

**Lauren Resnick by Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont**  
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*for Inside the Academy*

**What is the nature of your relationship with Lauren?**

We first met as colleagues and we immediately felt as if we had known each other for a long time - a feeling of friendship that deepened each time we met professionally and personally. In many ways, Lauren is like a dear older sister to me - even if, in fact, we weren't raised in the same "family" or academia and haven't even met that often. But when, occasionally, we have the opportunity to talk on the phone we always have the feeling of pursuing a conversation that was inadvertently stopped only a few days before.

When we first met, Lauren agreed to stay in my home. I had suggested this in order to take advantage of all the spare moments my young children and the heavy teaching load would leave us. And I felt so fortunate that Lauren accepted this unusual way of doing things! I remember the long evenings we had, looking at her data and mine, sharing the pleasure of discovering together children's creative reasoning in (supposedly standard) arithmetic tasks and the pleasure of the inner joy of experiencing how listening to young kids made us feel: we were accessing a world in which even the younger ones, even those who seemed to have "difficulties" as novices in arithmetic, were so intelligent! From then on we have shared a common enthusiasm for meeting minds "at work" in the classroom or out of school. We have also shared the pain of understanding how bureaucratic modes of interactions in school could induce students and teachers to believe that they were not "intelligent" enough to risk themselves into thinking - and shared the commitment to demonstrate that this is not true! With an incredible energy and a lot of work, Lauren has been struggling for this cause in her large country and in many places on all continents; this has inspired me in my more local involvements in science and education policy and in psychological research. Involved in promoting European cooperation in psychology of education, it has always been a pleasure for me to meet Lauren as an American partner truly interested in European scientific research and ready to share her experience and contacts.

**Please describe the details of one funny memory you have of Lauren.**

Not long ago we were attending a conference together in Italy, organized with limited means. On the first morning of this very hot summer, my husband and I found Lauren at breakfast in a very puzzled mood. She had spent a very bad night after a long journey: the neighbors were noisy; the door of the shower did not close well and the shower had been dripping all night; the ceiling was damaged and from time to time plaster dust fell on the bed, plus there was no air conditioning, of course... "It wasn't that bad" she kept saying ... trying to convince herself? We had been slightly luckier with our room and felt sorry for her, coming all the way from America to be greeted in such an uncomfortable way. The organizers of the conference were so busy solving hundreds of other problems that we decided to start looking for better housing for Lauren. At the end of the day, when we met Lauren again, we were proud of having found a nice hotel for her, in a much finer neighborhood, closer to the conference venue. But we had no chance to tell her! Because we found a totally enthusiastic Lauren: she had spent the morning walking around the blocks of houses of this poor district, entering small stores and bakeries, discussing with the man selling newspapers at the corner of the street, meeting a craftsman repairing violins in a very small shop and an artist making leather bags. She had been wandering around the few stalls of the small

local market. And now, in the late afternoon, when fresher air was bringing people back out on the streets, it seemed that everybody around knew her! When she entered the bar for a coffee she was greeted by a warm "Buona sera, mia cara"! And, next door, the panini was offered with a friendly "Amore"! "Ciao bella"! Everybody was smiling at her, trying to exchange a few words (successfully because Lauren understands some Italian), and she was made to feel part of the place. She felt so great that she couldn't even imagine that we would want her to change hotels! How could warm still air, leaks and dust matter in front of so much joyful and friendly zest for life?

**Tell us about X (this might be one or more key words that will remind Lauren of something others do not know about, and it should be "roast"-esque in nature). Please provide the "key words" here and then a brief description so I know about to what you are referring.**

The key-words could be : Skinner/ Bruner = a "normal" transition?

(I am sure you will enjoy listening to Lauren's memory of what happened when, as a young graduate student, after having been a member of Skinner's lab, she decided to discover another theoretical and methodological world of psychological research and went to Bruner. She had to fight her way as an autonomous thinker!

I would like to suggest that you not say too much when you elicit this memory so that it comes out spontaneously.)

**What do you think is Lauren's most significant, personal or professional accomplishment and why?**

It is impossible to pick out "the" most significant personal or professional accomplishment of Lauren for two reasons (at least):

- 1) they are so numerous that picking one out would unduly mask the others (i.e. "not see the forest for the trees").

- 2) they are all inter-connected. Lauren has always understood learning as "nested in society" and she has equally understood (since the beginning of her studies in History, or most probably even earlier) that society vitally needs to "learn" from experience and from others to become more intelligent (i.e., more creative, more knowledgeable, more social, more argumentatively minded, more dialogical) to solve its recurrent and present problems.

This has led Lauren to work simultaneously at different levels (the learner, the teacher, the school community, the local, national and international authorities), building projects nationally (with individual teachers, but also with districts or policy makers or scientific societies) and internationally. On all these levels, Lauren is not a "teacher-who-knows" (in spite of all that she knows) but an interlocutor in search of learning for herself and for society. Her brilliant students, the enthusiasm that she creates in the research community, the projects that she contributes to, her numerous books and publications, the scientific and policy committees of all sorts that she inspires, all testify to the success of her search.

Lauren has made and is still making major contributions to understand "minds at work" and what structures and enriches these minds, and how they communicate and share experience and knowledge. Her contributions promote a kind of learning that does not neglect neither contents nor social relations : a *sustainable* learning that has long term effects.

**How would you capture the essence and nature of Lauren?**

"Intelligence at work", listening and caring!