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Faculty Profile

Joanne Newcombe



Photograph by David Wilson

With the enormous challenges and opportunities in the field of education in Massachusetts, faculty members in the School of Education and Allied are making significant contributions to the quality of instruction, the formation of curriculum and the preparation of administrators. Dr. Joanne Newcombe, the Acting Chair of the Secondary Education and Professional Programs Department, is one faculty member who has taken up the challenges and embraced the opportunities as she works tirelessly to improve education both here in Massachusetts and in the international community.

Dr. Newcombe's primary interest involves working in the area of international education. She has spent considerable time abroad helping to build educational and cultural ties with educators in countries such as Mexico, Italy, Turkey and Brazil. Dr. Newcombe is convinced of the importance of developing relationships with educators, students and the general population in other countries and breaking down the walls that often separate people. In the coming months and years she will continue her globetrotting as she assists school systems in less developed countries.

When she is not traveling the world Dr. Newcombe has developed a number of key initiatives to enhance education in southeastern Massachusetts. Recently she formed a "support group" for regional superintendents as they grapple with their complex and demanding jobs. She meets with a group of twelve superintendents twice a month and provides both a comforting sounding board and the source of problem-solving expertise. During these difficult times for education in Massachusetts, Dr. Newcombe's "support group" has become critical for local administrators.

Dr. Newcombe has also lent her expertise to the MCAS process. She is a member of a traveling team of education leaders who visit local schools to provide them with advice on how they can improve instruction and formulate new curricula that meet the state frameworks. Dr. Newcombe views her role as leading a dialogue with faculty, administrators, students and parents. Improving MCAS scores in the view of Dr. Newcombe is a responsibility of a whole community.

Added to these responsibilities Dr. Newcombe has a busy schedule at the college as she serves as a thesis mentor for those involved in the Educational Leadership program. Many of her students have gone on to attain their doctorate through the University of Massachusetts at Lowell program, an accomplishment that she is quite proud of. Dr. Newcombe is also involved in broadening the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) program to communities such as New Bedford, Barnstable, and Plymouth.

At the core of Dr. Newcombe's professional expertise is her involvement in educational leadership. She is the co-chair of the Center for Public School Leadership at the college and coordinator of the Curriculum Leadership Center. Both of these centers serve as valuable resources to educators and administrators as they seek to strengthen the quality of education in Massachusetts. Dr. Newcombe is certainly one of the key players in bringing about education reform and enhancing educational leadership in this region.

In talking to Dr. Newcombe it becomes obvious very quickly that she is passionate about her work and has no intention of cutting back on her involvement in an ever-growing range of duties. Her real passion, however, is international education and particularly the advancement of educational opportunities for women. She has formed a relationship with the University of Madras in India where she has read four dissertations written by female doctoral students. Dr. Newcombe's commitment in the future will likely be to use her experience and her expertise to provide new opportunities for women through higher education. It is a daunting task, but with her stellar record of achievement, there are no limits to success.