School of Education and Professional Studies

newsletter

Summer 2013
Volume XV

updates

• faculty & staff news
• alumni support
• student experiences
As I complete my third year as Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies, I continue to be very proud of the ongoing accomplishments of the School’s students, faculty, and alumni.

This continues to be a challenging time to be in the profession of teacher preparation. In New York State, as in most states, there are many changes in state education regulations underway, from new student learning standards (Common Core), to new teacher certification assessments, to new teacher and school leader evaluation frameworks.

In the face of these changes and associated challenges, SUNY Potsdam remains steadfast in its commitment to preparing the best possible teacher candidates.

The faculty and staff in the School of Education and Professional Studies remain very active, as evidenced by the wide variety of reports and articles included in this year’s newsletter.

In addition to departmental and individual updates, you will find a number of interesting articles contributed by our teacher education faculty as well as others that describe our students’ experiences attending conferences and participating in other professional activities. We are quite proud of all that our students are able to accomplish.

The School of Education and Professional Studies includes thriving programs in Business Administration and Community Health, which includes Wilderness Education. You will find articles on faculty and student activities from each of these programs.

I especially wish to thank alumni for their continued support for important school initiatives. As you will see in the pages of this newsletter, our School is very fortunate to have so many alumni who are generously giving back to their alma mater in many ways:

- Through generous donations to the School in support of scholarships, academic departments, the Sheard Literacy Center’s mentoring program and Branching Out With Books, the Math and Science Education Center, the O’Shaughnessy Center, the Write Spot program and the School’s unrestricted fund.
- Through volunteering on advisory boards such as the School of Education Alumni Board, the Business Administration Advisory Council, and the Sheard Literacy Center Advisory Board.
- Through returning to campus to speak to students, such as the March 2013 TESA Conference session with alumni superintendents and principals, and the conference session on “Stories from the Field.”
- Through hosting our teacher candidates for crucial field experience and student teaching placements.
- By meeting with me in your schools during my travels throughout the state, offering advice and feedback on our programs to help us better prepare our teacher candidates.

Your ongoing contributions allow us to maintain a level of excellence in light of shrinking state funding. In these uncertain times, all of us who hold SUNY Potsdam dear to our hearts need to join together for the benefit of our current and future students.

Dr. Peter S. Brouwer, Dean
School of Education and Professional Studies

How can you contribute?

Please consider making a contribution to the School of Education and Professional Studies. Contributions to the School of Education and Professional Studies are welcome and very much appreciated. Financial support from individuals and organizations is critical to the School’s ability to continue providing an exceptional educational experience for our students.

We are grateful for contributions that allow the School to provide students with scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students and to enhance the School’s academic departments, the Sheard Literacy Center, the O’Shaughnessy Center for Assistive Technology, and the Mathematics and Science Education Center, to name a few.

To make a secure on-line gift, please visit https://secure.potsdam.edu/giving/. Please be sure to indicate how you would like to designate your gift. Contributions may also be made through a gift of stock, and you may also choose to include the Potsdam College Foundation/School of Education and Professional Studies in your will.

For more information on ways to financially support the School, please contact Nancy Griff in in the College Advancement Office at (315) 267-2112 or griffine@potsdam.edu or you may send a check made payable to The Potsdam College Foundation to:

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Thank you!
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Nicole Feml
Assistant Director of the Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification

The Teacher Education Student Association (TESA) reemerged during the Fall 2011 semester under the advisement of Nicole Feml, who is the Assistant Director of the Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification. TESA’s priorities include providing professional development opportunities to our future educators and serving the local community. One of the first projects TESA undertook was a bake sale to raise money for the family of Garrett Phillips, a local middle school student who was murdered. Students raised $820 to donate to the family.

With over one hundred members in 2012, TESA has been growing stronger each semester. In early 2012, TESA held a conference on education and invited many different presenters to campus, including Ms. Ginger Thomas, who was funded through the St. Lawrence Valley Teachers’ Learning Center. TESA members are now gearing up for their 2013 conference, “I’m a teacher… now what?” The highlight of the conference will include a lunch and panel discussion sponsored by the School of Education and Professional Studies Alumni Board.

During the 2012 spring semester, TESA also held a shamrock fundraiser to raise funds for Ollie White, a young boy who has acute lymphocytic leukemia. TESA successfully raised approximately $450 to help support the young boy and his family.

At the start of the Fall 2012 semester, TESA members decided to start a tradition: each year they would adopt a local school. Members sat down with Principal Larry Jenne of Lawrence Avenue Elementary School, the first school to be adopted, to identify the needs of the students and staff, including classroom support, fundraising, and other initiatives.

Members also volunteered outside of their regular field experience hours to assist in the classrooms, cafeteria, and library at Lawrence Avenue, while also presenting Mr. Jenne with a check for $300 to use toward the schools’ greatest needs as well as supplies for students. The money was raised via a bake sale in Potsdam’s iconic Satterlee Hall.

Marlena Lovaglio, a current TESA member, states, “TESA has impacted me in a lot of ways when it comes to being a future educator. I have been in TESA since Spring 2011 and have learned so much about how to be the best teacher I can be for students. In TESA, I have attended many conferences and workshops about how to better myself, and how to teach in the 21st century. Being in TESA has inspired me even more so to become an elementary school teacher. I am so happy to be a part of this wonderful club where my colleagues and I can learn and grow together!”

TESA’s priorities include providing professional development opportunities to our future educators and serving the local community.
Kathy White Finnerty ‘75, Honored With the 2012 St. Lawrence Academy Medal at Reunion Weekend

The School of Education Alumni Association honored Kathy White Finnerty, a member of the Class of ’75, with the 2012 St. Lawrence Academy Medal, at the College’s annual Reunion Weekend in July.

The St. Lawrence Academy Medal is presented to a SUNY Potsdam graduate who has made significant contributions to the field of professional education or related fields. The Alumni Association recognized Finnerty for her exceptional contributions to the field of education.

Kathy White Finnerty ’75 of Central Square, N.Y., is regarded as one of New York State’s foremost authorities on career and technical education. For the past 27 years, she has served the Oswego County BOCES in a variety of roles. As curriculum specialist for the Burton Ramer Technical Career Center, she is responsible for coordinating the career and technical education approval process, which involves facilitating curriculum review and development, national certification designation, and implementation of state and national assessments.

Finnerty’s enthusiasm and knowledge are well respected and greatly appreciated. Even when faced with instructors who just want to “teach the trade,” she takes the time to work with them to make sure that students receive the best education possible. Because she has

Kathy White Finnerty ‘75 is presented with the 2012 St. Lawrence Academy Medal by Mark Davey ’84, president of SUNY Potsdam’s School of Education Alumni Association Board of Trustees. The ceremony took place during the College’s Reunion Weekend in July.

SUNY Potsdam’s School of Education Alumni Association awards the St. Lawrence Academy Medal each year to an alumnus or alumna of the School of Education and Professional Studies who has distinguished himself or herself in the field of education and whose contributions have been exceptional.

Candidates must be alumni of the School of Education who have, through significant contributions to the field of professional education or a related field, dignified the professions of teaching or community health study, research and practice either directly or indirectly in political, social or financial ways.

Letters of nomination must include a completed nomination form and the following materials:
1. Three additional letters of support
2. Resume of College activities and positions held
3. Endeavors and accomplishments since graduation
4. Present position, family, address and phone numbers

Deadline is February 1.

For more information and a nomination form, please visit: http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/SOEPS/education/alumni/academymedal.cfm or call (315) 267-2515
An Update from the Department of Secondary Education

Donald Straight
Department Chair

“I’m so busy!”

Perhaps the only statement we hear more frequently than the one above is, “I’m TOO busy!” And indeed, during the 2012-13 academic year, educators are very busy! Further, those who educate educators are very busy as well! Many would agree wholeheartedly that we are far too busy.

What is making us so busy? We are living in days of unprecedented change, and at an unprecedented pace of implementation. Our partners teaching in the schools, from pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade, face dramatic changes. The New York State Common Core Standards are being implemented, driving curricular changes at all levels; new tests to hold students (as well as teachers and principals) “accountable” to the standards began in April 2013; new high school Regents exams (if they are still to be called that) will start surfacing in 2014; the statewide APPR process is now fully underway; and many teachers find themselves focusing on the details of this system, rather than on the students whom they wish to serve.

Meanwhile, in the post-secondary realm, changes in certification requirements loom on the horizon, demanding modification to existing programs so that our students—the teachers of tomorrow—are not blindsided by a new set of expectations with which they (and we) are not fully familiar. When we factor in the ongoing budgetary challenges created by uncertain revenue streams at all levels, which has had a cumulative effect of requiring that more be done with less, the 24 hours in each day just don’t seem sufficient, though we are certainly not petitioning for more hours to be made available in any one of them—we’re already exhausted when the sunset makes its appearance each day!

In addition to these present adaptations, we carry an ongoing responsibility to maintain our programs through continuous measures of assessment and revision, as needed. Reports of this introspection for each program (called “SPA” reports) have been filed with our accreditation agency, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, or NCATE; all responses that we have received to this point have been favorable, recognizing our undergraduate and graduate programs in English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, and Social Studies at the national level, though some need additional clarification in the coming months. We currently await a response to our Science programs, which were filed on March 15, 2013. Additionally, we anticipate a site visit from our NCATE team in the fall of 2014, and a plan of final preparations for that is underway.

This is no attempt to elicit sympathy; rather, it is the reality of our current enormous challenge, the latest in a seemingly endless series of ongoing cycles to validate the excellence of our adolescence education programs. And yes, such details can bog us down, causing us to wonder when we’ll have just a few moments to work with our students in meaningful ways as they prepare to become certified educators. We (or at least I) struggle at times to balance their excitement and idealism with more experienced, and even “cynical,” perspectives; we try to preserve the former while allowing them to think deeply about the latter, which often at the core are very legitimate concerns brought to our collective attention by the powerful voices of veteran educators. And for some of our students, these dialogues take place on a backdrop of other voices asking them, “Why would you ever want to become a teacher?” If we listen too closely (and I think we’re supposed to), this very public conversation can quickly become an overwhelming cacophony.

Amazingly, in spite of details included in the brief “rant” I have just concluded, we still have students who choose to enter our teacher education preparation programs! And, we have a great deal of success and satisfaction in working with them as they progress toward program completion. As previously mentioned, we have many separate programs in our Department; students can become certified to teach English, Foreign Language (French or Spanish), Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physics, or General Science), or Social Studies.

We are living in days of unprecedented change, and at an unprecedented pace of implementation. Our partners teaching in the schools, from pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade, face dramatic changes. The New York State Common Core Standards are being implemented, driving curricular changes at all levels...
Graduate certification programs are also offered in all of these areas except the foreign languages. Each of our students completes a first major in the content area, with a companion second major in adolescence education. Some program courses are common, but all of them specifically instruct students how to teach effectively in the content area. Thus, our students finish with distinct strength in their particular content, as well as pedagogical knowledge to bring that content to the level of their future students. And those graduates are well received for employment in our regional schools, in districts across NY, and in many other states in which a NY certificate may simplify the path to licensure.

Beyond our classroom and field-based experiences, we try to augment our students’ immersions in the world of education in every way possible...to provide opportunities for our students to attend conferences at which they can network with other professionals in their chosen field of study, attend workshops, and even present, if they wish to do so. These meetings add a new dimension of relevance to their campus studies and fieldwork, as students are able to participate side by side with current teachers for a conference’s duration. Many available sessions provide valuable information, primarily delivered peer to peer. And though the conferences themselves are not oriented toward recruitment, there is often information available to those who attend about job prospects, and real jobs are something that our students will be looking for, at some point! Here are reports from some recent trips taken by faculty members and their students:

**NYSEC Conference**
Clinical faculty member Joanne Stiles escorted twelve Secondary English Education program students to the New York State English Council (NYSEC) conference October 18-19, 2012, in Albany, NY. The theme of this annual conference was “Teaching and Learning: The Center of Common Core Standards.” Highlights of the conference included keynote speakers Ken Slentz (New York State Deputy Commissioner of P-12 Education), Henry David Hwang (playwright, “M. Butterfly”), Linda Opyr (poet laureate), and Penny Kittle (educator/author “Book Love”). SUNY Potsdam students also attended a wide variety of workshops which focused on creative ways to teach new and old topics, such as Shakespeare, mythology, grammar, writing, and graphic novels, as well as how to implement the newly adopted NYS Common Core Standards. SUNY Potsdam students were exhilarated by the enthusiasm of seminar presenters, and they shared what they learned in their methods courses when they returned to campus. This conference, however, wasn’t all about speakers and seminars. Potsdam students were able to network with educators from around the state, as well as meet students from SUNY Oneonta’s teacher education program.

Our students were able to make this trip and attend the conference at no cost, thanks to funding provided by the Deans’ Offices in the Schools of Education and Professional Studies and Arts and Sciences, as well as the Department of Secondary Education.

Beyond our classroom and field-based experiences, we try to augment our students’ immersions in the world of education in every way possible...to provide opportunities for our students to attend conferences at which they can network with other professionals in their chosen field of study, attend workshops, and even present, if they wish to do so.
An Update from the Department of Secondary Education...continued

**STANYS Conference**

November 3-5, 2012, a group of ten Secondary Science Education majors and their Instructor, Melissa Cummings, attended the 117th Annual STANYS (Science Teachers Association of New York State) Conference in Rochester, NY. The group left on a bright Saturday morning so that they could attend a special event called “A Dinosaur-ific Night at the Museum,” which was held at the Rochester Museum and Science Center and Seneca Park Zoo. The event began with vendor exhibits and prizes that led to a terrific dinner, and a presentation and demonstration of the new digital Planetarium. The next day, the group attended a wide variety of conference sessions that included the use of interactive notebooks in the classroom, a lesson share-a-thon, and STEM project presentations. Melissa Cummings led one of the sessions, a presentation using a Tic Tac Toe board as a type of assessment, and creating a cross curriculum tool. The conference lasted for three full days and there were many sessions, great luncheons, as well as mingling and networking with other Science teachers from all over NY. We extend special thanks to the Secondary Education Department, Dean Brouwer, Dean Marqusee, and the Geology and Biology Departments, for helping to fund the excursion.

**AMTNYS Conference**

The annual Fall Conference of the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New York State (AMTNYS) took place November 8-10, 2012 at the Rye Town Hilton in Rye Brook, NY. Fourteen students in adolescence mathematics education attended this event with Dr. Blair Madore (Mathematics) and Donald Straight (Secondary Education). Additionally, Becky Duprey (Curriculum & Instruction) attended with four of her students, and Dr. James Parks (Mathematics, emeritus) was also at the conference! Several presentations were given by current Potsdam students, faculty, or alumni, as follows: “A Plethora of Perplexing Problems,” with Kassie Averill, Kylie Barr, Nichole Brasie, Kathryn Lentini, Matt Leifeld, Alex Murray, Jess Obercon, Kandi Peck, and Nate Turcotte, was organized by Donald Straight; “Meso-American Mathematics,” presented by Blair Madore, who also filled in for a canceled session, “Hands on History of Tangrams”; “More Puzzles for Young Geometers,” with Jim Parks; “Fractions can Make Sense” by Becky Duprey and Julie Koehler—Becky also filled in for a canceled session with “Ten Frames, Making Numbers Come Alive!”


At Carole Shattuck’s request, several students took donations of relief supplies for those affected by the devastating storm “Sandy,” which had occurred the previous week and was the reason that many original sessions were canceled or transferred to a different presenter. On Friday, we connected with Jerry Hicks, a 2005 MST alumnus, to transfer our contributions to his car, and he delivered them later that day, where they were appreciatively received. Jerry had also made a trip in Thursday night with supplies. It was interesting to see complete families (with pets, if they had them) “living” at the Hilton while displaced from their homes; relief workers were also there from all over the country, restoring power and vital services to the affected areas. The environment at the conference center was a bit unusual, but it certainly made us more aware of the storm’s impact and of our own good fortune to have avoided its true fury.

Our team put a valiant effort in this year’s dance competition, but unfortunately had to relinquish the first place trophy we brought home last year to the women of SUNY Fredonia. They simply came to win in 2012! Funding for the trip was a joint effort: the Deans of Education and Professional Studies and Arts and Sciences, and the Departments of Mathematics and Secondary Education, all worked together to make it possible.

**Other Conference Participation**

In addition to these larger groups of students who were able to attend conferences with faculty members, we also had other travel activity in which students were involved. Two adolescence social studies education students, Jacob Wicks and Justin Maggs, received support to attend the annual National Council of the Social Studies (NCSS) meeting in Seattle, WA, which was also held in November 2012. Upon their return, they indicated that it was also a tremendous experience and expressed great appreciation for the opportunity.

**NBPTS**

Joanne Stiles, a trained Candidate Support Provider for the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, continues to provide support to regional educators completing the rigorous assessment. Two Northern New York educators achieved National Board Certification in December 2012—Margaret Garner (Special Education, Madrid-Waddington Central School) and Amanda Zullo (Science, Saranac Lake Central School). Further, an informational session was held in October 2012 for interested P-12 educators considering pursuit of a National Board certification for the 2013 and 2014 cohorts. Joanne is currently working with two teachers from the Carthage Central School district for the 2013 NBCT class.

In summary, faculty members in our Department are active in a variety of ways to make valuable use of the brief time that our paths of life overlap with those of our students. Often, the initial intersection of those paths is the start of a lifelong relationship, one that may span long distances once students leave our campus. Students reflect favorably on their experiences in teacher preparation, and people in the schools where they are employed speak positively about the whole of that preparation as well. Regional schools maintain partnerships with us, in spite of the challenges they are facing themselves. And the very public aspect of what we do, with the associated questions, suggestions, and even accusations, simply motivates us further to do it well.
Marcia Kilbourn Murphy ‘61, Establishes Endowed Scholarship in Memory of Gary J. Northrup

Marcia Kilbourn Murphy ’61 has established an endowed scholarship in memory of her partner, Gary J. Northrup. Marcia’s scholarship is designated for an incoming freshman who has a declared Social Studies Education Major with financial need and a deep passion to teach history. The first Marcia K. Murphy & Gary J. Northrup Scholarship will be awarded for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In establishing the scholarship, Marcia wishes to help fulfill a student’s dream to be a History Teacher, as her partner’s aspiration was to attend College and become an educator. He never fulfilled that dream, but did enjoy a satisfying and successful 40-year career in the Merchant Marines. Marcia wishes to honor the passion and kindness Gary demonstrated throughout his life by remembering him with this scholarship.

Marcia graduated from SUNY Potsdam in 1961 with a degree in Elementary Education, taught grade school in the East Irondequoit School District for two years and then for 32 years in the Rome City School District, retiring in 1995. She has great memories of and a passion for SUNY Potsdam and for the teaching profession. As a result of her education at SUNY Potsdam and her commitment to teaching, Marcia enjoyed a very successful career, impacting hundreds of students in the Central New York area. Throughout the years of teaching, Marcia truly enjoyed guiding students and gained the admiration of her students, their parents and her colleagues.

After retirement, Marcia enjoyed traveling with her husband Tom, until his death in 2000. She became a Mary Kay Consultant, and formerly served on the local boards of the Red Cross, Family Services, Zonta Club, and the Rome Hospital Twig Volunteers.

Dr. Peter Brouwer, Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies, was very pleased to learn of the Cranes’ scholarship gift. "This scholarship will truly make a difference," he said. "It is crucial in this day and age that we are able to attract and support the best teachers in the math and science areas. The future of our society depends on it."

Irving and Shirley created this scholarship to say thank you to SUNY Potsdam for the excellent education that Shirley received at Potsdam more than 50 years ago, not only through her course work but also involvement in a number of clubs and organizations. These included dorm counselor, student government leader, and member of the Agonian Sorority. Through her life’s work as a teacher, Shirley has set an example for students preparing to be teachers. After earning her bachelor’s degree in elementary education at Potsdam in 1962, Shirley has continued her education throughout her life, earning a master of science in history education at the University of Wisconsin, a master of science in special education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and a graduate certificate in gerontology at St. Elizabeth College. She is also an active volunteer in her community, working as a ombudsman for senior citizens at a nearby nursing home, serving as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, and participating in a number of activities and programs in the church.

Shirley and Irving hope that their scholarship may serve as an inspiration to others, particularly those who have benefitted from scholarships, to consider giving back to SUNY Potsdam so that future generations of students may experience the benefits of a Potsdam education.

Irving and Shirley (Wolf) Crane ‘62 Establish Endowed Scholarship for Math and Science Education

Marcia Kilbourn Murphy

Office of College Advancement

The Crane Family Endowed Scholarship for Math and Science Education was established in 2012 by Shirley (Wolf) Crane ’62 and her husband, Irving Crane, during Shirley’s 50th reunion year at SUNY Potsdam.

The couple’s choice in designating their scholarship for students preparing to be math and science teachers is most fitting, as it honors Shirley’s 24-year teaching career and Irving’s 38-year engineering career with ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Company. The Cranes’ donation to their scholarship is augmented by a corporate contribution from the ExxonMobil Foundation Educational Matching Gift Program.

It is the donors’ intention that their scholarship will serve as a strong motivator for students to become outstanding math and science teachers, who will, in turn, prepare outstanding students for the engineering and scientific workforce of tomorrow.

From left: Shirley (Wolf) Crane ’62, Irving Crane and Samantha Long from New Hartford, NY, the first recipient of the Cranes’ scholarship. Samantha is studying Early Childhood/Childhood Education with a specialization in Biology.
 Outsider Teacher / Insider Knowledge: Mohawk Cultural Competency in Schooling

As I was relocating to the North Country, the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne seemed like an appropriate setting in which to address and rectify my own shortcomings as a non-Native teacher of Native students.

After informally meeting and speaking with local educators and community members, it seemed that the reservation border-towns such as Farmingdale might be an appropriate site for exploring the research issues in which I was interested.

Dr. Sharon Vegh Williams
Department of Literacy Education

Working as a classroom teacher and reading specialist on the Navajo Nation for four years, I could not get over the sense of disconnection between the “Anglo” teachers (as we were called) and our students. They were eager to learn and we were eager to teach; somehow we just were not connecting. There was an obvious, but un-defined, un-explored cultural divide that hindered my ability to convey my lessons and prevented the students from meeting their potential.

Similar to most American schools serving Native students, the majority of the teachers in this New Mexico public school were non-Native. In addition, the deficit paradigm was the general and unspoken assumption towards the communities’ cultural ways of knowing. In other words, the majority of the non-Native teaching staff viewed the cultural divide as an example of cultural deficiency rather than cultural difference.

Only after becoming familiar with the research on Native education, was I able to make sense of my own complicit role in the destructive legacy of schooling for Native students. In retrospect, I was unprepared to meet the needs of my Navajo students due to my lack of cultural competency training (Beaulieu, 2006). Further, I was unable to fully recognize the cultural strengths the students brought with them to the learning environment (Gonzalez et al, 2005). This lack in my own training was the inspiration for my research.

As I was relocating to the North Country, the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne seemed like an appropriate setting in which to address and rectify my own shortcomings as a non-Native teacher of Native students. After informally meeting and speaking with local educators and community members, it seemed that the reservation border-towns such as Farmingdale might be an appropriate site for exploring the research issues in which I was interested.

Like other schools across the country, the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne seemed like an appropriate setting in which to address and rectify my own shortcomings as a non-Native teacher of Native students. After informally meeting and speaking with local educators and community members, it seemed that the reservation border-towns such as Farmingdale might be an appropriate site for exploring the research issues in which I was interested.

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Despite the growing Native student population and the persistent cultural divide between faculty and students, Farmingdale has provided limited professional development opportunities on Mohawk cultural competency for the non-Native staff. Research suggests that this lack of teacher cultural competency results in Native student academic underachievement (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Writer & Chavez, 2002).

On a national level, the American Council on Education found that Native students “exhibit the highest dropout rates, the lowest academic performance rates, and the lowest college admission and retention rates in the nation” (Grande, 2004, p. 5). Mirroring national statistics, Mohawk students in Farmingdale scored lower on standardized measures of achievement when compared with their non-Native counterparts (The New York State District Report Card, 2006-2007). The New York State Comprehensive Information Report from 2001-2002 reported a 36% drop out rate for Native students in Farmingdale compared with 17% for white students (The New York State District Report Card, 2006-2007).

Historically, education for Native students and associated federal and state policies promoted a blatant and intentional degradation of Native culture (Lomawaima, 2001; Tharp, 2006). The legacies of past educational policies continue to have a negative impact on schooling for Native American children. These legacies include the presentation of information from a European perspective, low teacher expectations, deficit orientation towards Native communities, disconnection from tribal teachings by elders, and the lack of access for meaningful community participation (Brayboy, 2005). To date, widespread efforts to modify curriculum and instruction in schools serving Native students have taken place very infrequently (Freng et al, 2007).

While the history of Native Education is embedded with racism and colonialism, there are similar issues with non-Native directed academic research involving Native American communities (Santiago-Rivera et al, 1998).

To ensure a collaborative effort and to align my research goals with the needs of the Mohawk community, I met with both the tribal and school district leadership suggesting a collaborative action research study that would develop a culturally relevant professional development program. Both the district and the tribe were interested in furthering professional development opportunities in Farmingdale, but had not had the resources, time, or personnel to pursue this important issue.
While challenges exist in creating effective professional development, well-developed programs have been shown to help establish more trusting relationships between schools and Native communities.

However, university and school-based programs in cultural competency need to be expanded to meet student needs. This research project aimed to fill this gap in the research and the field of education.

The primary goal of this research was to study the interactions between Native and non-Native participants as they worked to create a professional development program for the district. The points of conflict and contention between the participants were then used as a platform for addressing the cultural disconnect through teacher education. Four members of Farmingdale Native American Resource Program and four non-Native classroom teachers volunteered to participate in the study. This eight member participant group met regularly over the course of six months to create a professional development program for the district. The Tribal Education Council at Akwesasne was also involved to ensure that the community goals remained at the forefront.

In this study, qualitative methodologies were utilized to analyze the cultural disconnect between the Farmingdale schools and the Mohawk community. The most prominent theme that emerged through the research was how the broader cultural conflicts on the community-wide level were manifested and enacted through our participant group dynamics.

In a sense, the collaborative group was a microcosm allowing the researcher and participants to analyze the conflicts that arise in the greater Akwesasne and Farmingdale school community. Through the study, four general areas of conflict between Farmingdale and Akwesasne were found, including: contrasting conceptions of cultural competency, cultural disconnect, intercultural miscommunication, and issues of trust. Through uncovering and analyzing these areas of conflict, a model of cultural competency professional development intended for the Farmingdale District with implications for other schools serving Native students was developed.

To begin, Native and non-Native participants held different positions regarding the goals of Mohawk cultural competency. Specifically, Native participants wanted their distinct culture and cultural orientation acknowledged and validated in mainstream schooling. The non-Native participants held a range of views on the need for Mohawk cultural competency as articulated in the teacher survey distributed to the district teaching staff. The majority of non-Native teachers, 77 percent, expressed their desire to know more but weren’t sure how to access the information. Four percent of teachers believed the inclusion of cultural competency training was interesting, but viewed it as an “add-on” to their overburdened workloads. Fifteen percent of teachers objected to the inclusion of cultural knowledge because they believed it prioritized Native students over mainstream students. Four percent of Farmingdale teachers believed the inclusion of cultural competency was irrelevant to the learning process.

Johnnie, a Mohawk participant, explained, “We have all these people come back educated… But, you also need your chiefs- your traditional chiefs, your clan mothers, your faith keepers, and all that too.” He stated further, that Mohawk students confront additional barriers in the Farmingdale District because they come from a “different community, different lifestyle, and maybe their views go against everything here, most everything. You know, the bigger issues of sovereignty”. In this excerpt, Johnnie articulates the dual emphasis on traditional and mainstream education in support of tribal self-determination.

Nineteen percent of the non-Native teachers surveyed, on the other hand, asserted that no substantive differences existed between cultural groups and that focusing on difference is ultimately divisive. One non-Native participant, Greta, argued:

“I have never felt that I should treat any student differently…And I think- we do take into account individual differences. But, I’m getting the impression that I’m now supposed to take this one group of students and treat them differently. And I’m not sure I can deal with that.”

Another non-Native participant, Candy, also took a color-blind approach towards her students. Overall, the non-Native participants tended to downplay or ignore the cultural differences. The Native participants, on the other hand, viewed cultural knowledge and understanding as a keystone to successfully teaching Native students.

The data also uncovered many examples of cultural disconnect between Native staff and students and the school district. One Native participant, Hannah, addressed this cultural disconnect in a group meeting. “We really need to bridge the gap between your community and our community. We are aware of your community, yet it seems like generally speaking the majority of the district only knows the bad stuff about our community. They don’t really know the richness of everything else that’s here or the true struggles of what’s happening.” Further, she added, “[Mohawk] culture and the values are… totally opposite than your country.”

Mohawk values such as a less hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, the significance of sovereignty issues, and the nature of a matriarchal society differ significantly from mainstream cultural and classroom expectations.

For example, according to the Native participants, non-Native teachers are generally unaware of the continuation of the role of matriarchy in contemporary life. Historically, matriarchy has been a foundation of Mohawk society. As one Mohawk participant, Sally, described, “We’re raised that women are very powerful… girls are given a lot of responsibility and respect, especially their opinions and their voice, than like in white culture. I find for the most part our women, our girls I should say, we’re talking about elementary [school], they’re pretty tough kids. They’re smart. They’re independent. You know?” Sally went on to describe a non-Native teacher who had trouble relating to the Mohawk girls in her classroom. She stated, “He just has a really difficult time with the strong, young women that we tend to have. He gets frustrated very easily with that population. I just find that he doesn’t understand them, and he doesn’t try to understand them either.”

In essence, Mohawk girls may display a stronger classroom demeanor than the norm.
Mohawk Cultural Competency in Schooling...continued

As a result, some teachers may have difficulty relating to these students because their cultural and classroom expectations are challenged.

Examples of intercultural miscommunication also arose between the participants. For example, the Mohawk participants tended to reflect longer before verbalizing their thoughts. The non-Native participants, on the other hand, tended to think and reflect out loud. In addition, the non-Native participants tended to monopolize the group conversations in part through verbal debate and asking direct questions. In contrast, the Native participants tended to listen rather than assert their opinions in debate. The Native participants tended to hold back their opinions through listening without talking and reflecting before speaking. Further, the Mohawk participants refrained from voicing their positions because they believed the non-Native participants were not ready to listen. In his research, Foley (1996) identifies the many uses of silence in Native communities including, silence as “an honorable way of handling the garrulous, aggressive whites” (p.87). This conscious and active silence contrasts the long-standing mainstream stereotype of the quiet, passive Native American.

After our final participant group meeting, Sally confessed, “I kept quiet and held back. I didn’t reveal the cultural differences because I didn’t think they were ready to hear it.” Jane agreed with her sentiment. In essence, they felt that the non-Native participants were not really open to listening or learning. The non-Natives, on the other hand, assumed the Mohawk participants were in agreement because they did not openly debate or contradict points being made. On the contrary, however, the Mohawk participants ardently disagreed with many of the conclusions being drawn. In fact, the more they disagreed, the quieter they became because they believed the non-Native teachers were demonstrating their inability to understand.

The Native participants also described a lack of trust between Akwesasne and mainstream governmental institutions including schooling. This lack of trust, rooted in the historical transgressions against the Mohawk Nation, played out in the participant group dynamic. For example, Johnnie described how one of the non-Native participants had spoken disparagingly in the teachers’ room about the issues that had come up in the collaborative group discussions. Earlier in the study, Johnnie had expressed concerns about the possibility of group discussions being shared with district administrators. Although group confidentiality was stressed at the meetings, two of the non-Native participants did share group information with administrators without group consensus. As a result, Johnnie withdrew from the project before our final meeting. Essentially, he felt that the majority of non-Native participants could not be trusted. Although conflicts arose in the participant group dynamic, having a common goal of creating a professional development program for the district pushed the majority of participants towards continuing their involvement in the study despite the challenges.

Ultimately, this study shined a spotlight on the need for Mohawk cultural competency professional development for non-Native teachers in the district. Based on conversations in the group meetings, the study also raised a level of consciousness about intercultural relations in this heterogeneous school setting. Finally, the study brought to the forefront the lack of opportunities in place for non-Native teachers to expand their knowledge base.

As an action research study, contributions to practice were a critical component of the study’s outcome. Following the recommendations of this study, the district superintendent agreed to implement aspects of the professional development program. Specifically, the district added cultural competency training into the district’s new-teacher orientation. In addition, the district supported the group’s recommendation for an extensive teacher handbook on Mohawk cultural practices as well as an anonymous forum for asking potentially sensitive questions about Mohawk culture and cultural competency on the webpage. Finally, the district administration is exploring the possibility of conducting a full-day, professional development training for all staff, held at the Ronahonnik Cultural Center in Akwesasne. Both the new teacher training and the all-staff session will include a tour of Akwesasne and have workshops led by tribal elders.

As stated earlier, the cross-cultural issues at stake in the schools and community are rooted in centuries-old historical transgressions, and as such are deeply entrenched. Clearly, a one-day professional development session cannot fully address the complexity of this relationship. However, a comprehensive program with ongoing support, as outlined in this study, can begin the conversation that could lead towards a more positive schooling environment for Mohawk students.

References:


1 All names of individuals and towns have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.
Maya Kalyanpur  
(Department of Special Education) is a new faculty member and an author of the book *Cultural Reciprocity in Special Education: Building Family-Professional Relationships*, Baltimore: Brookes, 2012.

Dr. Kalyanpur made the following presentations:
- “Changing Perspectives of Disability in India’s Transition Towards Globalization: Implications for Educational Policy and Practice for Children with Disabilities” at the Annual Conference of the European Association for South Asian Studies, Lisbon, Portugal, July 2012.
- “Educational Services in Cambodia” at the Diversity and Social Justice Conference, at SUNY Potsdam, October 2012.


Michele Pinard  
http://www.learninglandscapes.ca/

In 2012 Dr. Pinard received continuing appointment and promotion to Associate Professor.

Sergei Abramovich  
(Department of Curriculum & Instruction) since his last report appeared in this section of the Newsletter has participated in various professional activities at local, national, and international levels. He spent three weeks in Serbia on a Fulbright Specialist Grant visiting the Universities of Niš and Novi Sad with seven presentations. As a result of this travel, SUNY Potsdam and the University of Niš signed a Letter of Intent for Academic Cooperation. He secured a publication agreement with Springer for a book provisionally entitled *Computational Experiment Approach to Advanced Secondary Mathematics Curriculum*. Two volumes of *Computers in Education* (2012, Nova Science Publishers) have been published with him as editor. His new articles appeared in the *Spreadsheets in Education* [2012, 5(2), Article 6], *Journal of Mathematical Modelling and Application* [2012, 1(6); with E. Cho], and *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Interfaces of Subjects Taught in the Primary School* [2012]. He authored/co-authored two book chapters published in *Computers in Education, Volume 2* [2012, Nova Science Publishers] and *Professional Development: Perspectives, Strategies and Practice* [2013, Nova Science Publishers, with M. Pinard as the lead author]. He was presenter/co-presenter at professional conferences in the United States, Korea, Nicaragua, Serbia, and Spain. He edited the book, *Foundations of Nonstandard Analysis*, published by the International Mathematical Virtual Institute (http://www.imvibl.org). As guest editor of *Computers in the Schools*, he has solicited, edited, and submitted articles for the special issue Computers in K-20 Mathematics Education. He continued serving on the editorial boards of six professional journals (*Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching, Spreadsheets in Education, Differential Equations and Control Processes, The Open Virtual Reality Journal, Gatchina Review, IMVI Open Mathematical Education Notes*) and reviewed articles/grant proposals for Asia Pacific Education Review, International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology, Technology, Knowledge and Learning, and Czech Science Foundation. At the invitation of the University of Jyväskylä Department of Mathematical Information Technology, he served as reviewer of a PhD thesis titled “Analytical-Numerical Methods for Finding Hidden Oscillations in Dynamical Systems.” Also, he served on a review panel of the National Science Foundation. At the local level, in addition to teaching overload in Watertown and serving on various committees, he coordinated the faculty seminar “Disciplined Inquiry in Education.”
http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/SOEPS/seminar/index.cfm

Sharon Williams  
(Department of Literacy) earned her doctorate from the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester in 2010. Her doctoral research on Native Education was completed under the mentorship of Dr. Stephanie Waterman, Onondaga Turtle Clan. Dr. Williams’ article “Outsider Teacher/Imagine: The Case of a Mohawk Self-Determination in Mainstream Schooling” will be published in the *Journal of American Indian Education* in 2013. In addition to her ongoing research in Native Education, Dr. Williams is co-founder of the North Country Children’s Museum slated to open in the Village of Potsdam in the fall of 2015.

Shalu Wunnava  
(Department of Business Administration) presented the research paper “Effective Communication of System Requirements to Global Virtual Teams: A Six Factors Back-to-Basics Framework” at the International Conference on Improving Competitiveness through Decision Sciences, Indian Subcontinent Region Decision Sciences Institute, Chennai, India, January 4-6, 2012; the paper was also published in the conference proceedings.

Her interview by a reporter from the *Watertown Daily Times* regarding social media and the privacy and security risks involved was published in the *Watertown Daily Times* and the *Daily Courier-Observer* in October 2011.

She also submitted a proposal and received a grant award to revise and incorporate research into MGMT 410: Operations Management course. (It is part of the Business Administration Department’s application for a Department Curriculum Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant Award.)
Corning, Inc. Foundation Supports Outreach Programs Hosted By Mathematics and Science Education Center

Nancy Griffin, College Office of Advancement and Tina Wilson Bush, Director, Sheard Literacy Center

The Mathematics and Science Education Center is dedicated to strengthening the preparation of math and science teachers at all grade levels, allowing SUNY Potsdam education majors to practice their teaching using cutting-edge technology and scientific equipment that they will most likely encounter in public school classrooms.

Financial Support for the Center
In December 2012, SUNY Potsdam’s Mathematics and Science Education Center was very pleased to receive a grant from the Corning, Inc. Foundation in support of the Center’s new outreach programs established during the 2012-2013 academic year. The grant is being used to purchase supplies, technology and healthy snacks for the children, and to fund a student assistant who coordinates the outreach programs.

Also, a generous gift was received from Diana (Zinnecker) Nole, ’87 and member of the Potsdam College Foundation Board, whose five-year gift is being used to purchase cutting-edge technology for the Center. Last year the Center was able to purchase a set of iPads for faculty to explore effective ways to teach using mobile technology in the classroom. This year a set of 15 iPads was purchased for students to use while learning about how to implement this technology in the area of math and science in their future classrooms.

Math and Science Outreach Programs
In September 2012, the College’s Mathematics and Science Education Center launched a pilot program to offer a science mentor program to local school children, similar to the College’s highly successful Literacy Mentor Program that currently serves about 200 children in grades K-8 each year through the Sheard Literacy Center.

The first class of the “PSI” (Potsdam Science Initiative) Middle School Science Mentor Program consisted of 18 students from Potsdam’s A.A. Kingston Middle School who came to the Math and Science Education Center after school, once a week for nine weeks, to participate in science activities led by SUNY Potsdam secondary science education students and faculty. Taught by former middle school teacher Melissa Cummings, ’98 and member of the Secondary Education/Science faculty, the students built a “working” volcano and saltwater aquarium, and they also visited the College’s chemistry and biology labs and museum. The program plans to also invite visiting scientists and engineers from area companies such as Corning to speak to the students about career opportunities.

In February 2013, the Center added a Math Mentor Program similar to the PSI program piloted in the fall semester. The Right EQuation (Math TREQ) is an afterschool program for youth in grades five through eight who would like to explore math in a variety of fun and creative ways and be inspired as a mathematician! The program welcomes students seeking assistance with daily mathematics assignments and projects. Students of all levels are welcome to participate. Secondary Math majors serve as the tutors/mentors for this program. Donald Straight, Secondary Math faculty, and current Secondary Math student, Carole Shattuck, prepare activities for this program as well as instruct SUNY Potsdam students on how to tutor a student in the area of mathematics.

For Middle School Students from the Potsdam Community: The new mentor programs help to increase the children’s interest in science and math, thereby enhancing their learning through fun and educational activities that they can plan with their college mentors. Ultimately, our goal is to sustain their interest so that they will want to continue to study math and science throughout middle and high school, and then perhaps choose a math- or science-related career.

PSI college mentors and middle school students participate in a rocket science experiment. Please feel free to view the following link to view a video clip of a PSI rocket experiment at http://youtu.be/pr07Qj-h-gU. Photo and video by Mr. Donald Straight, Department of Secondary Education.

For more information and registration forms for both of these programs please go to http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/SOEPS/litcen-

Objectives of the Outreach Programs
For SUNY Potsdam Secondary Math and Science Education Majors: The new mentor programs are designed to enhance our students’ course curriculum with significant and early hands-on experience working with community children to build interest and skills in math and science. For most of our majors, these mentor programs will be their first opportunity to work directly with school children. They experience what it is like to be a teacher early in their educational career, thus giving them valuable skills for working directly with school-aged children in the areas of math and science.

For SUNY Potsdam Science Majors: Students who are majoring in a science (biology, chemistry, physics) have the opportunity to partner with SUNY Potsdam science education majors to share their content knowledge, thereby strengthening our students’ preparation for teaching science.

View the following link to see a video clip of a PSI rocket experiment at http://youtu.be/pr07Qj-h-gU

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In EDLS 201, Principles of Education, Students Are Asked to Disentangle Student-Self, Teacher-Self

Dr. Michele Pinard
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Most people can recall a range of school experiences. Students and teachers alike compose tales—anecdotes that expose how policies, procedures, or curricular decisions impact them formatively.

For beginning teacher education candidates, examining their personal legacy can profoundly reveal how their professional narrative and philosophy of education or methods they will employ have been (or are being) shaped. At core, beliefs held about what it means to teach, learn, or serve in a community and questions about one’s personal and professional identity may merge. The student-self and the teacher-self become intertwined.

In EDLS 201, Principles of Education, one assignment asked students to disentangle these stories. As students volunteered in a service learning experience to teach children, they were instructed to observe carefully and listen closely—to themselves and their students—in order to write new (or at least edit old) scripts. Lest they cast aside seasoned teachers’ sagacity altogether, however, in Fall 2012, they were also asked to pause and gather tales from veteran teachers.

Nine women of the Delta Kappa Gamma educators’ society volunteered to be interviewed by teams of EDLS 201 students. The students completed CITI research training, practiced collecting oral histories, and focused on studying critical incidences.

Those were defined as ordinary moments, rather than eureka times, that occur in teaching, the ones that reveal to a teacher something deeper about student learning.

While some EDLS 201 students tutored Adopt-a-Bear children twice per week at Potsdam Central’s Lawrence Avenue School; others remained on campus to greet children in the CLEAR after-school creative arts camp.

There, they mentored small but enthusiastic groups and produced theatrical pieces.

More importantly, in each setting, they listened closely to students’ chatter, making sense of their academic and non-academic lives, the highs and lows, and reflected on how incidences related to course content. In critical incidence entries, students hypothesized about their emerging professional identity. Later, interviewing Delta Kappa Gamma members, echoes of their experiences were evident in the mature teacher tales.

Teachers told of personal connections with students, humbled by living conditions or constraints they knew families faced. These resonated deeply with EDLS 201 student researchers. They were grappling with the very heartstring pulling tales, told by children with whom they were working, one on one.

Auto-ethnographic projects that resulted from Teacher Tales were moving narratives, creative archives, and snippets of both novice and proficient encounters with realities of teaching. Select artistic renditions with captions appear here.
Justin Maggs, Graduate Student

During the spring semester of 2012, I was preparing for graduation and the transition into graduate school at SUNY Potsdam. As an undergrad I had majored in history with a minor in Wilderness Education. For a variety of reasons, I dropped the wilderness Ed minor during my senior year. Although I was very proud of my accomplishments as a history major, I frequently found myself dwelling on my decision to drop the wilderness education minor. Despite dropping the minor, however, I still maintained a close relationship with faculty and friends within the program. I also continued to do what I could to support the program through fundraising and advocacy. Midway through the spring semester, I was contacted by a member of the program, who asked me if I would be interested in joining the Wilderness Leadership Two course. Without hesitation, I said I was in. In the months that followed, I developed a plethora of lifelong skills, with applications in the classroom and beyond.

In order to share my experience, I must first describe the nature and purpose of the Leadership Two course. Within the Wilderness Education minor there are two tracks: Leadership in Adventure Education and Wilderness Leadership. The Adventure Education track is geared toward work with high ropes courses, therapeutic recreation, and rock climbing. In contrast, the Wilderness Leadership track is designed to prepare students to become outdoor leaders through intensive backpacking courses in wilderness settings. Prior to Leadership Two, which is the capstone experience for the minor, students must first go through Leadership One. Leadership One is a sixteen-day backpacking expedition in the Adirondacks, focused on developing decision-making skills, leadership ability, map and compass navigation, and Leave No Trace ethics.

During our twenty days in the wilderness, our group traveled 135 miles across the Pasayten Wilderness of Washington State. The Pasayten consists of over a half million acres of pristine wilderness located within the Okanagan and Mount Baker National Forests.

The Importance of Experiential Education:

What Twenty Days in the Pasayten Wilderness Taught a Graduate Student

Pictured from left to right: Julian Vadas (Assistant instructor), Aaron Baker, Emily Jackson, Justin Maggs, Mark Simon (Instructor and program director), Ryan Arno, Kaleb Stores, and Cory Howitt.

Campsite near Horseshoe Basin in the Pasayten Wilderness of Washington State.
While several wilderness locations were initially considered, the Pasayten eventually became the clear choice because it offered us diverse landscapes and ecosystems not found on the east coast. Additionally, the Pasayten offered many new challenges regardless of each individual’s prior experience.

For instance, the group needed to figure out ways to avoid drainages that ran north to south while traversing east to west. Drainages were often avoided by following ridgelines; however, traveling along a ridge posed additional risks. Alpine travel along ridges leaves groups more exposed to storms and the group had to ensure that proper contingency plans were in place if a storm rolled in. During the trip we also engaged in numerous off-trail bushwhacks, and frequently navigated 3rd class terrain. In addition, the group seized upon opportunities to practice mountaineering techniques, including ascending/descending snowfields.

When I tell people about my experience in the Pasayten, the most frequent response I’m met with is: “Wow, that’s incredible! But how is that going to help you with your degree? Or getting a job?” First, it’s important to understand that Leadership Two is much more than an “extreme camping trip.” My twenty day experience in the Pasayten allowed for personal and educational growth of exponential proportion. For instance, I had to learn to collaborate with my peers in order to solve complex problems. With the guidance of our instructor, our group utilized a variety of decision-making models to weigh the costs and benefits of a decision we had to make regarding itineraries, goals, or group needs. Unlike in the classroom, our decisions in the field had serious implications that could lead to injury, or even death, if the proper precautions were not taken. As a result, we took great care to ensure we were taking the best course of action. Although we occasionally made mistakes in our decision making, we were able to minimize the danger by having proper contingency plans in place. Throughout the decision-making process, organization, planning, and proper preparation were essential. By running a cost/benefit analysis for each decision, we were able to make quick, effective decisions in order to keep ourselves safe and meet our goals. These skills have already become applicable to my work in graduate school. Effective time management and collaboration are essential skills to have in graduate school. I continue to find myself drawing upon the lessons I learned during Leadership Two. Because of my experiences, I have become more efficient with my work and have greater confidence than ever before when working with a group.

In addition to providing me with skills that have contributed to my academic pursuits, my experiences with Wilderness Education have also made me a more active and informed community member. With an understanding of the power of experiential education and a desire to give back, I (along with many other program members) have volunteered with youth climbing classes, hiking trips, and presentations promoting Leave No Trace outdoor ethics.

While I have spoken at length about the concrete skills I have taken away from Leadership Two, I also experienced many intrinsic rewards. My experiences with Wilderness Education have made me a healthier person in body and mind, and I’m determined to continue to share my experiences so that others may reap the same rewards.

When I tell people about my experience in the Pasayten, the most frequent response I’m met with is:

“Wow, that’s incredible!
But how is that going to help you with your degree? Or getting a job?”
‘ Keys to Effective Teaching’ Helped Students Develop Their ‘Tool Box’ of Classroom Management Strategies

Carol Rossi-Fries,  
*Department of Curriculum & Instruction*

Carol Rossi-Fries presented the “Keys to Effective Teaching” workshop to 12 students on November 10 of this academic year. Students from a variety of departments within the School of Education and Professional Studies were all interested in developing their “Tool Box” of instructional and classroom management strategies. The group discussed and applied ET’s 3 Power Words, the 4 Elements of Effective Teaching and practiced how to implement them using the 12 Principles of Learning relative to Student Learning Outcomes. The workshop was very hands-on and practical, making it authentic and especially useful to our pre-service teacher candidates. Diana Fisher’s TOC office sponsors this annual workshop, and it is open to all members of the campus community.

**Middle School Association Conference**

In October 2012, a group of seventeen teacher candidates from the School of Education and Professional Studies travelled to the 32nd Annual New York State Middle School Association Conference in Cheektowaga, NY. The teacher candidates who were involved were from a variety of programs including Secondary English, Math, Science, Social Studies and the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program. Faculty members Nicole Feml and Carol Rossi-Fries collaborated with local Middle School Principal Jamie Cruikshank to make teacher candidate participation a success.

For two days, students participated in a diverse range of workshops, which stressed implementation of the Common Core and the 7 Essential Elements of Middle Level Education. Highlights of the trip included participating in the “Breakfast of Champions” panel discussion on current trends in education and interacting with middle school teachers/administrators from all over the state at a dinner theatre. These and other experiences at the conference helped our students grow personally and professionally as they networked with those in the educational community.

Dr. Peter Brouwer (Dean, School of Education and Professional Studies); Dr. Steven Marqusee (Dean, Arts and Sciences); Mr. Donald Straight (Chair, Department of Secondary Education); and Ms. Amy Guiney (Director, Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification) sponsored the attendance of the teacher candidates at the conference.

**Paws for a Cause**

In October 2012, Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) sponsored their second annual “Paws for a Cause” campaign for Potsdam Animal Shelter. Faculty Advisor Carol Rossi-Fries, who was attending this event, noted that the Potsdam Animal Shelter staff was very grateful for the support from these organizations.
Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area
Wilderness Education Program, Leadership 1

John Fealy and Mark Sudak

A group of 11 SUNY Potsdam Wilderness Education students (Gene Gaffney, Eliza Chapell, Alex Terry, Casey Cunniff, Sam Lasky, Nick Monte, Ashley Tranello, John Fealy, Adam Smith, Zack Pennacchi, and Mark Sudak) embarked on a 14-day trip through the Siamese Ponds Wilderness area of the central Adirondacks on August 10th. The students studied Leave No Trace camping skills and learned how to become outdoor leaders in an authentic wilderness setting. While most people loath the idea of sleeping on the ground and not showering or seeing a computer screen for two weeks, the Leadership students at SUNY Potsdam can all agree that sometimes setting aside your normal life and entering something wild is the best way to experience true beauty.

Although a trip like this has its beautiful moments, the logistics of traveling off trail and into a dense wilderness area complete with spruce and thick pines is an education in itself. The students on this trip learned how to navigate through the Siamese Pond Wilderness by map and compass, where 90% of the travel was off-trail. The group of 11 was split into two groups and taught by Professor Adam Wheeler and a team of previous leadership students who have completed this program.

On a typical day, students wake up and have their tents and camping equipment packed and a hot breakfast cooked and eaten by 7 a.m. The group establishes a leader for the day, and that person briefs the group on the plan and destination for the day, based on a plan from the previous night. The students work together to navigate through the wilderness and maneuver over or around the mountains surrounding them.

The leader of the day is confronted with all decisions regarding the trip and develops an understanding of the process we follow to make decisions in the wilderness. Each day ends with a full debriefing period to discuss leadership styles, decision-making, and route finding.

These trips give students not only the tools and skills they need to succeed in the program; in addition, these skills directly transfer to all aspects of their lives, whether it is working with other people, leadership ability, or self-awareness. Each of these students is now working together to organize the next trip, which will be selected and entirely planned by them. They will make the 20-day trip in the summer of 2013 to the western portion of the United States and further develop these skills under the supervision of Mark Simon.
A group of six Childhood/Early Childhood majors attended the New York State Reading Association Conference in Syracuse, NY October 28-30, 2012. Teacher education faculty member Deborah Conrad, clinical faculty member Carolyn Stone, and Sheard Literacy Center director Tina Bush attended the conference with the students.

In addition to the opportunity to attend two full days of quality professional development workshops and presentations, the students and faculty also presented a conference session entitled, “Ready! Set! Teach! Making Sense of the Common Core in Pre-service Education.”

The Monday morning session was well attended by conference participants, and the students received much positive praise for their presentation. These six students reflected upon their personal transformation experienced through pre-service literacy courses at SUNY Potsdam and into their student teaching placements.

Specifically, students discussed the completion of course assignments utilizing NYS ELA Common Core Standards with a focus on two of the instructional shifts: balancing informational and literary texts, and building knowledge in the disciplines.

The students showed examples of how to match ELA Common Core Standards to integrated literacy/science instructional strategy lessons and reflected upon their comfort level with using and teaching to the standards. Finally, through journal reflections kept during student teaching, students shared their observations in local public schools, specifically in regards to how schools are adapting to the new standards.

Deborah Conrad and Carolyn Stone began the session with the question: How do we prepare pre-service teachers for today’s elementary classrooms in light of the shift to the Common Core Standards?

They explained how course assignments in EDUC 407 (Integrated Literacy Instruction) have been tailored to understand and answer this question through the use of ELA Common Core Standards booklets in class, intentional planning of assignments, intentional reflection, and learning from teachers in the field.

Finally, Tina Bush explained the links to the Sheard Literacy Center with the Childhood/Early Childhood Literacy courses and assignments. Without the support of the Literacy Center, the student experience would not be as rich. It is a source of children’s literature, a mentoring experience for each student in EDLS 207 (Early Childhood Literacy), and Tina’s support of our EDUC 407 projects and Where are the Books? Final Conference in the Literacy Center. Students and faculty were able to attend keynote addresses by Dr. Richard Allington from the University of Tennessee, Dr. Donald Leu from the University of Connecticut, Dr. Patricia Edwards from Michigan State University, and Dr. John B. King Jr., NYS Education Commissioner, among others. Additionally, children’s authors Kwame Alexander, Diane Lang, Michael Buchanan, Bruce Coville, Trinka Hakes Noble, Coleen Paratore, and more, presented their work and were available to autograph their books.

A Title III Strengthening Institutions Faculty and Student Travel Award provided funding for this trip. This award covered the cost of the full conference, travel, accommodations, and food. We are very grateful for the opportunity to take students to a conference such as this and allow them to enjoy the full experience of attendance and professional presentation.

Faculty Participants:
Dr. Deborah Conrad, Co-chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction;
Carolyn Stone, Literacy Department;
Tina Bush, Sheard Literacy Center

Student Participants:
Paul Gordon
Elizabeth Ringer
Thomas Sawyer
Sarah Thisse
Olivia Tyler
Devinne Voigt
Gary Hind ’77, Esq. and Deborah (Diefendorf) Hind ’75 have made a multi-year commitment to fund a generous endowment for the School of Education.

The Gary and Deborah Hind School of Education Endowment will provide annual income to be used for the School’s greatest needs.

This is the Hinds’ fifth endowment fund at SUNY Potsdam, having previously endowed three scholarships as well as a fund in support of the Politics Department. Three of their endowments are designated for students and programs in the School of Education.

Debbie earned her B.A. from SUNY Potsdam in Psychology with teaching certification in Elementary Education, while Gary earned his B.A. in Politics from Potsdam and his J.D. from Albany Law School. Debbie is a former school teacher, and Gary recently retired as vice president and chief operating officer of financial related services for the Ayco Company.

Debbie is also past president and long-time member of the SUNY Potsdam Alumni Association Board of Trustees. Gary is past president and member of the Potsdam College Foundation Board of Trustees.

They are also active in the alumna/alumni associations of Alpha Kappa Phi (Agonian) sorority and Delta Kappa Theta fraternity. Gary is the 2011 recipient of the College’s Minerva Award, and Debbie was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Alumni Association in 2005.

‘My Exciting and Eventful First Year in SUNY Potsdam’

Dr. Shalu Wunnava
Department of Business Administration

It has been a very exciting and eventful first year for me. I graduated in Spring of 2011 with my Doctorate in Business Administration, started working at SUNY Potsdam in Fall of 2011, presented a research paper at my first international conference outside of North America in January, 2012, got married in April 2012, received my first grant (as part of the Title III Department Curriculum Development Program) to revise and incorporate research into MGMT 410 Operations Management course for Spring, 2013, mentored/sponsored a student’s summer internship, developed a single-seat Honors course for Operations Management for Fall, 2012, and presented my research at the SOEPS research seminar in November, 2012.

And I also made it to the news! A reporter from the Watertown Daily Times interviewed me regarding social media and the privacy and security risks involved. The article was published in the Watertown Daily Times and the Daily Courier-Observer in October of 2011.

A few more details about my research:

Presented my research paper on the topic of “virtual teams” at an international conference; the paper was also published in the conference proceedings.


3. It seems like a very busy first year, but rather than stopping to rest, I feel motivated to keep going and do more. I’m really passionate about what I do, and therefore I love what I do. And it’s great that my job happens to be what I love to do.

4. I consider myself one of the fortunate few in this world who do what they love the most for a living and who do it at a place where they look forward to going to work every day.”

Dr. Shalu Wunnava

The interactions with my students, the great collegiality amongst my departmental colleagues and the wonderful rapport I share with them, as well as the general warmth and friendliness of faculty and staff everywhere on campus makes SUNY Potsdam a wonderful institution to work for.

And being an alumna of University at Albany (SUNY), it has been a great feeling to come back home to the SUNY system, this time around as a professor.
Best High School Teachers:
A Tributary Reflection

Dr. Ronald Bretsch
Department of Secondary Education

Occasionally in some courses that I teach, I ask, “Who were your best high school teachers? I don’t mean who were your favorite teachers, but rather who were your best teachers?” Time and maturity help us to realize that our favorite teachers may not have been our best teachers. “And why? Or how?” A variety of responses results. Then we focus on “What are any common characteristics of ‘best teachers’?” They, too, vary. But it is easy to discern that there are two most common characteristics: knowledge of subject matter and a variety of pedagogical or basic teaching skills. “He knew what he was talking about,” and “She engaged us.”

Setting the same exercise for myself, I remember three “best teachers” in my own high school years. There also were mediocre teachers and a couple of downright bad ones. My central school was in a small village in northern Jefferson County, New York. Thirteen “gals” and 13 “guys” were in my “Class of ’61.” The school district was definitely rural, as well as agricultural, with numerous dairy farms. The rural character continues, as does the relative small size, but the agricultural basis has been quickly fading.

Hugh Gunnison was my English teacher for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. A graduate of St. Lawrence University, he came to us young, full of ideas of how the world could be made better by his involvement with us, and as somewhat of a mystery with his New Jersey-like accent and avant-garde (for us) perspectives.

We read Shakespearean plays; *Silas Marner*, Carl Sandburg; both 1984 and *Brave New World* (never imagining that we would ever “arrive”); “the old sheep of the [English] Lake District,” William Wordsworth; Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas’ *America Challenged* (then newly published); et al. We learned to use et al, as distinct from etc. as distinct from viz., i.e., and op. cit. We learned vocabulary words that we all thought we never would use in life, and more importantly, we expanded our “working, differentiating conceptual understandings” with each new word learned. We wrote, we wrote, we wrote: essays, poems, semester-long papers that necessitated learning how to do college-level library research. We discussed. We were challenged to defend our perspectives—and not coddled into thinking that merely because we “thought them” that was sufficient—nor that because “it felt good,” that it thereby could be defended on moral or other grounds. We learned parliamentary procedure in fine (or not so “fine”) detail. Sometimes he assigned different essays, poems, or books to specific pupils.

Mr. Gunnison’s classes were exciting. We soon grew far beyond our parents’ world perspectives and those of the rest of the community. In retrospect, I know now that he was teaching at a college freshman or sophomore level and was being successful with small village, rural, unsophisticated kids, some of whom had been up early many mornings checking on their trap lines or other grounds. We learned to use et al. as distinct from etc. as distinct from viz., i.e., and op. cit. We learned vocabulary words that we all thought we never would use in life, and more importantly, we expanded our “working, differentiating conceptual understandings” with each new word learned. We wrote, we wrote, we wrote: essays, poems, semester-long papers that necessitated learning how to do college-level library research. We discussed. We were challenged to defend our perspectives—and not coddled into thinking that merely because we “thought them” that was sufficient—nor that because “it felt good,” that it thereby could be defended on moral or other grounds. We learned parliamentary procedure in fine (or not so “fine”) detail. Sometimes he assigned different essays, poems, or books to specific pupils.

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Rarely did he sit. We wrote and wrote—and he commented and commented and commented—on our papers. (Pity the best of English teachers!) We spend a unit on Freudian psychology. (“Psych 101” for me as a freshman at Albany State University was relatively easy.) He would get disgusted, but not angry. And, in his class, I knew that my world would never be the same. Later on, Mr. Gunnison earned a doctorate from Syracuse University and served as a Professor of Education at S.U. U.

Mrs. (not “Ms” at that time!) Gladys Douglas was my social studies teacher for 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. (There was no social studies course in grade 12 in New York State then, except at local option, which few schools selected.) She was a native of our community and a graduate of Houghton College. She retired in 1961, and the editor of the yearbook gave me the privilege to write our graduating class dedication to her.

She spoke with an authoritative, but not authoritarian, voice. She knew her three content areas “inside and out,” as well as how the events of the past week related to each of them: World Regional Geography, World History (basically European), and American History. Sometimes we would challenge her in class, which she enjoyed. She was a classicist in that she had no problem in teaching ancient Greek virtues about the responsibilities and rights (in that order) of citizens of a democracy. For her, social studies was an interesting, fascinating, story-like subject, filled with interesting personalities, complete with difficult moral questions, and it was the most life-changing course we would ever take. The success of the nation depended on how well we did in her class.

We discussed variations on the themes: “What would you have done if you had been President Truman?” “Would you have authorized the dropping of the first atomic bomb?” “What evidence would you need for making the decision?” “He authorized only one. Two were used. How or why was that done?” “What constitutional question does that cause?”

In 9th grade, each pupil selected a country and prepared a portfolio (today’s term) on it: large hand-drawn maps (physical, demographic, etc.), photos of persons, examples of its products, its current domestic problems, and other items, including a written research paper. It was social studies “substance” (“What?”) and, as important, “syntax” (“How to do the research? By doing it”).

A Republican (of the northeastern U.S. kind, which today would be considered too moderate or progressive in other parts of the country), she did not “sugar coat” American history.
Native Americans (or “Indians,” as they were then called) had been horribly mistreated; here are the examples. Both Jefferson and Adams were partly correct in their visions of partisan politics and their probable future in American politics and government. Explain. The map of Africa has been artificially carved into European colonies with boundaries that represent unrealistic economics. “Now, remember the roles and effects of Anne Hutchinson, of Harriet Tubman, of Susan B. Anthony, and especially of Marian Anderson . . .” “What were the contributions to American culture by immigrants from Poland, from Japan, from . . .?”

One of my last remembrances of Mrs. Douglas was a conversation with her soon after August 1974. She did not chide, nor lecture, but she did gently remind me of the importance for a university social studies teacher education professor to do a better job of preparing future presidents than her generation had done. “Each pupil in your class is a potential president, or something equally or of greater importance!” “We social studies teachers failed the country when he [President Nixon] passed civics [social studies] in high school.”

My third “best” teacher was one of my aunts, Leda Bretsch, whose class I attended for only one year. A native of the community, she had earned her Bachelor’s degree at Keuka College. She was the “commercial” or “business” teacher. Our principal required, legally or extra-legally, in hindsight, that every one of his seniors who was going onto college or into the business world complete the year of typing. That included me. (By foresight and creative wording I went through the whole school year without ever calling her by name: neither Mrs. Bretsch, nor Aunt Leda!)

At that time, in high schools at least in northern New York, there was “tracking” or ability grouping. Even the smallest of high schools, such as ours, had two tracts in each grade: “Regents and non-Regents.” The basic difference was whether a pupil was to go to college, which, of course, was a result of other factors.

Her pupils respected Mrs. Bretsch. She had a reputation for fairness, regardless of the economic background or social standing of a pupil’s family, fairness for which children and youth have antennae usually more finely tuned than have adults. Education was important, college or no college. She taught more different subjects that did most teachers for whom a lesson plan could be used for more than one class. And, her subjects required homework: homework had to be corrected each night, not over the coming weekend. She was thorough, even in correcting typing assignments; sometimes, some of us would make planned mistakes that we could logically expect her not to find. We, not she, failed in the attempts, and she enjoyed the game.

Her love and devotion for each of her pupils is evidenced most directly for me by her phoning one Friday evening when I was at home in the village for a weekend. Jimmie Jones, who had been two years behind me in school, and by the luck-of-the-draw in a small school, my gym locker-mate for two years, had been recently killed after deplaning in Vietnam to fight in the war there. Jimmie was not from one of the village’s affluent families. As his teacher for four years and him being “one of my pupils,” Mrs. Bretsch wanted “to call on the family” at once that evening and asked if I would go with her. I did. It was one of those moments when I realized that my role was to be a good listener to the very distraught parents and not to provide answers. Jimmie’s mother was sobbing; his father was stunned. “Why did he have to die?” “Why are we fighting this . . . damned war?” “Why him?” “He was so small and so gentle!”

At that time, I had reinforced that there are occasions when the teacher’s role is not to give answers, but rather just “to listen actively,” which is not to be confused with listening silently, nor with saying “I know just how you feel.” (I am grateful that I made the decision en route to the Jones’ home not to share with them my questioning of the moral and the constitutional bases of the Vietnam War—as tempting as it was to do so—in a confused attempt at consoling.)

Where are the commonalities among these three “best teachers”? They had different “teaching styles,” Their personalities varied. Their ages were dissimilar. And not all pupils “liked” all of them.

The sine qua non (thank you, Mr. Gunnison!) for all three, however, were: A) knowledge of their content or subject matter; B) and the skills to adapt their pedagogy to that specific content of the moment and to the specific pupil or pupils, as difficult as that is with a class of twenty-plus pupils and with several lesson plans each day.

I disagree with two previous education deans at Potsdam that “a good teacher can teach anything to anyone.” Similarly, simply knowing one’s content does not result in knowing how to teach it. The intertwining of substance and syntax, of “what” and “how,” of product and process, of curriculum knowledge and instructional abilities, is so strong that a person who has never taught high school might assume otherwise.

The secondary school teacher needs two undergraduate majors: one in her or his content area and one in education. Understood must be the substantive structural components of the disciplines’ contents, as well as their syntactical components of discovering and processing.

In addition, he or she must love the act of teaching, and that requires the ability to see the potential in each individual pupil, despite the immediate, practical difficulties. And the high school teacher who is a “best teacher” may not be liked by every pupil at that time and must not dilute her or his teaching to teaching to the masses, with a “one size fits all” approach.

It is not a moral failing when a person cannot teach. It is an art form. There are other worthy jobs and professions. As a “calling,” the best teachers are not those who “cannot do anything else.” Rather, they have options, but they also have a calling to this vocation in the classical conceptualization of “vocation.” Of the three requisites of a good teacher, viz., thorough subject matter knowledge, abilities in various teaching styles, and vocational calling, vocational calling may be the most consequential.
NCTE 2012 Convention: Fresh Perspectives Enrich Our Teaching and Research

With “Dream–Connect–Ignite!” as its theme, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) annual convention in November 2012 offered dozens of opportunities for participants to spark new interests and network with colleagues, all in the never-a-dull-moment setting that could only be Las Vegas.

Three faculty members from the School of Education and Professional Studies took part in the conference. What follows are snapshots of our experiences based on the diverse workshops and presentations we attended. Determined in this case not to let “what happens in Vegas, [stay] in Vegas,” we offer these glimpses into NCTE 2012 with the hope that we might kindle new connections with alumni, colleagues, and students, as we apply what we learned to our own teaching and scholarship. Rest assured: We promise to retire the “fire” metaphor immediately, as well!

Laura Walsh, Secondary Education – English Education

It was almost 18 years ago that I began my journey as an educator. In that time, much has changed, but one thing has remained the same: teachers are still struggling to develop effective ways to help students engage with their learning.

When I was a fledgling high school English teacher, the teaching of literature was defined for me in the following way: “Students read the book and answer questions about the book while the teacher tells students what he or she wants them to know about the book.”

Such a process was often dispassionate and left students both uninterested and unmoved. In addition, no connection was made to students’ lives or to a larger community. Students did not interact with the text or with each other, but instead were forced to read and think in isolation. The classroom became a place of rote learning instead of a place of inquiry and discovery.

Let’s face it: young people today are more engaged than ever before—maybe not in the things we wish they were, but they are certainly communicating with and learning from each other and are doing so by utilizing a myriad of technological tools. They are highlighting their daily experiences on Facebook, blogging about their road trips, and texting meeting times and places for lunch on their smartphones. And now teachers are being asked to incorporate these technologies into their own teaching and students’ learning, making the classroom I described above seem even more illogical.

In her article “Literacy 2.0,” Joyce Riha Link writes, “While reading and writing continue to be the fundamental skills of literacy, technology—when integrated effectively—can be a powerful tool for instruction…schools must teach students to succeed in the information economy. They must integrate technology into literacy instruction” (25-26). Unfortunately, what is often overlooked is how to actually accomplish this.

I have been attempting to bridge these Digital Literacy gaps in my own classroom teaching for some time. At this year’s NCTE conference, a colleague and I presented on the use of online Professional Learning Communities to help facilitate discussion and problem solving on topics of educational importance. Each week, my students at SUNY Potsdam would converse with her students at Metro State College in Colorado through a Google Groups forum. What did we discover? Students posted comments and ideas but were, essentially, “doing school” instead of truly interacting with each other or with the information. Clearly we had not accomplished our goal.

We had used technology, but it did not serve to improve student collaboration or communication in any way. Instead, we were left wondering, “What happened?” In their book Digital Habitats: Stewarding Technology for Communities, Wenger, White and Smith explain, “Using technology to overcome distance and time is not always a simple translation of familiar face-to-face meeting formats. A choice of technology has to reflect the style of the community…” (75). In essence, it is not enough to simply use technology; it has to fit with what students are expected to do and learn.

Thankfully, the NCTE conference included numerous workshops with a prominent focus on teaching and technology. One in particular gave me great guidance on the use of technology in multiple classroom settings as well as a number of online frameworks and tools to help my students explore relevant curricular topics and actively and meaningfully engage with each other and with various texts.

In one workshop, presenters walked us through the BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) Network—a blog that discusses challenges related to the use of technological devices to support learning. In addition, attendees were able to view ways in which students are demonstrating their learning through sites like voki (www.voki.com), Museum Box (museumbox.e2bn.org), and Edmodo (www.edmodo.com).

Clearly there are countless tools available to educators and their students beyond PowerPoint if one is willing to seek them out. While perhaps a bit overwhelming at first, the results can be extraordinary! Take, for instance, a student in my LITR 323 class who created a YouTube video supporting the reading of a young adult novel entitled Where Things Come Back by John Corey Whaley. This student presented the video to the class and uploaded it onto his YouTube channel where the author saw it and subsequently contacted the student to thank him. This led to the student sending me the author’s contact information, me contacting the author, and the author Skyping for a half hour with my students. Mr. Whaley answered questions about his writing style and techniques, writing inspirations, character development, etc.

It was an individual assignment that spiraled into a significant experience for the entire class, simply because of the use of technology. This event only served to reinforce what I learned at the conference and to give me the confidence to move forward with new ideas to merge technology with the teaching/learning of literature and literacy. My computer is on, and the World Wide Web awaits!
Since the scientific process pivots upon experiment, procedures, and sequencing, etc. English Education and TESOL students asserted that “meaningful interaction is devalued” and “skills such as compare/contrast and summarizing are valued.” These examples are illustrative of the list of concerns the teacher-candidates observed.

DelliCarpini, Hyman, and Gulla’s presentation of their research reminds me that the CCSS is an authoritative text that deserves a critical review, and prospective teachers need a space in which to scrutinize, question, and “talk back” to this document in order to get a better understanding of what skills are valued, glossed over, privileged, and omitted. By providing student-teachers with an opportunity and the space to critically examine the standards now, once newly minted, these new teachers will be better able to navigate the terrain between their students’ academic needs and the demands of the curriculum objectives. Moreover, as a matter of consequence, I will also be better able to assist future teachers in their critique of the standards, especially regarding how they may maneuver within, around, and beyond them.

Another conference highlight was a panel discussion with young adult fiction and non-fiction authors, Sharon Flake, Rita Williams-Garcia, and J. L. Powers. These authors reminded the audience that the contemporary issues and socio-cultural perspectives that are represented in young adult novels and non-fiction literature are authentic, and they have the potential to purposefully engage young readers. This session emphasized how readings and discussions involving culturally relevant and topical literatures can “ignite” students’ critical awareness and their problem-solving skills, thereby generating sensitivities toward a multitude of social concerns.

This session was timely for me as I prepare for teaching a literature-based class in the spring. Using literature widens students’ perspectives as they walk in the shoes of others; encounter characters whose lives are perhaps at first glance unfamiliar and much different than their own; and/or experience emotions of shock, horror, comfort, confusion. The utility of literature, literary theory, and literature’s connection to literacy are too extensive to present here, yet being one among more than a hundred audience members who appreciate rich literature and all it has to offer was enriching and empowering.

How I do look forward to next year’s conference!

Dr. Marta Albert, Literacy Education

My conference experience began with an inspiring keynote address by Sir Ken Robinson, the author, speaker, and academic perhaps best known to many in education circles for his artfully animated TED-talk, “Changing Education Paradigms” (http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html). Robinson’s background is in theater and drama education, and he worked in the U.K. for many years to make arts education accessible for children and youth across social classes. His talk stressed the importance of diversity, collaboration, and personalization in education. Robinson urged us to remember that “being alive is a creative process” and teachers serve students (and ourselves) best when we elicit rather than suppress learners’ creativity, since it is essential to the development of self.

He had an upbeat manner, wry sense of humor, and optimistic outlook that definitely set a tone for the conference. In fact, I found his stance typical of presenters in the sessions I attended, focused on three themes: teaching writing, supporting writers through peer tutoring, and using new media and technology to support literacy development.

By providing student-teachers with an opportunity and the space to critically examine the standards now, once newly minted, these new teachers will be better able to navigate the terrain between their students’ academic needs and the demands of the curriculum objectives.
For example, “They All Have Laptops. Now What? Teaching English Language Arts in an Age of 1:1 Computing” featured two veteran high school English teachers (private and public) and a researcher involved in 1:1 technology initiatives in California. The private school teacher is involved in a new iPad-based project, while the public school teacher has been at the helm of a Google laptop project in her district since 2008. Students in the iPad project are able to take home the tools, including a wireless keyboard; the laptops in the Google project remain in the classroom.

Unique circumstances have made each project possible within their locales, yet much in the presentation felt applicable and helpful for my own teaching and research interests. Both teachers are lifelong learners who entered the age of new media and technologies in literacy education with a healthy dose of skepticism.

They expect technology to prove itself: it must assist them to teach and reach students differently than they could without it. Striking a chord with Ken Robinson’s keynote message, each teacher stressed a desire to foster student collaboration and creativity, and each one has found multiple ways to use technology to reach these goals.

In the iPad project, the teacher has begun to “flip” her instruction by creating brief and engaging videos on focused topics. Students watch these videos on the iPad as part of their homework, and then must apply the concepts to do substantive planning and drafting before class.

In days that follow such homework, there is much more time available in class for individualized writing conferences, structured peer writing interaction, and meaningful group projects. Students note with appreciation that they can watch videos over and over as they practice a concept. “I can slow you down and rewind you!” has been a common refrain.

Students come to class with plans and ideas that are developed rather than skeletal; they are prepared to write, revise, and work in-depth with peers in class. Since the videos are teacher-produced, they personalize learning and help foster links among curriculum topics.

The teacher in the public school setting has classes that can run to 36 students or more. She has discovered that focused, online “chat” conversations can be a vehicle to deepen and enrich class discussion. This teacher places students in small groups to dissect brief excerpts of complex texts through online chatting. On her desktop screen, she monitors group discussions, identifying points of commonality and unique ideas—all of which she uses to structure class conversation when the online segment wraps up. Her goal is to get students to contribute thoughtfully in face-to-face discussions, and the online chats facilitate this well, since students are accustomed to this form of writing and interaction.

They probe the text, raise questions of the text and of each other, and generate new insight together. They speak more—and more meaningfully—in class after participating in these focused written chats, and have an archive available for later reference, which has improved the quality and depth of their writing.

I could go on and on! These teachers are pragmatic, creative, and appealingly cautious and measured as they search for ways to use technology well, rather than just use it.

Indeed, this was the spirit of all of the sessions I attended, making the entire conference a terrific learning experience. With Susannah Luttman, a graduate of SUNY Potsdam’s literacy specialist program who has relocated to the Las Vegas area, I was fortunate to be able to present a workshop, too, focused on multigenre writing. Rachel Cook, an English teacher at Norwood-Norfolk High School and also a Potsdam literacy specialist alumnus, helped to design the presentation. We all learned a great deal in our work to plan the session and from our session attendees.

For those who are interested, the online resource from the NCTE conference is a permanent, searchable database of documents, videos, and Powerpoint presentations: http://ncte.connectedcommunity.org/2012Browse/. I have already dipped into it to share materials with students and surely will make many return visits.


Education Students Attend AMTNYS Fall Meeting

Becky Duprey
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

The AMTNYS Annual Fall Meeting was held in Rye, NY from November 8th to the 10th. Once again, several SUNY Potsdam faculty, faculty emeriti, and students attended the meeting. This year, Blair Madore, Becky Duprey, Don Straight, Jim Parks, and 18 SUNY Potsdam students attended (4 undergraduate elementary, 13 undergraduate secondary, 1 MST secondary).

The students who attended are:
- BA/MA and Sec Ed: Kassie Averill, Alex Murray
- BA and Sec Ed: Kylie Barr, Nichole Brasie, Ray Cummings, Danielle Fountain, Kathryn Lentini, Matt Leifeld, Austin Martin, Jessica Obercon, Carole Shattuck, Nate Pike, Nate Turcotte,
- MST: Kandi Peck
- Childhood/Early Childhood Ed: Alison Forth, Michael Greco, Lacy Skeldon, Julie Koehler.

Several presentations were given by Potsdam faculty and students. Nine students (Kassie Averill, Kylie Barr, Nichole Brasie, Kathryn Lentini, Matt Leifeld, Alex Murray, Jess Obercon, Kandi Peck, and Nate Turcotte) organized by Don Straight presented “A Plethora of Perplexing Problems.” Blair Madore presented “MesoAmerican Mathematics” and “Hands on History of Tangrams” as a fill-in for a cancelled session. “More Puzzles for Young Geometers” was presented by Jim Parks, Professor Emeritus. Becky Duprey co-presented “Fractions Can Make Sense” with SUNY student Julie Koehler, and she presented “Ten Frames, Making Numbers Come Alive!” as a fill-in for a cancelled session.

In addition to the presentations made by SUNY faculty and students, 13 Potsdam Students (Secondary, MST, and Childhood/Early Childhood Ed) were part of the arrangements team providing technology support for conference speakers. Each student volunteered for a two-hour period.

As always, socializing and meeting up with Potsdam Alumni is a great part of attending the conference. Students and faculty participated in the Dance Contest, which was won by the women of Fredonia. All participants enjoyed some laughs. This year we were able to meet up with several alumni: Frank Sobierajski (AMTNYS Data Manager and soon to be retired Tech Teacher at Cato NY), Jennifer Lemery (Queensbury), Jerry Hicks (Queensbury), Jillian Dunkleberger (Indian River Central Schools), and Will Hardin (Granville Jr/Sr High School).

In addition to the camaraderie and fun, SUNY Potsdam took some time to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy. At Carole Shattuck’s request, several students took donations of relief supplies for those affected by Hurricane Sandy during the previous week. On Friday, we connected with Jerry Hicks to transfer to his car our contributions, which he delivered later that day (he had also made a supply contribution trip the night before), and the supplies were appreciatively received.

Plans to attend the 2013 Annual Fall Meeting are already underway. This conference will be held in Buffalo from November 7 to November 9, 2013.

In addition to the presentations made by SUNY faculty and students, 13 Potsdam Students (Secondary, MST, and Childhood/Early Childhood Ed) were part of the arrangements team providing technology support for conference speakers. SUNY Potsdam also took some time to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy. At Carole Shattuck’s request, several students took donations of relief supplies for those affected by Hurricane Sandy during the previous week.
Visiting Serbia on a Fulbright Specialist Grant: Collaboration, Education, Culture

Dr. Sergei Abramovich
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

In 2012, at the end of spring semester, I spent three weeks in Serbia on a Fulbright Specialist Grant visiting universities of Niš and Novi Sad. This visit was motivated by my earlier work with Professor Biljana Popović (University of Niš) and Professor Siniša Crvenković (University of Novi Sad) on a new journal, Open Mathematical Education Notes (OMEN), sponsored by the International Mathematical Virtual Institute (www.imvbl.org) with headquarters in Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina. In 2010, Professor Daniel Romano, General Manager of the Institute, invited me to assume the responsibilities of editor-in-chief of this journal. Professors Popović and Crvenković are associate editors. I wrote about this work in the previous (2012) issue of the Newsletter. A few words about the Fulbright Specialist Program: The program seeks to increase the participation of leading U.S. scholars and professionals in different areas towards the end of initiating an appropriate invitation for a short-term visit. After my application was approved by the CIES, Universities and Niš and Novi Sad submitted a request to the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, inviting me as a Fulbright Specialist with a series of lectures in mathematics education. In turn, the U.S. Department of State considered this request and awarded me with a grant in mathematics education to visit the two universities. Needless to say, an enormous amount of professional paperwork was involved in the process that resulted in the grant.

On May 14, 2012, I arrived in Belgrade and was met by the representatives of the U.S. Embassy. They saw me off to an embassy’s Mercedes Benz as a means of transportation to Niš, about 160 miles along the major highway towards the Bulgarian border. The driver, constantly responding to calls on several cellphones, safely made it in two hours to the hotel, Niški Cvet.

On the next day, I was invited to meet with the University of Niš administration, including Vice-Rector for international cooperation Professor Vesna Lopić who expressed interest in establishing a formal academic cooperation with SUNY Potsdam. It appears that I was the first SUNY representative to visit University of Niš. As a result of this travel, with assistance from Krista LaVack (Director of our Office of International Education) and SUNY Potsdam (represented by Provost Madden), the University of Niš signed a Letter of Intent for Academic Cooperation.

As a guest of the University of Niš I gave four lectures and three TV interviews, all of which were organized by Professor Popović. One interview can be found at the website http://www.nuit.ni.ac.rs/index.php?option=com_hwdvideo&task=viewvideo&Itemid=55&video_id=202.

The picture below was taken immediately after the lecture.

A few words about the Fulbright Specialist Program: The program seeks to increase the participation of leading U.S. scholars and professionals in academic exchanges with colleagues from non-U.S. institutions, and to encourage activities that go beyond traditional lecturing and research.

The author is the fifth from the left; Prof. Popović is the fifth from the right.
Similarly, in Novi Sad, I did several talks, organized by Professor Crvenković, that were attended by mathematics education and mathematics students and faculty. Furthermore, while in Sombor where the faculty of education of the University of Novi Sad is located, I was honored to be the plenary speaker at an international conference entitled “The Interfaces of Subjects Taught in the Primary Schools and Possible Models of Integrating Them.” Sombor is a beautiful small town about 60 miles from Novi Sad towards the Hungarian border. The teaching College in Sombor was established in 1778, so this year it is just 15 years short of celebrating its bicenquinquagenary (250th) anniversary. It became part of University of Novi Sad, which was established in 1960, although the very origin of education in the region goes back to the 11th century. As a kind of suburb of Novi Sad, Sombor is a frequent host of many conferences in different professional fields. At the conference, I finally met Professor Romano, with whom I had a chance to discuss the development of OMEN in the cozy setting of Sombor’s cafes. In addition, on a day free from meetings, Prof. Crvenković showed me Belgrade, a large European city, which is home to the Cathedral of Saint Sava, the largest Orthodox Church in the world.

During my time in Serbia, in addition to sharing my work with Serbian colleagues and their students, I was learning new things for myself, comparing educational systems in my home and host countries. Mathematics education systems and approaches to teaching mathematics in the U.S. and Serbia have both similarities and differences. At the primary level, the similarity in approaches deals with the idea of the integration of mathematics and literacy. As evidenced in Serbia, one can just look at the title of the above-mentioned conference in Sombor. As evidenced in the U.S., one can mention the Common Core State Standards Initiative recently introduced and accepted by the majority of states, including New York State. At the primary level, these core standards concern mathematics and literacy, the two subject matters increasingly seen in the U.S. as a cornerstone of pupils’ scholastic excellence across the curriculum. Thus it appears that such a pedagogical perspective is not language specific and can be utilized across different linguistic denominations.

At the secondary and, perhaps, tertiary levels, the similarity in approaches to the teaching of mathematics can be seen in the focus on real-life mathematical applications. For example, as guest editor for a special issue “Computers in K-20 Mathematics Education” (to appear in print in 2013) of the journal Computers in the Schools, one

The author (right) with Prof. Crvenković on the shore of Danube

of the articles I received in response to the call for papers was, by coincidence, from the University of Novi Sad mathematics department. The focus of this article was on the use of computing technology to teach secondary mathematics concepts to prospective teachers through real-life applications. During my time in Novi Sad, I had several meetings with the authors helping them to improve the text. This work was exactly what the Fulbright program expects from an academic exchange—to engage in activities that go beyond lecturing and research.

It was interesting to learn about requirements for scholarly publications in Serbian universities during tenure earning process—articles, in order to be counted for tenure, have to be published not just in peer-reviewed journals, but in those indexed in major databases such as, for example, Scopus or Thomson Reuters ISI Web of Science. In order for a new journal to be included in Scopus, however, it has to be in existence for at least three years, like Computers in the Schools, for example, and during that time publish a certain number of articles. That is why, in Serbia (as well as in other countries of former Yugoslavia) junior mathematics education faculty are reluctant to submit their work to new journals. This information was important for me as editor of OMEN, and it is something I could only learn by visiting Serbia, meeting, and talking to people there. Another interesting thing that I learned in Serbia is the notion of what they call proceedings of international significance: a paper to be included in such proceedings has to be at least 16-page long with at least 10 references. In addition, whereas the quality of books and journals in Serbia is extremely high, they are only moderately expensive.

To conclude my recollections, I would like to acknowledge the superb hospitality of my Serbian hosts and colleagues. Their time and efforts were crucial for my outstanding experience in Serbia. I am confident that our collaboration will go beyond the development of OMEN and eventually include student and faculty exchange. Both sides have many interesting things to learn from each other.

During my time in Serbia, in addition to sharing my work with Serbian colleagues and their students, I was learning new things for myself, comparing educational systems in my home and host countries.
An Internship at Hospice: Life Lessons For Our Students

Ada Santaferra
Department of Community Health

Our students have described an internship at Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley as an experience that is unforgettable, challenging, amazing, rewarding, and fun. A student described her internship at hospice this way: “When people ask me where my internship site is and I reply back with Hospice they are in complete shock. They comment about how difficult the job is and that they don’t understand how anyone can do it. Through my internship I have come to realize that it is not about the patient dying; it is about providing support for the patient and their family. It’s about making the days less stressful so they can enjoy their last moments with each other. People who have not had the opportunity to see this side of Hospice will never understand. I feel lucky to be able to say that I understand.”

Founded in 1983 as an all-volunteer hospice serving one terminally ill patient, today Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley has 75 staff members and 100-plus volunteers and cares for, on average, 70 patients and their families each day. Their service area includes all of St. Lawrence County, which has a population of about 110,000, and is the largest county in New York State with 2,822 square miles. Eighty-five percent of our patients remain in their homes (their preference) and the remaining 15% are cared for in hospitals or nursing homes throughout the county. For the past 29 years the goal of hospice has remained the same: to provide exceptional, compassionate care for people with terminal illness and their families.

The internship experience at hospice is unique in that there is no other internship placement in which our students are confronted with death and loss on a daily basis. Because of the nature of the work at Hospice, the interns encounter some of the most difficult issues we deal with as a society. Also unique about hospice is that, intertwined with gaining marketable skills, learning about workplace etiquette, and gaining confidence in their ability to be an effective health educator, the interns learn valuable lessons about compassion and how to provide emotional and spiritual support to people confronting the end of life.

Projects the interns have had the opportunity to participate in include: working with the Amish community as they mourned the loss of a young person in their community, working with the “Good Grief Clubs” in local schools to educate children about grief and loss, developing education material for Camp Healing Hearts, a one day camp for children 5-17 who have experienced the death of a family member or friend, creating literature for surviving the death of a spouse, and presenting health-related workshops on topics such as stress management for the staff at Hospice.

When asked about why she is so enthusiastic about mentoring Community Health interns, Mary Jones, the Director of Family Support Services replied, “What impresses me most is the SUNY Potsdam interns’ level of dedication. They come to the table prepared, eager, and engaged. Their enthusiasm has a ripple effect. They infuse the agency with excitement.” She added, “Each SUNY Potsdam intern continually raises the bar for the next one. The interns are independent. They do not need hand holding and approach learning with a ‘What’s next?’ attitude.” Kay Deperno, bereavement counselor at Hospice, said she enjoys working with SUNY Potsdam Community Health interns because, “They have fresh ideas, unlimited energy, and they inspire me to do better.”

While at hospice, Community Health interns learn tangible skills they can use in their careers and in their lives. Mary, Kay, and the entire staff recognize, value, and appreciate the skills the interns bring to Hospice.

Kaley Arsenault was an intern with Hospice during the spring 2012 semester and had this to say about her internship experience: “My internship at Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley provided me with unforgettable memories and experiences. The projects I was able to complete while interning at Hospice were things I never dreamed possible. The amazing and courageous staff deserves all the thanks in the world for what they do on a day-to-day basis. This internship was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

The welcoming, warm, and nurturing environment offered by the hospice staff allows the interns to learn important skills for the job market, to grow as a professional, and to cultivate compassion.

Mary and Kay encourage students who are interested in an internship with Hospice to enroll in a death and dying class. Although not a requirement for the internship, taking a death and dying class provides interns with a foundation of understanding the dying and grief process. Doing so reduces the anxiety of completing an internship with Hospice.

Hospice is continually looking for persons and organizations/clubs to make healing stones for distribution to patients and their families. If you and/or your organization/club are interested in making healing stones please contact Ada Santaferra at 315-250-9678 or santafam@potsdam.edu.

For more information about an internship placement with Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley, contact Ada Santaferra at 267-3132 or santafam@potsdam.edu.
The Santafera/Community Health Internship Scholarship
Caitlin Manahan
Sanamtha Paige

Wilderness Education Leadership Award
Evan Price

Curriculum & Instruction, B-6

Departmental Scholars
Childhood/Early Childhood
Sarah Adams
Charlotte Breen
Miranda Gokey
Kayla Grant
Samantha Larson
Christine Li
Allison Metot
Krista Metz
Lia Preus
Chelsea Ranck
Thomas Sawyer
Katelynd Schmidt
Sarah Thissie
Olivia Tyler

Harry F. Brooks ’68 North Country Educator Scholarship
Courtney Tripp

William J. Amoriell Scholarship
Kellise Jensen

Carbery Scholarship
Juliana Brush
Rachel Desormo
Ashley Walbroehl

Michele Christy Memorial Scholarship
Nancite Holl
Sarah Thissie

Vernice Ives Church ’61 Scholarship
Molly Gray

Class of 1951 Scholarship
Marisa Madson

Class of 1953 Scholarship
Kailey Christy

Carol Clements Scholarship
Sarah Adams

Evans-Cumming’s ’83 Scholarship
Jessica LaClair
Thomas Sawyer

Susan H. Diekrs ’75 Scholarship
For Early Childhood Education
Brittany Lucky

Richard C. & Joy (MacDonald ’58) Dorf Family Scholarship
Samantha Larson

Florence M. Dowd Scholarship
Andrew Bell

Kathleen Strobeck Fales ’44 & Allen R. Fales Scholarship
Olivia Tyler

Krista Fordham ’08 Master’s in Education Scholarship
James Armstrong

Marian Lee Frazier, Class of 1940 & Lula M. Lee Scholarship
Ashley Walbroehl

Mark Gallogly & Elizabeth Strickler Award
Cherish Labombard

Betsy Jane Paro Golding Scholarship
Andrew Bell

Evelyn Timmernner Kelsey Scholarship
Adriana Rizzo

Elizabeth “Betsy” Burgan Northrop Class of 1961 Scholarship
Alyssa Navilio

Eola Pitts Memorial Scholarship
Stephanie Lashomb

Camilla Ray Scholarship
Jessica Quimby

Cecelia Alton Rock Scholarship
Samantha DiPietro

Outstanding Sponsor Teachers

Outstanding Canadian Teacher Award
Ms. Susan Pippen
Long Sault Public School

Outstanding U.S. Teacher Award
Ms. Kristie Fuller
Indian River High School
Mr. Robert Ladouceur
Lincoln Elementary School

Leitiz Award
Hanna Botsford
Anna Greer

Business Administration

Departmental Scholars
Marcus Domfort
Erin Higgins
Andrew Holmes
Anthony Provoncha
Kyle Rizzo
Mark Saunders
Wenzheng Shi
Matthew Tarlach
Danielle Tuttle

Excellence in Accounting
Anthony Provoncha

Excellence in Finance
Andrew Holmes

Excellence in Management
Leland Shippee

Excellence in Marketing
Andrew Holmes

Community Health

Departmental Scholars
Samantha Ahlfeld
Chelsea Coons
Alissa Tischler

Outstanding Community Health Student
Courtney Falconer

Neil Johnson Award for Excellence
Caitlin Manahan

Dr. Neil & Mrs. Marilyn Johnson Scholarship
Alyssa Farmer

Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence
Courtney Falconer

Gary & Deborah Diefendorf Hind Scholarship
Jon Schiwenske
Briana Teile

Alfred W. Santway Scholarship
Kristopher Boettcher

James W. & Ruth J. Scott Student Scholarship
Rudy Conrad
Rachel Gordon
Jay Shimmel

Kathleen M. Sipher Memorial Scholarship
Brittany Martin

Jerry and Catherine Welsh Scholarship
Chelsea Cutway

Inclusive & Special Education

Lorraine Mader Bayner Memorial Scholarship
Traci Brewer
Ashley Chevrier

James W. & Ruth J. Scott Student Scholarship
Stephanie Dwyer

Outstanding Students of the Year
Bianca Falange
Beth McCullough-Ladouceur
Amy Stone

Teacher Education Study Abroad Scholarship
Latesha Fussell

Rebecca V. Sheard Literacy Center

William O. & Patricia B. Davis Scholarship
Victoria Hamilton

Claire Freedman Koshar ’56 & Martin Koshar Writing Internship Scholarship
Victoria Hamilton

Dr. Patricia Ruggiano & Thomas Schmidt Outstanding Mentor Award
Sarah Mulcahy
Beth Sanford
Kathryn Schneyer
Lacey Skeldon

School of Education & Professional Studies Scholarships

Annual Fund Scholarship
Mackenzie Bence
Jessica Bibbins
Latesha Fussell
Miranda Gokey
Erin Higgins
Amy Stone
Margaret Whalen

J. Stuart Hokhirk Award
Travis Bogart

Dorothy M. McGeoch Memorial Graduate Student Award
Adam Herod

Promising New Teacher Award
Jeremy Welik
Year Two:
“Branching Out With Books” Continues
Successful Potsdam-SLU Collaboration

Nancy Griffin,
College Advancement and
Tina Wilson Bush, Director,
Sheard Literacy Center

With the help of two grants totaling $35,000 from the Charles R. Wood Foundation, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Potsdam continued the successful implementation of “Branching Out with Books” (BOWB), a collaborative program involving college students travelling to five project sites weekly to work with children to strengthen their literacy and reading abilities.

Schools participating in BOWB in Fall 2012 included Jefferson Elementary School in Massena, Hermon-DeKalb Central School in DeKalb Junction, Madrid-Waddington Elementary School, the Akwesasne Library and the St. Regis Mohawk School, with 41 students from the two colleges travelling to the schools and library each week to work with more than 440 school children on their literacy skills while building self-confidence and instilling in them a love of reading and writing.

Miss Myers, a SUNY Potsdam education student, reads with a second grader from Jefferson Elementary School in Massena during the Branching Out With Books program.

Developing early literacy skills can be fun! Students in the program help one another on building word stations and kick back and enjoy a good book after a long day.
Program activities included one-on-one tutoring in reading and writing, digital storytelling culminating in “Film Night” for the students and their families, a book-cart program, reading games, a visit to the St. Lawrence bookstore and a pre-teen book club.

The program also involved 26 teachers and four after-school program coordinators at the schools and library.

The program was designed and implemented by a team of educators and administrators from the two colleges and schools. The team included Jefferson Elementary School teachers Faith (Bottge) Bish ’09 and Mary (Hoffman) Russell ’07; Dr. Marta Albert of SUNY Potsdam’s literacy faculty; Tina (Wilson) Bush ’89, Director of SUNY Potsdam’s Sheard Literacy Center; Randy Sanders, Coordinator of Hermon-DeKalb’s Extended Day program; Glory Cole ’80, Director of the Akwesasne Library; Brenda Papineau, Director of St. Lawrence’s Community Based Learning Program and the Center for Civic Engagement; and Carol Smith, Grants Manager at St. Lawrence University.

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SUNY Potsdam Alumni Education Leaders Speak With Aspiring Teachers

SUNY Potsdam's School of Education Alumni Board recently hosted 22 alumni who are leaders in education for a career advice session to students aspiring to become teachers.

The session, titled "Entering the Teaching Job Market: Advice from Potsdam Alumni Superintendents and Principals," was held on campus on Saturday, March 9 as part of the College’s Teacher Education Student Association (TESA) annual two-day conference.

The conference was organized by TESA Adviser Nicole Feni '02, who is the College’s assistant director of the Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification; and TESA Conference Chair Sarah Adams, a junior from Evans Mills majoring in Early Childhood/Childhood with a specialization in mathematics.

More than 80 college students attended the conference, including a group from SUNY Canton.

Alumni presenters included BOCES Superintendents Thomas Burns '92 of the St. Lawrence Lewis BOCES and Christopher Todd '92 of the Oswego BOCES, as well as District Superintendents Patrick Brady '88, Potsdam Central Schools; Dr. Harry Brooks '68, retired superintendent of the Broadalbin-Perth School District; Dr. Mark Davey '84 of Gates-Chili Central Schools; Frederick Hall, Jr. '84 of Sackets Harbor Central Schools, who also served as the keynote speaker for TESA’s annual dinner meeting; Christine Holt '93 of the Inlet Common School District; Seth McGowan '96 of Tupper Lake Central School District; Dr. Randy Richards '83 of Lake Placid Central Schools; and Susan Todd '88 of Herkimer Central Schools.

High school principals who presented at the conference included Joann Chambers '87 of Potsdam Senior High School; Jeremy McBride '95 of Webster Schroeder High School; Jonathan Parks '85 of Saranac High School; Lee Roscoe '91 of Westhill High School in Syracuse; and David Treharne '83 of Auburn Enlarged Central Schools.

Middle school principals who presented included Jamie Cruikshank '92 of Potsdam’s A.A. Kingston Middle School; Scott McDonald '94 of William Golding Middle School in Cobleskill; and Nancy Taylor-Schmitt '84 of Indian River Middle School.

Elementary school principals included Scott Gilbert '86 of the Potomac (VA) Elementary School; Larry Jeune '83 of Potsdam’s Lawrence Avenue Elementary School, Charity Zawatski '02 of West Side Elementary School in Gouverneur; and Sharon Thomas '89 of the St. Regis Mohawk School.

In addition to the session on entering the teaching job market, the TESA Conference also offered a session called "Best Practice Approaches to Teaching Literacy: Stories from the Field," featuring alumni Faith Bish '03 of Jefferson Elementary School in Massena; Randy Burlingame '90 and David Vroman '83 of Potsdam Central Schools; Megan Leger '10 of Colton-Pierrepont School District; Amanda Chapman '09 of Gouverneur Central Schools; Tiffany Maynard of SUNY Potsdam’s Sheard Literacy Center; and Rebecca Ouderkerk '10 of Madrid-Waddington Elementary School. Amy Schwerzmann '73 of the Watertown City School District was the keynote speaker for the conference’s session on literacy.

Dean Peter Brouwer said, “The TESA conference was a unique opportunity for our students to hear the perspectives of school leaders who are alumni of our teacher preparation programs. The students were able to gain excellent career guidance, and our alumni were able to give back to their program in a meaningful way.”