Community Engagement

Did you know our department has seven different practicum courses that occur in school and community settings? The program provides our graduate students with a range of experiences in teaching children and young adults who are experiencing difficulty with reading and/or writing.

In 2014-15, we offered seven different practicum courses (18 sections) in seven community settings (five elementary schools, one middle school, and Job Corps). Across all sections, these projects involved 13 full-time or part-time faculty and 341 graduate student placements, impacting approximately 318 children and young adults. All graduate students in the MS in Literacy or the MS in Special Education and Literacy degrees participate in this program. In addition to fall and spring semesters, the largest number of practicum courses occur in summer when elementary and middle school students need additional literacy support. Further, by offering the courses in the summer, the elementary students receive a free breakfast. Many of the practicum courses end the semester with a “family celebration” that brings together parents, administrators, teachers, professors, graduate students and children in a literacy celebration around the tutoring that occurred during the semester.

A nationally accredited program by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), the MS in Literacy degree is intended for teachers who are seeking literacy certification in New York State (Birth-Grade 6, Grades 5-12). Newly revised in 2013, the practicum experiences bring together current research and policy to prepare teachers to teach literacy as classroom teachers, literacy specialists, or literacy coaches. The graduate students engage with the children and young adults in read alouds, tutoring, and mentoring to establish a broader view of literacy, with a more encompassing definition of what children and young adults need to know and do. These literacies include areas such as reading, writing, viewing, speaking, listening, and representing, all situated in new technologies and social contexts. For example, ERDG 619 focuses on writing with children, while ERDG 605 has a focus on digital literacies for young adults. In spring 2016, Job Corps students came to the UAlbany campus media center for a digital literacies project that helped the young adults envision possibilities of attending college.

As part of the accreditation process, the program collects assessments to evaluate the program, and report on an annual basis to the accreditation agency. These assessments include administrator surveys, graduation surveys, course evaluations, graduate student scores on the New York Content Specialty test in literacy, and a culminating project for the program. For these assessments, graduate students draw on the practicum experience to show growth in areas such as showing how to interact with families and communities in caring ways that build respectful, positive relationships that support students. In addition, program faculty participate in five meetings per year with a group of community stakeholders (e.g., principals, superintendents, BOCES personnel) to further advance the design and needs of the program.

Did You Know?

The School of Education is:

- #6 Online Graduate Education Program in the Nation - U.S. News & World Report (includes MS Reading, Early Childhood and Childhood Education online programs)
- #10 Best College Value Online Master’s of Education (MS in Early Childhood Education)
Faculty Highlights

With a national reputation as a researcher, scholar and educator in children’s literacy, Dr. Donna Scanlon was awarded the State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. SUNY presents these honors annually to individuals within the SUNY community to acknowledge and provide system-wide recognition for consistently superior professional achievement and to encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence. In addition, Dr. Scanlon will be giving a keynote address at the International Literacy Association Conference in Orlando, FL, July 15-17, 2017.

The Literacy Research Association selected Dr. Virginia Goatley as co-editor of the Journal of Literacy Research. The New York State Education Department appointed her to the New York State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching for a four-year term. Additionally, during 2016, she was the chair of the IB Commission for the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), which included an ex-officio role on the CAEP Board of Directors.

Dr. Stephanie Affinito has been designated a 2016 Open SUNY Online Teaching Ambassador. The Open SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence (COTE) recognizes outstanding SUNY online instructors each year and must be considered “Exemplary online SUNY educators who are enthusiastic and effective in online teaching, and who can be a positive and strong advocate for online teaching in our SUNY community.” In addition, Dr. Affinito received $28,000 from SUNY’s Innovation Instruction Technology Grant (IITG) program for Scaling the Metaliteracy Badging System for Open SUNY: Collaborative Customization for Teacher Educator Programs.

Each year, the University at Albany honors special members of its community with Excellence Awards denoting exceptional contributions to the life of the campus. This year, Dr. Kelly Wissman was selected as a recipient of the 2016 University at Albany Excellence in Teaching Award. Across her scholarship and teaching, Dr. Wissman considers how literature, literacies, and the arts can facilitate the creation of more equitable and humanizing educational spaces for all students. In addition, Dr. Wissman published a book on teaching global literature in elementary classrooms with four graduates of the department.

Roseann Maurantonio, a first grade teacher at Rosendale Elementary School in the Niskayuna Central School District, received the School of Education Excellence in Part-Time Teaching Award. For the last five years, she taught ERDG 500, the first course many students take when starting the MS in Literacy degree program. Held to high expectations, the graduate students appreciate the informative, organized, engaging and energetic nature of her teaching.

Dr. Cheryl Dozier (cdozier@albany.edu) will be the acting Department Chair for the spring and summer semesters while Dr. Goatley is on sabbatical.

Dr. Helen Stuetzel, MS ’79, CAS ’82, PhD ’91, is a recipient of the 2015-16 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching. Helen is a lecturer in the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning. Her primary role has been teaching graduate level courses for practicing K-12 teachers over the last 28 years. Stuetzel retired as principal of Ballston Spa Middle School in 2009. She has worked for the Gloversville Enlarged School District in a variety of part-time capacities since then, and is currently a literacy consultant.

The Family, School, and Community Partnership SIG of the American Educational Research Association appointed Dr. Jaime Puccioni as the program co-chair.
Dr. Delicia Tiera Greene, Assistant Professor in the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning, earned her PhD from Syracuse University in Information and Technology from The School of Information Studies (The iSchool). With an interdisciplinary research focus, Dr. Greene also specialized in the areas of Literacy, Language and Culture.

Dr. Greene is a community-engaged scholar-activist whose work focuses on bridging the gap between out-of-school and in-school literacy and language through culturally relevant pedagogy. Dr. Greene’s research agenda focuses on enhancing teaching and learning for literacy educators, school librarians, and students in the urban secondary digital literacy contexts. Her research and teaching expertise focuses on digital literacies, urban literacies, young adult literature, teacher education and reflexive practice, black feminist rhetoric, the sociopolitical nature of literacy, and black girlhood studies.

Dr. Greene’s upcoming research project focuses on how literacy educators respond to multicultural texts in a virtual professional learning community. This study will highlight the strategies literacy educators employ in incorporating multicultural texts and digital technologies in their secondary literacy classroom. She also has an upcoming research project that focuses on black adolescent girls’ engagement in multimodal composition and how they use digital stories to self-express and develop their own personal narratives.

Prior to pursuing doctoral studies, Dr. Greene served as school librarian and English educator at the Paul Laurence Dunbar Academy Middle School 301 in the South Bronx section of New York City. During that time she also served on the school’s inquiry team designed to engage educators in action-based research to inform practice. She procured two $400,000 grants to fully renovate the outdated library at Paul Laurence Dunbar Academy. Dr. Greene has also served as a young adult public librarian with the New York Public Library and as the Director of Community, Schools, and Library Partnerships at Syracuse University. She also served as a project manager and literacy consultant on Cheddar Bowl in-3D, a virtual literacy gamification project designed to support middle and high school students. Dr. Greene served as a team leader and mentor for the IT GIRL Project designed to increase middle and high school girls’ interest in careers in the STEM field. Dr. Greene was recently invited to serve as a member of the Liberty Partnerships Rising Stars Program (LPRSP) Advisory Board, a state funded program that encourages young people in grades 5-12 to achieve academic and personal excellence. She is a member of the Black Girls’ Literacies Collective (BGLC), which consists of black female scholars that conduct research and write with and about Black girls’ multiple literacies within school spaces and outside of schools spaces.

Alumni Highlights

Dr. Julie Smit is one of the University at Albany’s winners of the 2015-2016 Distinguished Dissertation Awards for her dissertation, “Eighth Grade Girls’ Knowledge Building with Narrative Texts.” Julie graduated last May and is currently an assistant professor at Texas Tech University.

Dr. Tisha Lewis Ellison received the Early Career Award at the Literacy Research Association conference in November.

Did You Know?

Belize 2016: From the Mountains to the Jungle to the Sea

During the January 2016 Winter Session, Associate Professor Cheryl Dozier and doctoral student Joy Stephens led their second study abroad experience in Belize, Central America. During their 16 day stay, seven undergraduates taught each day in town and village schools. In addition to engaging with learners and their families, the group explored iguana and howler monkey sanctuaries, zip-lined across the jungle canopy, climbed Maya ruins, hiked through ceremonial caves, snorkeled with stingrays and sharks, and swam at Rio on Pools. This year’s trip will run from January 1 to January 15, 2017.


**Joint Faculty/Student Publications and Presentations**


Doctoral student Amal Aldaej, Dr. Kelly Wissman, and alum Maggie Naughter Burns presented on a panel at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia. Their panel was entitled, "Advocating for Global Children’s Literature: Multiple Perspectives on Teaching for Inquiry, Critical Literacy, and Intercultural Understanding."

Advanced Students

Congratulations to Wendy Bower and Diane Hamilton for completing their PhD in Literacy programs this year. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Congratulations to Laurie Timmis for completing her CAS degree in Literacy.

Doctoral student Amal Aldaej, Dr. Kelly Wissman, and alum Maggie Naughter Burns presented on a panel at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia. Their panel was entitled, "Advocating for Global Children’s Literature: Multiple Perspectives on Teaching for Inquiry, Critical Literacy, and Intercultural Understanding."


Hickey, P. J. & Lewis, T. (2016, April). Word investigations: Intriguing and engaging morphological activities for ELLs. Workshop session presented at the international convention of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Baltimore, MD.

Lewis, T. (2016, April). Response to intervention and English learners. Poster session presented at the international convention of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Baltimore, MD.


Master’s Students

The Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning has enjoyed a partnership with Glenmont Job Corps since 2013. Master’s students in the grades 5-12 and B-12 programs collaborate with young people at Job Corps in three courses: ELTL 505, ELTL 506, and ELTL 605. ELTL 505 students collaborate on "knowledge building units" that culminate in public presentations of written arguments. ELTL 506 students engage in book discussions. The ELTL 505 and 506 practica occur at Job Corps. ELTL 605 is held on the University at Albany campus where Job Corps and master’s students collaborate on multimodal productions such as digital movies.

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Your donations help to support our growing practicum courses and sites, the purchase of books and materials, faculty travel, and student scholarships. We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to all of you who have donated to these special projects in the past. Please make sure to specify the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning when making your donation.

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