

## **Alumni Spotlight**

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### **What led you to Stanford and the GSE?**

I was in my 14th year of full-time teaching and taking classes at night in a 15-graduate credit program called Bilingual/ESL Teacher Leadership Academy (BETLA) at Bank Street College in 2010–11. This was a scholarship program funded by New York State for 25 teachers in New York City to share practices for teaching English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs). I had not been in an academic setting since graduating from my MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program at Teachers College Columbia University in 1997. It was exciting to read, write, and discuss teaching, teacher leadership, and education scholarship. Some of our readings were written by researchers at the GSE. I wanted to keep learning and take a break from teaching, so I applied to the GSE. I was also drawn to Stanford because I had been attending meditation retreats in California for a couple of summers.

### **How did your education and time at the GSE inform your career and life path?**

While in BETLA in 2011, I had attended an information session about National Board Certification in Teaching— the gold standard in teaching. In 2012, I was sitting in the lobby of CERAS and straight ahead of me was the office door of Stanford's National Board Resource Center. Kenji Hakuta, my advisor, had also talked about board certification in a class I took with him. Stanford Professor Emerita Linda Darling-Hammond and former Stanford Professor Lee Schulman had also been heavily involved in National Board Certification for Teachers. While sitting for a talk in the CERAS auditorium, someone pointed out Lee Schulman to me. I was an intern at SCOPE for one of Linda's projects, but I only saw her a handful of times as she was often busy and traveling. In 2013–14, I pursued and achieved National Board Certification in Teaching English as a New Language. There was also so much discussion at Stanford about international education, which got me curious. In 2017, I applied and was awarded a Fulbright Award for Teachers to study the education system in Singapore for four months. A couple of years later, I read about a GSE alumna who was awarded a Fund for Teachers fellowship in the GSE's Alumni Connector e-newsletter. As a student in Kenji and Guadalupe's bilingualism classes, we had discussed the possibility of true bilingualism. So, in 2019, I applied to learn Chinese (Mandarin) language in Taiwan and Beijing, China, for seven weeks and was awarded a fellowship from Fund for Teachers to do so. I took Chinese language classes for several years after that summer until my district changed curricula and I needed to spend time learning it.

### **Who were the key stakeholders or mentors in your journey?**

I'm so grateful for all my professors at the GSE, who really wanted us to learn and do well. I wasn't too interested in sociology when I entered Stanford, but I soon became interested thanks to the many sociologists at the GSE. What I also didn't know when I applied to the GSE was that

my former schools superintendent, Tony Alvarado, had taught and given the Cubberley lecture at the GSE four years before I became a student. I didn't think a class on the History of School Reform would be interesting or pertinent to me, but I ended up having so much to say about how Tony invested resources so teachers in my district could receive professional development to do our jobs effectively.

**What key events or memories have shaped your experience to date?**

Like National Board Certification, Tony sought to professionalize the field of teaching. I researched and wrote papers for both my History of School Reform and Organizational Studies courses about the educational leadership in my school district. I called current and former teachers in my district in NYC and former and current principals to interview them about Tony's reforms. Ultimately, I interviewed Tony himself. I had not spoken to him before as a teacher in his district in his last year and a half before he left for San Diego. It was exciting to read about his reforms written by researchers, including those at the GSE, to have experienced the reforms, and then to talk to him about his thoughts on education.

**What are you doing now and/or what is next in your career path?**

Though not the tech-savviest, I've been learning how to use AI when planning learning activities for my Multilingual Learners (MLLs). It's saved me some time and energy and has facilitated the learning of vocabulary words for my students with images, definitions, and a sentence, for example. I'll be co-presenting on how to use AI in a city-wide conference for teachers of MLLs in June. What's next in my career path is I plan to continue teaching my students and sharing teaching practices with fellow educators as a teacher leader.

**What advice or message would you like to share with your alumni peers, future graduates, and aspiring GSE students?**

As I begin my 30th year of teaching, I am grateful for all the professional learning opportunities I've been fortunate enough to have received throughout my career as an educator. It has kept the work of teaching intellectually engaging. Since graduating from the GSE, I've been taking guitar and vocal lessons, which have been fun and challenging. It's important to learn something new and be a student. My advice is to keep learning and exploring new possibilities.