Early Literacy Teacher Education Project

The Child Research and Study Center at the University at Albany is pleased to announce recruitment* for a three-year project focused on enhancing teacher preparation related to early literacy development at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). It will provide professional development opportunities for teacher educators and instructional materials that may be used in their language arts methods courses.

The project derives from research on a comprehensive and responsive approach to early literacy instruction known as the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA; Scanlon, Anderson & Sweeney, 2010; Vellutino & Scanlon, 2002) which has been found to be effective in reducing the incidence of reading difficulties when instituted by classroom and intervention teachers. Over the last few years, teacher educators from ten institutions of higher education from across New York State (both private and public) collaborated with researchers at the Study Center to develop, test, and revise materials, based on the ISA, for use in teacher preparation courses. The current project will make these materials available to a broader number of teacher educators.

Participating teacher educators will engage in webinars in which the content of the ISA course materials are discussed. The instructional areas include such topics as promoting motivation to read and write, developing phonemic awareness and skill with the alphabetic code, promoting strategic word solving, developing language skills, enhancing world knowledge, and promoting comprehension. Following the webinars, instructors will have access to the course materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides, exemplary videos, readings, and child work samples) to use in their courses. Individual institutions/programs will determine how to best incorporate the materials in their particular courses.

► Institutions are eligible if they prepare elementary level teachers, reading teachers, and/or special education teachers and graduate at least 25 pre-service students per year in any undergraduate program that is targeted by the project and/or 10 students per year in a graduate program that prepares teachers for the elementary and/or early elementary grades.

► Teacher Educators who volunteer for the project will participate in a 40 hour webinar series which presents the instructional materials and provides opportunities to discuss how they might be utilized in teacher education courses. Adjunct faculty, graduate assistants, and beginning professors who are teacher educators are a particular focus of this project, but all interested teacher educators at participating institutions are eligible. Participants will be compensated for time spent in the webinars.

► Students enrolled in participating teacher preparation programs will take the project’s Knowledge of Literacy Instruction survey when they enter their program and again when they complete it. They will be asked to respond to a self-efficacy survey and to allow their field supervisors and collaborating teachers to respond to a survey regarding the student’s knowledge and teaching skills.

To learn more about the Early Literacy Teacher Education Project, go to http://www.albany.edu/crsc/

Approved by IRB

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*Institutions that provided letters of support will be given first priority for participation.

The University at Albany