University at Albany Professor Honored with Teacher Educator Award

Cheryl Dozier, Ph. D and associate professor in Reading, received the 2013 Jerry Johns Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award from the International Reading Association (IRA). This award honors an outstanding university instructor of reading methods or related courses.

Dr. Dozier is an associate professor at the University at Albany – State University of New York. A former classroom teacher of kindergarten through eighth grade in urban and suburban classrooms, she has taught methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels for over 15 years. Currently she teaches a writing practicum course and a Literacy Lab capstone practicum for literacy specialists. In these practicum experiences situated in urban schools, she engages with graduate students, elementary students and their families, classroom teachers, and administrators to prepare responsive teachers. Dr. Dozier co-edited the Literacy Research Association (IRA) study group on literacy lab/reading clinic preparation. Her professional development initiatives involve collaborating with school districts as they redesign their literacy instruction. Two of the schools where she consulted received the New York State Exemplary Reading Award through the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA). In 2010 she was recognized for her university level teaching with two awards, the State University of New York Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching and the University at Albany Excellence in Teaching Award. In 1996, Dr. Dozier received the New York State Reading Association’s Reading Educator of the Year Award.

Dr. Dozier is the author of Responsive Literacy Coaching published by Stenhouse. She also co-wrote Critical Literacy/Critical Teaching: Tools for Preparing Responsive Teachers with Peter Johnston and Rebecca Rogers (Teachers College Press). She has had articles published in The Reading Teacher, Journal of Literacy Research, and Reading and Writing Quarterly (forthcoming). Dr. Dozier helps examine the relationships among responsive teaching, learners, and families toward creating a more just society. She has shared her research on responsive literacy coaching and teacher preparation at national and international conferences.

Dr. Dozier works closely with CASDA on a NYSED Teacher/Leader Quality Partnerships Grant involving three of the elementary schools in the Albany City School District: ASH, TOAST and Montessori Magnet. She has had articles published in The Reading Teacher, Journal of Literacy Research, and Reading and Writing Quarterly (forthcoming). Dr. Dozier has been a regular guest on New York State’s education radio show, The Teachers Network, and has worked for over 10 years on a NYSED funded project to engage teachers in research to improve children’s literacy development and emphasis on instruction. She was a recipient of the Peter Johnston’s Mentorship Prize in 2011.

In a world filled with uncertain things is one thing is clear—the field of education is in the midst of a significant transformation. As in all such economic and social transitions, we experience our situation incoherently. We often feel overwhelmed and a bit disoriented. We look back in time fondly and look forward with anxiety. Will this period of change end soon or have we entered a state of “permanent white water”?

What will the years immediately ahead hold for our field? Changing demographics, financial constraints and greater influence of technology appear to be sure bets. More externally imposed change and greater competition from private and charter schools are also likely. In New York, the Regents Reform Agenda—APPR, CCLS and DDI—will have modified the landscape.

We will adapt. Districts will become more efficient, share services with one another and, in some cases, reorganize. Schools will be drawn into closer relationship with parents, communities, business and higher education. Teacher leadership, professional development and emphasis on instruction will all increase.

Successful adaptation to the current environment requires high expectations for organizations and the careers of their members. When I ask leaders about the vision they have for their schools, they often respond that it is to remove their buildings from state accountability lists or to improve their own school’s graduation rates. They are adapting, but is this enough?

During this time of great change, this question has been on my mind, and possibly on yours. What is it that we are supposed to be doing and how closely does it resemble what we are currently doing? Often, and certainly this year, we have been too busy doing to think about such matters but three events this past month provided me with moments of clarity about our collective purpose as educators.

On a warm early evening recently, I decided to exercise by walking through the fields adjacent to the area middle and high schools. The place was teeming with activity. A high school track meet and a tennis match were still underway. Loud cheers and plauds came from soccer moms and dads watching a spirited community game. Wherever there was an open patch of green, parent-coaches were conducting practices in baseball, soccer and lacrosse for boys and girls of all ages. I smiled as I walked; I had supported my children in the same ways on the same fields a generation earlier.

Early in May, the Scholars Recognition program, which CASDA has sponsored for the past 27 years, once again recognized the achievement of top scholars from the high schools in our 11 county region. What makes the program truly unique is that each recognized student was asked to identify the teacher who had been the most influential in his or her life and to explain why. As you might guess, the students chose their teachers with much more than helping them to get good grades on state tests.

As a proud University at Albany alumna, I was pleased to attend a family member’s graduation from the Rockefeller Graduate School of Public Affairs recently. When I watched the ceremony, I was struck by the genuine affection which these young adults held for the professors seated on the stage who had pushed them beyond their very best over a long multi-year period. Instead of relief that the experience had come to an end and the pain would now stop, these students expressed gratitude for the teachers who had developed them.

These experiences, which we each have daily, point to educators’ true purpose—to assist all young people in their efforts to realize their own unique potential. The state’s current emphasis on literacy and numeracy is but one aspect of this larger goal, necessary but not sufficient. Our immediate problem is that we often confuse this “means” with the broader “end” and narrow our vision, declaring victory when test scores reach an acceptable level.

Over the years, as I have asked parents what they expect of their schools, they answer that, though they want educators to develop their children’s literacy and math skills, they also want much more. Teach our children to be good people and to be considered others, they say. Provide them with experiences which will nurture their curiosity, develop their talents and appreciate life. Help them to believe in themselves, to develop resilience and to appreciate life. Help them to believe in themselves, to develop resilience and to appreciate life.
Future Educators and Current Leaders Honored at CASDA Annual Awards Dinner

Graduating seniors from area high schools were honored at the Annual Scholars’ Recognition Dinner on Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at the Marriott Hotel in Albany.

The annual event honors outstanding scholastic achievement by members of the graduating classes of the public, private, parochial, and BOCES secondary schools in 11 neighboring counties. These students are chosen by their schools on the basis of scholarship, leadership, and service to their schools and communities. Each of these students then identifies the teacher who has had the most significant influence on him or her to join them at the dinner. Teachers chosen several times over the years of the program are individually recognized at the dinner.

The dinner also included a keynote speech by Dr. Susan Scrinshaw, President of Sage Colleges. Dr. Scrinshaw gave a moving speech about the importance of creativity, perseverance, and mentoring. The students and teachers were also featured in a supplemental insert in the Times Union the morning before the ceremony. The insert included photos and quotes from both the students and their teachers. The student quote explained why the teacher had inspired them while the teacher quote expressed what it was like to have the student in class.

The Scholars’ Recognition Program is an innovative Capital Area Business and Education Partnership among the School of Education at the University at Albany; Price Chopper; Freihofer’s; Whitman, Ostrowsky & Hanna, LLP; CSArch, CAP COM Federal Credit Union, and CASDA.

Nearly 500 attend CASDA Scholars’ Recognition Dinner

63rd Operations and Maintenance Conference
June 25, 2013
Burnt Hills Ballston Lake Middle School
8am-2pm

This conference provides a professional development day for school buildings and grounds staff. Participants enjoy a keynote, workshops and time with vendors throughout the day.

Register:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/OMCONF2013

Office Professionals Conference
June 27, 2013
UAlbany East Campus
8am-2pm

This conference provides a professional development day for school office professionals. Participants will have the opportunity to learn new ways to deal with stress, increased workloads and time management.

Register:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013OPConference

NonTraditional College Fair
June 28, 2013
UAlbany East Campus
9am-3pm

The fair will feature two breakout sessions, one for students and one for parents. Students will be invited to attend “How to Begin the Career Exploration Process in H.S.” and parents can attend “How to Encourage Your Child to Explore Careers.”

Register:
See www.casdany.org

Save These Dates
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The dinner also included a keynote speech by Dr. Susan Scrimshaw, President of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) Foundation members Dr. Philip Fusco and Mary Milford presented the Arnold A. Amell Award to Genevieve Stinson of Troy UFSD and Hannah Keener of Johnstown CSD.

The Nelson J. Armlin Scholarship, a $1,000 annual award created in the memory of the longtime educator, administrator and past CASDA Associate Director, was awarded to Michelle Williamson a student pursuing an MS in Special Education at the University at Albany.

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Successful adjustment to the current environment requires a great deal of discernment. Dr. Dozier observes the expertise and experience in content-based pedagogy for the last four years on this project. We congratulate her on her latest accomplishment.

In a world filled with uncertainty, one thing is clear—the field of education is in the midst of an incredible transformation. As in all such economic and social transitions, we experience our situation incoherently. We often feel overwhelmed and a bit disoriented. We look back in time fondly and look forward with anxiety. Will this period of change end soon or have we entered a state of “permanent white water”?

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