



School Profile

The
Koan
School

What is the Koan School?

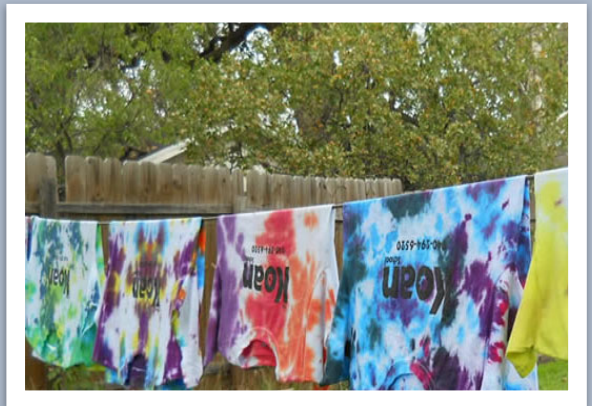
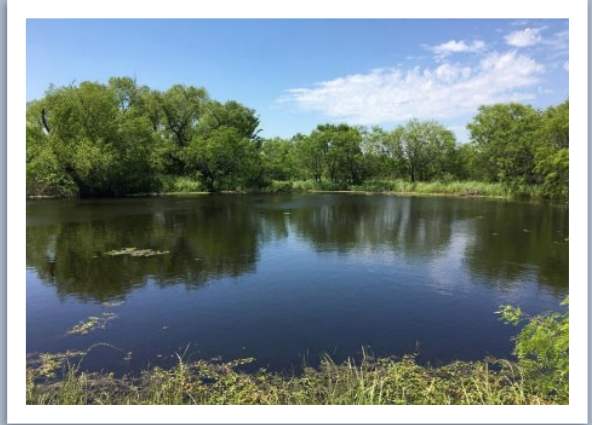
Koan School is a 501c3 non-profit private school serving students in Pre-K through 12th grade. Our mission is to provide a more affordable alternative for private education that meets the unique needs of diverse groups of learners in our community.

In order to provide a holistic curriculum for our students, we provide integrated academics with an equal emphasis on fluency and project-based learning, as well as personal and social education, including community service opportunities, and cultural and arts education. Koan School's learning environment promotes independence, critical and creative thinking, and global awareness.

Koan opened in January of 2013 with four middle school students. We now have more than 50 full-time students and have expanded to include Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.

The school is located on a beautiful 15 acre farmstead, complete with animals, ponds, and woods for exploring. The main building on the property was converted from a single-family home into a charming 3,200 square foot, 5-room school house.

Koan School is accredited through the North Central Association (NCA) Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. We are also a member of North Texas Progressive Schools (NTxPS).



How do we teach?

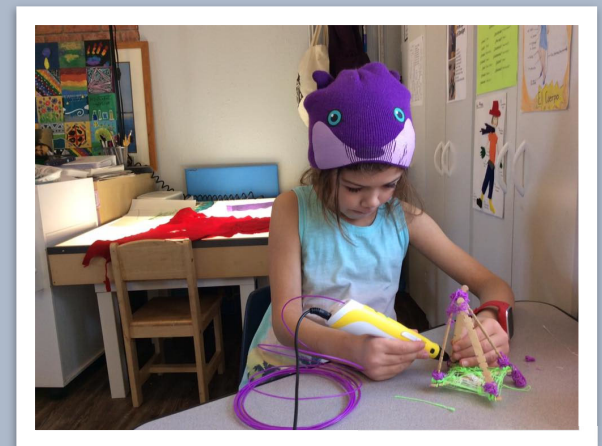
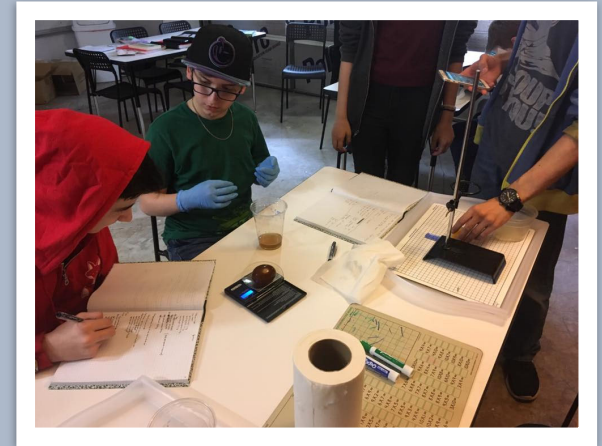
At Koan School, we are not dogmatic in our approach. However, many of our pedagogical choices line up with those of the Progressive Education movement.

Goals for Students of Progressive Education:

- Be engaged and proactive members of a global community
- Be prepared for jobs of the future
- Possess independent problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Have sustained interest in lifelong learning for the sake of learning rather than as a way to earn rewards

How we accomplish those goals:

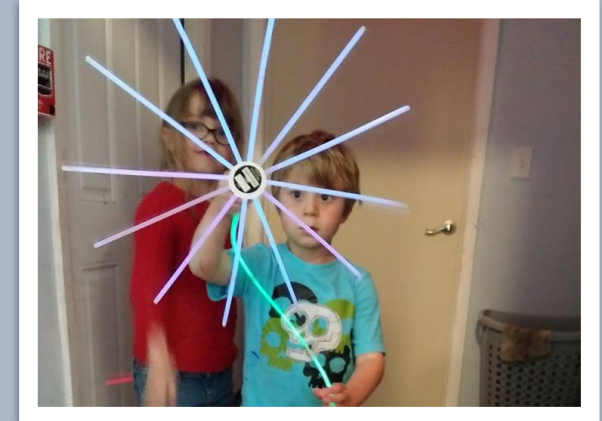
- Provide a hands-on learning environment and opportunities for active learning
- Rather than always giving students the “right” answer, we provide them with access to materials that will help them learn more about the world around them
- Give students time to expand their knowledge on their own areas of interest
- Use collaborative and cooperative group work to increase confidence as a learner and mentor
- Encourage entrepreneurship
- Incorporate service-learning opportunities
- Individualize learning goals with an emphasis on mastery
- Focus on understanding and participation, as opposed to just rote knowledge
- Use technology as a teaching and learning tool
- Assessment is formative and on-going, and often the natural result of learning objectives



Differences between Traditional and Progressive Education

Traditional	Progressive
School is a preparation for life.	School is a part of life.
Learners are passive absorbers of information and authority.	Learners are active participants, problem solvers, and planners.
Teachers are sources of information and authority.	Teachers are facilitators, guides who foster thinking.
Parents are outsiders and uninvolved.	Parents are the primary teachers, goal setters, and planners, and serve as resources.
Community is separate from school, except for funding.	Community is an extension of the classroom.
Decision-making is centrally based and administratively delivered.	Decision-making is shared by all constituent groups.
Program is determined by external criteria, particularly test results.	Program is determined by mission, philosophy, and goals for graduates.
Learning is linear, with factual accumulation and skill mastery.	Learning is spiral, with depth and breadth as goals.
Knowledge is absorbed through lectures, worksheets, and texts.	Knowledge is constructed through play, direct experience, and social interaction.
Instruction is linear and largely based on correct answers.	Instruction is related to central questions and inquiry, often generated by the children.
Disciplines, particularly language and math, are separated.	Disciplines are integrated as children make connections.
Skills are taught discretely and are viewed as goals.	Skills are related to content and are viewed as tools.
Assessment is norm-referenced, external, and graded.	Assessment is benchmarked, has many forms, and is progress-oriented.
Success is competitively based, derived from recall and memory, and specific to a time/place.	Success is determined through application over time, through collaboration.
Products are the end point.	Products are subsumed by process considerations.
Intelligence is a measure of linguistic and logical/mathematical abilities.	Intelligence is recognized as varied, includes the arts, and is measured in real-life problem-solving.
School is a task to be endured.	School is a challenging and fun part of life.

Source: Robert G. Peters, with thanks to the books *Schools of Quality*, by John Jay Bonstigl, and *In Search of Understanding*, by Martin C. Brooks and Jaqueline Grennon, *Independent Schools*. Published by the [National Association of Independent Schools](#).



Our Community

- We participate in local sustainability programs, such as Keep Denton Beautiful and Denton Sustainable Schools. Koan School has won first place in the Primary or Special Schools categories in the Denton Sustainable Schools program since the 2016-2017 school year. We have also received numerous grants for our agricultural programs. This year, we are working with a community partner to build an aquaculture garden on campus.
- We supervise students from University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University each semester. Some students complete internships and practica at Koan School. Others complete community outreach hours required for coursework, like the students from the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science. Some university students also develop and run educational research that benefits our students, themselves, and their field of study. For example, in the fall of 2017, Koan School participated in mindfulness research being conducted by faculty and students from the Department of Psychology at the University of North Texas. This program was designed to increase empathy and prosocial behaviors.
- We participate in outreach on behalf of many other non-profit organizations in Denton as well. These partnerships give our students important opportunities to interact meaningfully in the community by volunteering, participating in fundraising, setting up drives for social and animal welfare agencies, and meeting other community members who have common interests.
- We also host other low-cost educational programs each month. We currently partner with Childbloom Guitar Program to provide music education opportunities for members of our community.



What do we teach?

LOWER ELEMENTARY – PK – 1ST GRADE

8:15 Drop off begins – Students play outside
8:45 Circle Time
9:15 Work Cycle
11:10 World Languages (MWF) or Art (TTh)
12:00 Lunch and Recess
1:30 Story Time
2:00 STEM Workshop (MWF) or Yoga (TTh)
3:15 Clean-up
3:30 Dismissal

MIDDLE ELEMENTARY – 2ND & 3RD GRADE

8:15 Drop off begins – Students play outside
8:45 Circle Time
9:45 Work Cycle
11:10 World Languages (MWF) or Art (TTh)
12:00 Lunch and Recess
1:15 Reading
2:00 Electives (MWF) or STEM Workshop (TTh)
3:15 Clean-up
3:30 Dismissal

UPPER ELEMENTARY – 4TH & 5TH GRADE

8:15 Drop off begins – Students play outside
8:45 Math & Science Block
10:15 Break
10:45 ELA & Humanities Block
12:30 Lunch and Recess
1:15 World Languages
2:00 Electives (MWF), STEM Workshop (TTh)
3:15 Clean-up
3:30 Dismissal



What do we teach?

MIDDLE SCHOOL – 6TH – 8TH GRADE

- 8:15 Drop off begins – Students play outside
- 8:30 ELA & Humanities Block
- 10:20 Break
- 10:40 Math & Science Block
- 12:30 Lunch and Recess
- 1:15 World Languages
- 2:00 Project Work (MW), STEM Workshop (TTh), Electives (F)
- 3:15 Clean-up
- 3:30 Dismissal

HIGH SCHOOL – 9TH – 12TH GRADE

- 8:15 Drop off begins
- 8:30 Settle In (gardening, logic puzzles, extra instruction, etc.)
- 9:00 Math
- 10:00 World Languages
- 11:00 Study Hall
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 History (MW), Science (TTh), Current Events (F)
- 2:15 ELA (MTWTh), Electives (F)
- 3:15 Clean-up
- 3:30 Study Hall
- 4:30 Dismissal



What do we teach?

Below is a list of electives and after school clubs offered in recent years.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES	INSTRUCTORS & PROGRAMS
AP Study Hall	Koan Faculty
Arts & Crafts	Bedarra Pope, Koan Faculty
Chess Club	Koan Faculty
Creative Movement	Ilana Morgan, Community Dance Center at Texas Woman's University
Dungeons & Dragons	Hayden Dent, Koan Faculty
FIRST LEGO League/Jr. Teams	Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science Students at University of North Texas
French Club	Soline D'Haussy, Koan Faculty
Geography Club	Amanda Newton, Koan Faculty
Girls' Engineering Club	Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science Students at University of North Texas
Guitar Lessons	Childbloom Guitar Program (individual and group lessons, fee based)
Homesteading Activities	Amanda Newton, Koan Faculty
Japanese Club	Erica Walsh, Koan Faculty
Mock Trial	Dr. Greg Gullion, Texas Wesleyan University
Music, Theater, & Dance	Matt Ludlam, Ludlam Dramatics
Philosophy for Children	Rika Tsuji and Benn Johnson, University of North Texas
Physical Education	Koan Faculty
Roots & Shoots	Koan Faculty
Running Club	Liz Hinley, KMF Performance
Small Engine Repair	Dr. Greg Gullion, Texas Wesleyan University
STEM Workshop	Koan Faculty
Winston Science Competition	Koan Faculty
Woodshop	Soline D'Haussy, Koan Faculty
Writer's Workshop	Write Now Program, Texas Woman's University
Yoga & Movement	Shoshana McIntosh, Koan Faculty

What do we teach?

High Schoolers at Koan have also participated in the following academic and enrichment programs:

DUAL CREDIT AT TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY & NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE

The Dual Credit - High School Advantage Program is a great way for qualified Koan School students to get a head start on their college education. Not only can students attend courses that will apply toward both their high school and college graduations, but they also benefit from the college learning environment at a fraction of the price. Students may have the opportunity to take dual credit at Koan, TWU, or NCTC.



ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations. The AP curriculum for each of the various subjects is created for the College Board by a panel of experts and college-level educators in that field of study. For a high school course to have the designation, the course must be audited by the College Board to ascertain that it satisfies the AP curriculum. If the course is approved, the school may use the AP designation and the course will be publicly listed on the AP Course Ledger. These courses are provided on the Koan School campus.



Our students have received credit for and/or taken AP exams in the following areas:

- Art History
- English Language & Composition
- Biology, Environmental Science, Physics
- French, Japanese, and Spanish Language & Culture
- Human Geography, Comparative Government

STUDY ABROAD

In addition to our own study abroad program, which currently offers up to 3 month stays in France, Japan, and Costa Rica, Koan students have participated in the U.S. State Department's Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES Abroad) program, which provides competitive merit-based scholarships for U.S. citizens in secondary school (age 15-18.5) to study for one academic year in select countries. Students have also participated in the Youth Ambassadors Program, which brings together high school students and adult mentors from across the Western Hemisphere.



Who are we?

Faculty & Staff

CLASSROOM FACILITATORS

Classroom facilitators are responsible for greeting and dismissing their students each day. They conduct classes in their areas of expertise, and oversee transitions to and from other classes. They also:

- Serve as the first point of contact for families on behalf of themselves and the enrichment faculty
- Coordinate long and short-term planning for the individual needs of students
- Coordinate lesson plans with other teachers to reinforce student knowledge on an interdisciplinary basis
- Coordinate assessments in math, reading, and writing and communicate the results to families
- Conduct parent-teacher conferences at least once per semester, and more often if necessary
- Prepare students adequately for any additional assessments they wish to take (e.g., PSAT)
- Evaluate student progress toward their own learning objectives
- Provide a positive, mindful, and challenging learning environment
- Engage in appropriate classroom management / discipline and work with students to develop reasonable, agreed-upon classroom norms and rules

ENRICHMENT FACULTY

Enrichment Faculty conduct classes in their areas of expertise across multiple classrooms, such as World Languages, Art, etc. Enrichment Faculty may also sub for Classroom Facilitators and accompany classes on field trips as needed.

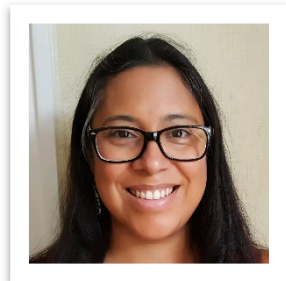
Who are we?

CLASSROOM FACILITATORS



LOWER ELEMENTARY FACILITATOR | Jeanne Webb

Jeanne Webb led a Primary Montessori classroom for ten years before coming to Koan School in 2013. She also led an early childhood music class for several years and taught private piano lessons. After graduating from the University of North Texas in 2002, Jeanne earned her Early Childhood Montessori credential with Southwestern Montessori Training Center in 2005. She began Elementary Montessori training at the Shelton School in 2008. Jeanne integrates activities in her classroom that nurture peaceful living skills in children. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family and playing piano.



LOWER ELEMENTARY FACILITATOR | Maya Leptuch, M.A.

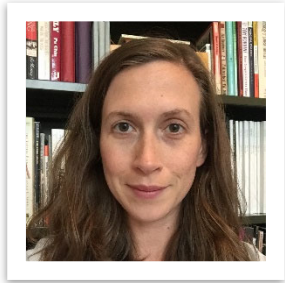
Maya Leptuch is a French citizen who traveled all over the world before moving to New York for high school. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with a Minor in Linguistics from Oklahoma University. She then moved to Denton with her husband and received a Master of Arts in Teaching from Texas Women's University. Maya was a Pre-K ESL teacher for the Dallas Independent School District for one year and a Kinder, first and 3rd grade bilingual teacher for 7 years for the Denton Independent School District at Newton Rayzor Elementary IB World School. Maya brings her multi-cultural experiences to the classroom to foster diversity, such as an understanding of differing perspectives, while providing inquiry-based learning opportunities for her students. Maya enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, as well as dancing and reading. Maya's family has been a part of Koan School for many years, and she became a faculty member in 2018.



UPPER ELEMENTARY FACILITATOR | Bedarra Pope, B.F.A.

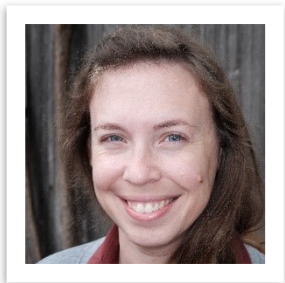
Bedarra earned her BFA in Art Education from the University of North Texas in 2010. She continued her education abroad studying art and Spanish in Spain and Mexico. Bedarra has over ten years of experience working with children in a Montessori setting and she spent several years employed as an activities director at an assisted living facility, where she gained valuable life experience. Since joining Koan in 2015, Bedarra has taught art, Spanish, camp class, AP art history, sewing, and facilitated numerous extended school day clubs. She loves crafts of all kinds, from weaving to junk sculptures, tie-dye to broom-making. Apart from arts and crafts, Bedarra enjoys spending time outdoors gardening, hiking, swimming, or spending time with her friends, family, and farm animals. After giving birth to her daughter, Zoe in March of 2020 Bedarra spent the first few months of the pandemic on maternity leave. For the 2020-2021 school year, she facilitated a small, neighborhood homeschool group at her family farm in Aubrey. She is excited to return to Koan School as a classroom facilitator in 2021-2022.

Who are we?



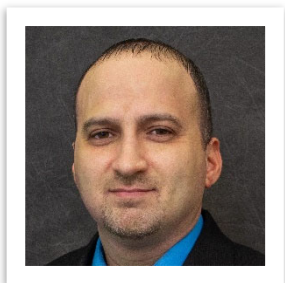
UPPER ELEMENTARY FACILITATOR | Shoshana McIntosh, M.A.

Shoshana McIntosh grew up in Michigan where she studied Creative Writing and Dance at Western Michigan University before moving to Texas. In between, she taught English as a foreign language in Taiwan, traveled in Asia, continued teaching English in Chicago, and lead a reading and math afterschool program in Chicago Public Schools for several years. After moving to Texas, Shoshana fell in love with teaching in museums and has the spent the last few years teaching art programs for all ages in local museums, schools, and non-profits. With a background in dance and teaching yoga, Shoshana has designed and taught lessons and workshops that invite teachers and students to incorporate movement in the classroom. No matter what subject she is teaching, she is passionate about helping her students engage with the world in meaningful ways and is committed to creating an environment that welcomes inquiry and thoughtful discussions. When she is not teaching, she enjoys playing with her young daughter, rock climbing, reading, writing poetry, and cooking delicious vegan food. Shoshana joined Koan in 2019.



MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITATOR | Amanda Newton

Amanda Newton co-founded the Koan School with Scott Warren and Heather Barahona in 2013, and she is committed to helping students learn in a positive, safe, and peaceful environment. In addition to teaching Middle School this year, Amanda currently serves as the Koan School Board President. She also participates in numerous community service organizations throughout DFW. When she is not at school or volunteering in the community, Amanda enjoys writing music, cooking, and traveling.



HIGH SCHOOL FACILITATOR | Gabriel Estrada

Gabriel Estrada is the incoming middle and high school Math and Science Teacher for the 2021-2022 academic year. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In addition, he has a Bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from the University of North Texas. Gabriel brings a wealth of educational and industry experience to Koan School. He was a full-time math teacher at Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School district for six years; he has over two years' experience teaching the math and science portions of the SAT & ACT in Huntington Learning Center; and he worked eight years as a manufacturing and quality engineer in Mexico and in Gainesville, Texas. Outside of school, Gabriel volunteers in his local church as the youth director and guitarist. Family is a big part of his life. He enjoys playing basketball, traveling, and teaching STEM to young people.

Who are we?

ADMIN & ENRICHMENT FACULTY



DIRECTOR | Greg Gullion, Ph.D.

Greg Gullion is the incoming Director of Koan School for the 2021-2022 school Year. Greg earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of North Texas in 2005. He worked as a professor for 18 years at Texas Wesleyan University and 4 years at Texas Woman's University and Texas A&M Commerce. Greg served in the role of administrative chair for 10 years and has successfully guided students, faculty, and two academic programs. He was honored as outstanding professor two times during his tenure at Texas Wesleyan University and was nominated for Carnegie Teacher of the Year in 2014. Greg and his family have been involved with Koan School since close to its inception. Both his children attended school at Koan, and his son graduated from Koan in 2020. Greg has previously taught a variety of courses at Koan on a volunteer basis, including small engine repair, mechanics, statistics, and mock trial. Outside of school and work, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, working on cars, and exploring the outdoors.



ENRICHMENT FACULTY | Soline D'Haussy, M.L.I.S.

A native of France, Soline came to the United States twenty years ago to be a language instructor at Indiana University. Her teaching experience also includes tutoring home-schooled children in French, leading French/American exchange programs for high school students in Brittany, France and teaching English in Hungary for a year. She holds a master's degree in Library and Information Sciences from the University of North Texas. She has been with Koan School since 2014. When she is not cooking, you can find her in her vegetable garden, tending to her chickens, building something really useful, or reading a good book.



ENRICHMENT FACULTY | Grace Chalker

Texas born and raised, Grace graduated from the University of North Texas with degrees in Linguistics and Japanese. She spent a year studying abroad at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto where she fell in love with Japan's history and culture. Upon graduating, Grace taught Japanese at Koan School for the 2017-2019 school years. She assisted with AP Japanese test prep, and planned and led an 18 day trip to Japan with her students. During the 2019-2021 school years, Grace worked as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) at junior high schools in Japan. She also continued her Japanese studies and passed the JLPT N2 exam. She is excited to be back at Koan this year to show students how fun learning a second language can be! In her free time, Grace enjoys practicing Japanese with her friends, rock climbing, tubing rivers, and playing video games and Ring Fit. Grace also likes attending anime conventions where she has volunteered her time as a translator for Japanese guests.

Who are we?



ENRICHMENT FACULTY | Wandysel Torres Galán, M.A

Wandysel Torres is a writer and a Spanish teacher. She has a master's degree in Creative Writing from the University of Sagrado Corazón in Puerto Rico. She holds a certification in Mediation as an Alternative Method for Conflict Resolution from the Judicial Branch and the School of Law of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. She completed a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. She published her first story book, *Diversas*, in 2019. She obtained an Honorable Mention in Best First Book at the prestigious 'International Latino Book Award 2020' contest, held in Los Angeles, California. She also obtained Honorable Mention in the First International Children's Story Contest 'Cuentos Domingueros 2021'. Her works have been published in various anthologies. She has collaborated with the Departments of Education and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, and the Academic Senate of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico (Fajardo Campus) and the Department of Spanish of the University of Puerto Rico (Carolina Campus) in the emphasis on equity of gender and the importance of contemporary Puerto Rican literature.

Contact Us!

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