

“I was tired of just ‘talking’ and wanted to do something more hands-on,” Schwanenflugel said. “I talked about pre-literacy, and she talked about the young mothers’ class, and it just emerged from that.”

The goal is for young mothers to learn more about how to promote their children’s literacy and language development, Schwanenflugel said. “We’ve talked about how to encourage the use of environmental print and to evaluate its use in childcare centers their children may attend and how to encourage language development through positive parenting and reading books to children in the home. I’ve stuck pretty close to what we know about best practices from research.”

The pre-literacy class is one of several ways the College is helping the high school serve the needs of its students through the COE-PLC partnership.

On another day, Elizabeth Fairweather and Rebecca Nordin, doctoral students in gifted and creative education, meet with students they are mentoring for their senior Capstone projects in psychology. With the help of their mentors, the students are researching occupations in the field of psychology and steps they need to take to prepare for those positions.

“My major goal has been to help her become familiar with the route to her chosen career, including the college application process, scholarship searches, the college experience and the career itself,” Nordin said. “I want her to be aware of programs and opportunities that she can take advantage of. This can be an overwhelming process, and I hope that I can make it easier for her by giving her an overview and answering her questions.”

Nordin has helped her mentee, Tiffany Cooper, search for colleges that offer programs in her area of interest and discussed a timeline for taking her SAT and completing college applications.

“I also suggested a way she could organize information, including deadlines and costs,” Nordin said. “Overall, I am using our time together to allow her to think about, learn about and ask questions about her career future.”

In another collaborative effort with Classic City High, students in UGA’s chapter of the Math Educators of America are helping high school students with advanced algebra problems in preparation for end-of-course tests and graduation tests.

Helping to link students with mentors and tutors is one of the priorities of Bonnie Cramond, a professor of gifted and creative education, director of UGA’s Torrance Center



Rebecca Nordin (L), a UGA doctoral student in gifted education, mentors Tiffany Cooper, a student at Classic City High School

for Creativity and Talent Development and coordinator of the COE-PLC partnership, and her graduate assistant, Kathleen Diez Kuss, a doctoral student in gifted and creative education. Working with UGA faculty members Jenny Penny Oliver and Tracie Costantino and staff member Scott Conklin, they have:

- participated in school improvement committee meetings that are part of the Clarke County School System re-accreditation process;
- donated bookstore gift certificates to PLC graduates;
- helped arrange for PLC teachers and students to obtain UGA library cards and campus parking passes so they can do research at the library;
- contacted the Georgia Aquarium and UGA College of Veterinary Medicine to help arrange for science student field trips;
- attended a day-long planning retreat at the beginning of the school year to become familiar with school priorities and ways the College could help the PLC staff reach goals; and
- helped arrange for COE grant writer Christa Harrelson Deissler to conduct a grant workshop and helped PLC staff apply for a grant to open a library at the school.

After the initial year of the partnership with the PLC, additional plans are being made for increasing the College’s collaborative service with the school in several areas for next year:

- **Enrichment:** Encouraging involvement of other UGA faculty in the partnership through such activities as hosting student field trips, science labs or classes on

campus; providing talks by UGA professors and graduate students on everything from careers to research techniques; arranging for students to attend concerts, art shows and other fine arts events as well as astronomy evenings on campus; soliciting donations of books for the PLC students and their young children who attend the daycare center there as well as donations of money and supplies, such as discarded computers and science lab equipment. Presently, the school does not have a science lab.

- **Mentoring and tutoring:** Plans are being made for PLC students to take the high-school Interestalyzer test by Joseph Renzulli, a leading researcher in the field of gifted education, to determine students’ interests. Information from the questionnaire will be used to help link mentors and students and to plan enrichment opportunities. The goal for next year is to match each student with a mentor who shares the student’s interests. This is one of the strategies aimed at increasing the number of students who graduate in a timely manner from the school. This spring, out of 23 students who could have graduated, 8 actually donned the cap and gown on May 17. The others have postponed graduation until the summer or fall. Such postponements drive up the cost of their education and increase the chances that life events will postpone graduation even further. Helping students to form plans for their lives after graduation will be a focus of the mentorships. The Interestalyzer results also will be used to match these high school students with service learning positions, some of which