFESSOR CLAUDIA COOPER

BY BEKAH WHITE '19

CLAUDIA COOPER, Assistant Professor of Education & English/American Literatures at Middlebury College, will be retiring at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. Professor Cooper has been teaching at Middlebury since 1998 in the Education Studies and the English and American Literatures departments. She earned her doctorate in Human Development and Psychology with a specialization in language and literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is also a co-founder of the [Global Family Initiative](#), and has worked in Ethiopia since 2003. This interview took place mid-May, in Cooper's Twilight Hall office. It has been lightly edited and condensed.

How did you begin teaching at Middlebury College?

When we moved up here 1997, I did a winter term, and then I did some supervisions, and then more winter terms. When I look at the list of courses that I've taught here, it's pretty long because at that time they didn't want you to repeat courses, so I had to create a new course every single time I was teaching. My appointment was made as a joint interdisciplinary appointment between English first-year seminar and Education Studies, with my home base being in Ed. Studies.

You mentioned that you taught a great deal of courses, so what were your favorite ones to teach?

What's been really interesting is that the literature, the writing, and the Ed. courses are so wildly different, and then if you throw in the off-campus courses that I've done in Ethiopia, it's comparable to asking do

you like dates or tangerines? They're just so different.

What I would say I love about all of

them is the nudging around of ideas, and when we have freedom to play with those ideas. If we can start to press open the folds and see what's in there, and play with our biases, and put them out on the table and ask: What's there? What's not there? Why is this the way it is? then the classes get more and more interesting and I think that students take away more and more from them, too.



What will you miss most about Middlebury College?

I will miss relationships with students and colleagues tremendously. I'm not disappearing here; I will still be around! The relationship with my colleagues encompasses deep collegiality, support, fun, challenges, brainstorming, and problem-solving, all of those kinds of things which make work interesting, and which are probably, of course, the same things that you develop with students. Especially if you're in the kind of class that I like to do most: seminar-style, nudging ideas, playing around with questions. You're also doing that challenging, intellectual work. What's particularly interesting in teaching is learning the new things, even when you're trying to revamp a course that you've taught a bunch of times. And the aspect of being part of a really genuinely rich, intellectual community, I will miss. Just having that at your fingertips all the time, and having students come in and say, "Okay, well what about this? How do I think about that? What are we going to do with that?" I think it's really fabulous because it keeps you on your toes, too. As a scholar yourself, it's like "oh, that's a really great question, I have no idea, let's figure it out." That's a lot of fun.

Do you have any post-retirement plans?

A lot more writing, which is very hard for me to do in the semester, and I do a lot of arts and cooking, so there's the hobby pleasures. Betasab Global Family Initiative, of course, working on that, pushing that into its next phase.

Can you speak a little more about what the Betasab Global Family Initiative is?

That project has three segments: we have two group homes, our Origins Homes, where we're raising 20 orphaned and abandoned children; we also have 100 children at the moment that we support in school in our Learning Lions Scholars Program; and we have the Sheba Women's Empowerment Program that just launched last year with our pilot year. As we move forward, we're expanding the Learning Lions Scholars Program. The program gives very low-income students what they need to stay in school: backpacks, school supplies, notebooks, pens, papers, uniforms, shoes, other shoes because you can't wear your school shoes at home all the time, everything else that they need, and nutritional snacks as well. What that support does is straight up allow them to stay in school, because a lot of these kids at a fairly young age would have to be out supporting their families. Our women's empowerment program ties to those mothers, and we're giving them basic literacy, numeracy, and financial training so those mothers become more self-sufficient so we can build sustainability in those programs.

How did you get involved with the Betasab Global Family Initiative?

I co-founded it, so that was the first deep involvement. There had been a lot of interest in Ethiopia, and I had a partner there who is now my former country director, and he kept asking me if I would help him open up a place for children, especially orphaned and abandoned children. I kept saying, "No, I have a job, I don't know how to raise money, there are a lot of things in my way." But I kept thinking about it. In 2008, I took a Middlebury class to Ethiopia, and in that class, I was surrounded by the 18 to 22-year-old-energy that says "we can do anything!" One of the students in that class, was Eric Hoest '08, and he became a co-founder. He's a very brilliant man who is now the CFO for Brew Dr. Kambucha. He was an economics major here, so he was much more comfortable being in charge of the money side of things. Together with Eric and my son, Nick Rogerson, co-founder and managing partner of Lico Consulting (Colorado College '08, Univ. of Toledo '13, Georgetown SFS '18), we just started it. It took 4 years for us to get fully cleared through the government and get our first children in May of 2012! We ran the two group homes that we have for two years, and then we started taking on the Learning Lions kids. We started with 30 and now we're up to 100 of those lovely children and 10 women graduates of our empowerment program.

That's amazing. What do you think will change with the Betasab Global Family Initiative in the next five years?

If all of my dreams come true, we will have much more financial stability, we will have the capacity to expand in number of beneficiaries, and expand the programs. For example, wouldn't it be great if we could also do parental or guardian trainings once a month? I'd like to see not only the benefit to them, but also the investment by the mothers for their children in the program. A lot of our mothers can't help with homework necessarily because they haven't gone that far in school themselves, so wouldn't it be great, for example, if we could have a tutoring program for some of those kids, and really focus on helping them not only stay in school, but really succeed in school, in maximizing their potential. Certainly getting the women's program up and running with more beneficiaries is another goal; there are a lot of women who would love to feel more stable and secure, and not just be doing pick-up work when it comes which is how many of them are surviving, often with multiple children. If all of my dreams came true, we would have some kind of sustainable income stream in Ethiopia. For example, our prime interest is in opening a school that would be something we could slide-scale our own orphans into, potentially slide-scale other local kids while

being a really high-quality institution that would be desirable for all local children. One of the other things that I plan to do is to send children's books I've collected over the years over there. I want to have a lending library or a reading room for the children, not just for the group home children, but for the local children, too.

What would you tell someone who is thinking of donating?

I would say, "Yes, please!" One of the things that I think is really great and powerful about the Betasab Global Family Initiative is our size: it is really small. Of course, it's also one of our challenges. What it means, really though, is that when I'm talking to you about group home children, I'm not talking to you about 400 random children whose names we don't know; I'm talking to you about Yordanos – who changed her mind from wanting to be a nurse to wanting to being a doctor after being in our program because she saw she didn't actually have to stop, she could be anything she wanted to be. I'm talking to you about Solomon – who could draw a microscope from memory in fifth grade - and wants to be a biochemist because he wants to help make medicines. Or I'm talking about Meliku – who wants to be a truck driver because he loves the freedom, he loves the road! So the idea is that you can be involved and make a serious difference with a small organization in a personal and individual way. If you're wondering whether the money you donate to an organization like ours has a profound impact, well, it does. You can come to know our project really well; it's really transparent. If you want to go over there anytime, you go. Visitors are always welcome. At the College, I still would love student support; I've had research assistants and volunteers go over, but I'm still looking for more ownership in the student population. I would love for a club to take us on!

To read Tara Affolter's "faculty minute" honoring our wonderful colleague Claudia Cooper, [please click here](#).

FALL 2018 STUDENT TEACHERS

BY CRYSTAL FARKASCHEK '19



Back row: Irene Margiotta, Tracy Weston, Avery Travis
Front row: Crystal Farkaschek, Bekah White, Elissa DeNunzio, Sarah Koch

During the fall of 2018, the following Middlebury College students completed their student teaching semester in Addison Central School District:

Mary Hogan Elementary School

- 1st Grade: Elissa with Shauna Lee
- 3rd Grade: Crystal with Elizabeth Thacker
- 5th Grade: Sarah with Brandi Corbett

Weybridge Elementary School

- 3rd & 4th Grade: Bekah with Catherine Canavan

Middlebury Union High School

- 9th & 10th Grade English: Irene with Ben Krahn
- Physics and Chemistry: Avery with Jay Harrington

At the end of the semester, the student teachers gave presentations on their teaching philosophies and what they learned over the course of the semester. With the guidance of their mentor teachers, the student teachers were able to not only create and teach their own personalized units, but also learned how to create curriculum that is engaging and representative of their students. Through forming relationships with their students, the student teachers were able to understand their class as individuals and as learners, allowing them to create deeper connections and access points into learning.

Student teachers began their semester in August engaging with professional development training within the district and in their specific schools. Professional development ranged from curriculum development, assessment techniques and tools, trauma-informed learning, and ALICE training, amongst other professional development with their mentor teacher.

The hours were long, and the days flew by as the student teachers quickly became more confident and competent in their teaching. Teaching requires perseverance at the individual level, but with the support of the Education Studies department and the individual departments within the school district, student teachers were able to soar alongside their students. Weekly seminar as a cohort allowed the student teachers to share their experiences with each other and further provided an avenue for reflection, growth, and community building.

While many of us still see our students, we all miss them dearly and wouldn't change our student teaching experience for anything!

Student Teacher Updates

Elissa DeNunzio '18 is finishing the school year as a long-term substitute at the Mary Hogan School here in Middlebury.

Avery Travis '18 is now living in Bethesda, MD, where she is a long-term substitute teaching Foundations of Computer Science at Wootton High School in Montgomery, MD.

Sarah Koch '18.5 is working as a Paraprofessional in Austin, Texas at Baty Elementary School. She'll be working at her canoe trip summer camp again this summer in Ontario.

Irene Margiotta '19 will be a Teaching Fellow at North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka, IL. The position is part of the Independent School Teaching Residency program at UPenn, so over the course of two years she will be teaching 9th and 10th grade English at North Shore and working towards her Master's of Science in Education at UPenn.

Bekah White '19 will be working at Weybridge Elementary School as the new 4th/5th grade classroom teacher beginning in August.

Crystal Farkaschek '19 will be continuing her interviews for K-6 teaching positions in the Chicago area.

GRADUATING SENIORS & AWARDS

Congratulations to our Winter and Spring graduates!

Winter 2019, Class of 2018.5, Minors

Sarah Koch*
Samantha Pearl
Julia Sprague

Spring Class of 2019, Minors

Kahari Blue	Megan Mahoney
Ellen Colton	Lillian Massaro
Adam Druckman	Jack Parker*
Sarah Gratz	Audrey Pan
Gisel Hernandez	Lulu Zhou

Spring Class of 2019, Double Majors

Crystal Farkaschek*, EDST & Sociology
Irene Margiotta*, EDST & English and American Lit.
Bekah White*, EDST & Psychology

2018-2019 Awards

Norma Jean Rowell Noble Prize in Education Studies: Crystal Farkaschek

John and Irene Mangione Memorial Award in Education Studies (Elementary): Bekah White

John and Irene Mangione Memorial Award in Education Studies (Secondary): Irene Margiotta

*Completed all requirements for VT teacher licensure

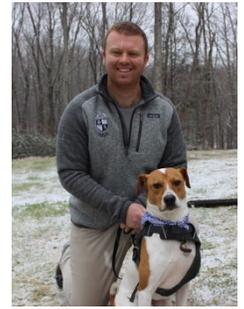
RECENT GRADUATES

Brittany Parker Dombroski '17 is a sixth-grade math teacher at Manchester Elementary/Middle School in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, VT. She was married in October 2018.

Meg Poterba '17 is a middle school science and math teacher at Dexter Southfield School in Brookline, MA. She is now their Assistant Director of Sci-Tech Camp and Director of Girls in Science Camp. She also coaches middle school girls' soccer and basketball, and is thinking about pursuing a Master's degree in counseling.



Harrison Schroder 17.5 is living in Middleburg, VA where he is a science teacher at The Hill School. He has a new dog named Obi who he adopted a few months ago and is almost two years old.



Joey LaLiberte '18 (right) is a teacher and coach at the Delbarton School in Morristown, NJ. In March, he and **Steve Bissainthe '18** (left) visited Joshua Tree National Park. Steve is now a Field Artillery Officer in the US Army, stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Francia Martinez '17 (right) has been accepted into graduate school at USC for a Master's in applied psychology beginning in the fall. Until then, she will continue to work at a non-profit (Hub Cities Consortium), and describes her role as "helping those who did not have the chance to get a good education to secure job and educational opportunities." In February, Francia visited **Kristina Ohl '17** (left) in Colorado. Kristina is living in Longmont, where she is an elementary STEM teacher at Timberline PK-8.



Closer to campus, **Chelsea Colby '17.5** (right) and **Nora O'Leary '17** are finishing their first year of teaching in Addison Central School District. Chelsea is a first- and second-grade teacher at Cornwall Elementary, and Nora is a fifth-grade teacher at Mary Hogan.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

In August 2017, Middlebury College President Laurie Patton and ACSD Superintendent Peter Burrows signed a Memorandum of Understanding that reaffirmed the close ties between the college and ACSD, and set in motion the formation of a Professional Development School ([PDS](#)). A PDS is a school-college partnership that provides a framework to reimagine an infrastructure that will lead to a teacher induction process extending from the first field placement in a pre-service program to a master teacher's ongoing evolution as a teacher and human being.

For the past two years, ACSD teachers, administrators, EDST faculty, and College faculty and staff have worked together to design our PDS. Our mission statement and goals are as follows:

Mission Statement: The PDS, through a commitment to democratic inquiry, prepares and sustains educators to be knowledgeable, principled, courageous decision makers to create a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world.

Goals: To embody the commitment to equity and access to every aspect of the curriculum, the PDS has four main goals:

1. P-16 students: Increase learning for all students by creating enhanced learning environments where effective curricular, instructional, and organizational practices are used to ensure that all students reach their full potential as students and as persons.

2. Teacher candidates: Provide teacher candidates with consistent opportunities to learn the craft of teaching and learning to high and inclusive standards through systematic school-based practice.

3. P-16 faculty and staff: Provide meaningful, reflective professional development for school and college faculty and staff, based on their evolving needs and collaboratively developed by them.

4. Research and communication: Support scholarly inquiry and the advancement of knowledge in teaching and learning, especially through collaboratively designed inquiry, and engage the local community to share learning.

Related to our third goal, beginning next school year the Education Studies program will start offering graduate level courses that are designed to meet the needs of local P-12 teachers. The first course will be led by Professor Jonathan Miller-Lane and focus on Individuals and Society. The following year (2020-2021) a course will be offered in the sciences, and a 2021-2022 course will focus on mathematics. We are very excited to be able to develop and provide high quality, "home grown" PD through these new graduate courses.

Related to our fourth goal, we will have our first annual PDS Conference on Teaching and Learning on June 3, 2020, and invite colleagues and community members to save the date and join us (more information forthcoming).

You can read more about our Professional Development School, graduate courses, and upcoming projects [at this website](#).

FOR CURRENT STUDENTS

BY CRYSTAL FARKASCHEK '19

Education Studies students have participated in internships and summer opportunities at the following organizations. More details about their experiences at the different sites can be found at [Ed. Studies Summer Opportunities](#).

- **Avery Travis:** *Teaching Experience for Undergraduates sponsored by the National Science Foundation, Georgetown Summer Institute of Teaching and Learning*
- **Bekah White:** *FLS International*
- **Bryan Martinez-Brito:** *Camp Starfish, Teaching Experiences for Undergraduates at Liberal Arts Colleges*
- **Carolina Huff-Sierra:** *Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership*
- **Cece Alter:** *Education Internship at the Children's Creativity Museum*
- **Crystal Farkaschek:** *Breakthrough Collaborative Twin Cities*
- **Emily Kelly:** *Summer Field Studies, Camp Manito-Wish (CMY)*
- **Jack Parker:** *Breakthrough Collaborative Norfolk Academy*
- **Irene Margiotta:** *Livingston High School Summer Academy, West Morris Mendham High School*
- **Mark Gross:** *Camp Akeela*
- **Sarah Koch:** *Camp Northway Lodge*

FACULTY

In addition to teaching, we've been working on some other projects, a few of which we'll highlight here.

Tara Affolter published a book titled [Through the Fog: Towards Inclusive Anti-racist Teaching](#). She also had a cameo in a recent College musical, and is looking forward to teaching pre-K again this summer in Madison, WI.

Jonathan Miller-Lane is about to conclude his time as the Faculty Head of Wonnacott Commons and the lead professor of both JusTalks and the Sophomore Seminar in the Liberal Arts. Next year he will be on sabbatical in Cornwall and spending his time writing about white supremacy and teaching the new Individuals and Societies graduate course for ACSD teachers.

Tracy Weston's publications this year include a chapter in the *Handbook of Research on Field-Based Teacher Education*, which describes the methods course partnership with Weybridge Elementary School as a model to improve coherence in teacher education. She also taught a new course in Environmental Education, and is very proud of her Posse for graduating.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Alums: To share an update in the fall newsletter, [please complete this form](#).

To receive future newsletters, [please let us know your email address](#).

You can find some licensure students and faculty on Twitter using #MidTeachers.