Enhancing Teacher Preparation for Early Literacy Instruction and Responding to Literacy Learning Difficulties

The Child Research and Study Center at the University at Albany is pleased to announce recruitment* for a three-year Teacher Knowledge Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE). The goal of this project is to enhance the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers with regard to their ability to provide effective instruction to early literacy learners, particularly those who struggle at the early stages of literacy development. This goal will be addressed by making available to teacher educators course materials designed to support the development of their students’ expertise related to early literacy development and instruction.

The course materials are based on a comprehensive and responsive approach to early literacy instruction known as the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA; Scanlon, Anderson & Sweeney, 2010; Vellutino & Scanlon, 2002). Participating teacher educators will engage in webinars during which the content of the ISA course materials will be presented. The materials 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 and world knowledge, and 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.

Institutions that prepare elementary level teachers, reading teachers, and/or special education teachers are invited to apply. To be eligible, institutions must graduate, on average, 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. Individual institutions and programs will determine how to best incorporate the course materials in their particular courses.

Teacher Educators who volunteer for the project will participate in a 40 hour webinar series which presents the instructional materials and 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 any interested faculty are eligible. Teacher educators will be asked to provide feedback on both the content of the webinars and on their experience as participants, and to report on their use of the instructional materials in their courses; they will be compensated for their participation. The webinars will be archived for later review by participants and, ultimately, for use by teacher educators who do not have access to the live webinars.

Students enrolled in participating teacher preparation programs will take the project’s Knowledge of Literacy Instruction survey when they enter the 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 Teacher Knowledge Project

Visit our website at http://www.albany.edu/crsc/

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