

# THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION



## MTT Kicks Off Year 14 of the Program

The Master Technology Teacher (MTT) Program is a partnership between The University of Alabama's College of Education, Technology in Motion, and Tuscaloosa City and County Schools to train teachers to use technology in classroom instruction.

Recently, the MTT program started its 14th year, with their first meeting held at The Tuscaloosa Career & Technology Academy [http://tcta.tuscaloosacityschoools.com/pages/Tuscaloosa\\_Career\\_Tech\\_Academy](http://tcta.tuscaloosacityschoools.com/pages/Tuscaloosa_Career_Tech_Academy).

This group includes preservice and inservice teachers from The University of Alabama

and area elementary and secondary schools. Dr. Vivian Wright says "the group has made significant contributions and has provided leadership for the promotion and integration of technology to enhance teaching and learning."

The group is facilitated by College of Education Professor of Instructional Technology, Dr. Vivian H. Wright and Dr. Robert Mayben, Instructional Technology Specialist for the UA/UWA In-Service Education Center.

For more information, see the UA Technology in Motion Website at <http://uatim.wikispaces.com>.



*Dr. Mayben and Dr. Wright discuss different apps during the session*

2013-2014 MTT Team





# Learning Together:

A Partnership to Improve Elementary Students' Literacy Achievement and Teacher Candidates' Practice



*Dr. Henderson and Mrs. Crawford*

It is 7:30 in the morning and the teacher candidates' parking lot at Holt Elementary School is nearly full.

Upon entering the professional classroom, established in 2012 by **Dr. Shannon Henderson** in partnership with the principal, **Mrs. Debbie Crawford**, you will see teacher candidates studying their assessment data and selecting books for the upcoming lesson with their struggling kindergarten or first grade literacy learner.

Snippets of conversations bubble up from tables and in small groups selecting books from classroom library:

- "He's using visual information to solve unknown words, but he is ignoring meaning—have you used a book that is good for

prompting for meaning?";

- "Today in word work, I'm going to see if she can write the word we took to fluency yesterday.";
- "I think that Jamal is ready to move out of sound boxes and move to spelling boxes—his writing book shows that hears almost every sound—now we need to focus on what 'looks right.'";
- "Her strength is using meaning to solve unknown words, but she is ignoring the structure—I need to find an engaging book that is patterned for my lesson today.";
- "Portia is consistently reading a Level 6 book between 95-98%—I need to move her up."

This is no ordinary "Introduction to Reading" methods class. The teacher candidates in Dr. Henderson's section of CRD 369 tutor a struggling kindergarten or first grade literacy learner for 30 minutes, two days per week; concomitantly learning about literacy processing theory and how to apply those understandings to the teaching of reading and writing.

Based on the work of scientist and literacy researcher, Dr. Marie Clay, teacher candidates use a modified



lesson framework from the Reading Recovery intervention program as they learn how to assess students' strengths and identify what their students "need to be able to learn how to do next" to accelerate their literacy development. At the end of the semester, teacher candidates prepare and submit a clinical report that highlights student progress and recommendations for future instruction that is shared with the principal, classroom teacher, and parents.

While class is officially scheduled from 8:00-9:30, UA teacher candidates arrive at 7:30 and often remain on site until 10 or 10:30 as they problem-solve and plan for upcoming lessons—evidencing their dedication and commitment to their elementary students, teaching, and the teaching profession.

# UA Hosts 2014 Regional Science Olympiad

This year's Alabama Science Olympiad at the University of Alabama was scheduled for Saturday, February 22, 2014, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The College of Education SCTL Science Education Faculty, GRAs, and Students (SciTeach) and the Office of Research on Teaching in the Disciplines (ORTD) sponsor the Experimental Design Event, one of several others that day. The SCTL science education faculty has been sponsoring this event in the Science Olympiad for over 10 years, for both middle and high school division teams.

This year the event included 15 middle and 15 high school teams, 90 secondary science students, from south central to northern Alabama participated in the annual competition. The Experimental Design Event took place in the science education lab in 3408 SEC Bldg. Graduate teaching assistants, Marilyn Stephens, Abby Mire, Michelle Wooten, and Tara Ray; SCTL students Rocky Elmore and John

***“Experimental design is a planned activity designed to understand the natural order of events in nature.”***

***-Dr. Dennis Sunal***

Coleman; and faculty Dennis Sunal [SCTL] designed, administered, and judged the event.

Experimental design is a planned activity designed to understand the natural order of events in nature. The researcher does something more than just carefully observing what is occurring. The importance of experimental design stems from the quest for understanding causes or relationships as opposed to simply description. The purpose of the design is to rule out these alternative causes, leaving only the hypothesized factor that is the most likely real cause.

Science Olympiad offers students experiences with science outside of the classroom that often are a

**Dr. Dennis Sunal**  
Professor,  
Secondary Science  
Education



focus of science clubs and after school activities as students prepare for Olympiad events, making it a social experience as well as an academic one. Participation in Science Olympiad events and tournaments, in turn, attracts more students to professional and technical careers in science, technology, and science teaching. Dr. Dennis Sunal, who works with the experimental design section of Science Olympiad at UA, notes, “Even when students do not pursue science careers, they become citizens more able to think through the science-related problems we all deal with in daily life through the Olympiad experience.” ■

# Elementary Education:

## Undergraduate Students Conduct Action Research



*Drs. Lisa Fowler and Lee Freeman*

Each semester, Elementary Education Practicum III (CEE 496) instructors, Drs. Lisa Fowler and Lee Freeman, provide students with a unique opportunity to conduct action research.

Students are guided through the process of forming a research question centered upon some concern they have identified during their semester III placement.

Once the question is formed, students learn how to write an Introduction to their action research study. The pre-service teachers then conduct extensive review of current literature seeking to identify solutions to the question. They are taught how to write a Review of Literature in APA format.

Once the literature review is complete, students form a Plan of Action in an attempt to answer their action research questions. The procedures used vary, based upon the nature of the question. Cooperating teachers have input into this process, as well. Students create a plan for action research that will last at least 10 days.

As the students carry out the Plan of Action, data are collected. Next, an in-depth analysis occurs with faculty guidance. All of this information is formally written and accompanied by data charts and graphs to provide students more experience in gaining meaning from data.

This project has proven to be a valuable experience for students. When their formal paper, complete with concluding paragraph and references, is finished, students present their work. Action Research Presentation Day is a "big deal". Students dress professionally, prepare brochures, and present their findings to semester II (CEE 495) students.

The presentations serve two purposes. First, they are a forum providing students with a means to share the information they have gathered and the conclusions they have made. Second, semester II students preview the requirements for the upcoming semester. After reading final drafts of the action research papers, and watching presentations, Drs. Fowler and Freeman identify at least two students who demonstrated outstanding studies.

During the fall semester, Amanda Cramer and Marissa Murphy were identified as having conducted a high quality of research.

The action research papers describing their work were sent to the Office of Research in the Teaching Disciplines (ORTD). The ORTD published the papers and extended an invitation for both students to attend a research seminar for undergraduates in spring 2013. The papers are available at <http://education.ua.edu/centers/ortd/ugresearch/>.

# COE Alumni Showcase

## Glenda Ogletree

Since graduating in December 2007 with a doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction and Elementary Science, Glenda Ogletree has been teaching at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Ga. As an Assistant Professor in the department of Childhood and Exceptional



Student Education, she teaches the undergraduate and graduate science methods' courses along with other preparatory courses. She is also currently working with a pilot group of internship students on the edTPA portfolio process. She sponsors the Nu Zeta Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi. They have an active

group of students and graduates that participate in many community service activities including a yearly Literacy Alive project at a local school's Twenty-First Century after school program. Her dissertation dealt with teacher science pedagogical content knowledge and its positive impact on student learning. The dissertation has been cited numerous times in the literature and several studies have followed up research methods developed while at UA. During the past six years, she has presented at local, state, and national conferences and she has a recent article in KDP's New Teacher Advocate journal.

## Emily Sims

Emily Sims, a 2012 Ph.D. graduate, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Secondary Education at Jacksonville



State University. In addition to serving as Undergraduate Program Chair, her course load entails ELA and literacy undergraduate and graduate courses. She also supervises ELA teacher candidates in field experiences. In May 2013, Sims achieved National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) renewal status in ELA.

Moreover, she was selected as a member of the NBPTS ELA Standards Committee. This committee was comprised of educators from around the United States and was charged with revising current and developing new ELA standards for future National Board candidates. In 2012, Sims was elected to a four-year term on the Jacksonville City Schools Board of Education. She has presented at national, state, and local conferences and served on various national, state, and local committees. Her research interests involve using emerging technologies to improve student achievement and to increase student engagement.

## April Nelms

April Nelms (Ed.S. & Ph.D., 2012) is an assistant professor and science education coordinator in the Department



of Teacher Education at the University of North Georgia (UNG). In her role as assistant professor, April teaches science methods in undergraduate programs, including elementary, middle, and secondary levels; in in-service teacher professional development communities; and in an online

graduate program in middle grades math and science. As science education coordinator, she manages scheduling, budgets, personnel, and faculty evaluations. With the rural, residential setting of UNG in close proximity to Atlanta, April is pursuing her research interests in inquiry science instruction and teacher knowledge development in rural, impoverished areas and suburban areas. She continues to pursue national grants to advance her research and obtained two in-house grants for program development. April also facilitates student teaching experiences for education majors in partnership with universities in Germany and China and is planning an inquiry immersion experience in New Zealand.



**Hannah Gerber**

Hannah R. Gerber graduated from The University of Alabama in December 2008 with her Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction, Secondary English Education. She is Assistant professor at Sam Houston State University. Hannah is interested in the impact that various media and technologies have

on culture, broadly focused on the impact on learning and socialization across cultures and societies through transnational flows and responses. Her immediate focus is on the impact these digital spaces have on learners within public school systems, with an interest in both urban and rural schools systems. Since arriving at Sam Houston State University, she has proposed five new graduate/doctoral level classes including Digital Epistemologies, Digital Literacies & Pedagogy, Digital Literacies & Policy, Popular Culture, Virtual Worlds & Literacy, and Virtual Ethnography. She is in the process of proposing a new master's program as a Master's of Digital Epistemologies and Literacies. She is involved in international outreach in Egypt and across the North Africa region and has helped spearhead (with an Egyptian NGO-AIM) the development of a program to work with public school teachers in Egypt post-revolution. Hannah serves as the current chair of the National Council of Teacher of English Conference on English Education (NCTE/CEE) Commission on New Literacies, Technologies, and Teacher Education and is chair of NCTE's newly established Collaborative on Contemporary Literacies, Popular Culture, and Out-of-School Spaces. Hannah also serves as co-editor of the book series, Gaming Ecologies & Pedagogies (Sense Publishers) along with Sandra S. Abrams.

**Amanda Glaze**

Congratulations to Dr. Amanda Glaze who won 1st place in the Science Education Division for her research paper entitled, "Evolution and PreService Science Teachers: Factors Influencing Acceptance and Rejection," at the 2014 Alabama Academy of Sciences paper competition. Dr. Glaze, received her doctorate in December, 2014 from the College of Education at



The University of Alabama and is currently teaching at Jacksonville State University. Under the guidance of Dr. M. Jenice Goldston, her research paper which was based upon data collected during her dissertation focused on preservice secondary science teachers' acceptance and rejection of evolution. Dr. Glaze, Dr. Goldston and Dr. John Dantzler have recently co-authored an accepted paper from this work in the International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education. Another co-authored paper from her work is under review in the Journal of Science Education and she has been asked by an editor to submit a proposal for a book based on qualitative research findings from the preservice teachers in her dissertation work.

**Martha Poole Simmons**

Since Martha's retirement after teaching for 32 years in elementary schools and at the university level at AL State University, Huntingdon College and Belmont University, Dr. Martha Poole Simmons who received her B.S. in 1959 and Ph.D. in 1980 in Elementary Education continues to provide service to others through her commitment as a volunteer in



Montgomery, AL and the nation. The AL A.A.R.P. and the Central AL District American Red Cross selected her as the recipient of the 2013 Volunteer of the Year Awards because of her service in disaster relief and at hospitals, community senior centers and churches. She provides leadership and facilitates action and organization within groups. Martha Poole led volunteers in raising over \$108,000 to renovate Montgomery's Crump Senior Center, and she serves as a presenter at civic and church groups providing information on disaster relief preparedness. Martha Poole enjoys swimming and playing doubles tennis and has won 60 medals in the AL Senior Olympics. On April 10, 2014, the HandsOn River Region and the Junior League of Montgomery, AL, presented Dr. Simmons with the Lifetime Achievement Award, for her volunteer activities over time. The HandsOn River Region partners with over 200 non-profit, faith-based and government organizations to recruit and connect volunteers in a coordinated way to create the biggest impact for positive change.



## English Language Arts Student Receives International Exchange Alumni Award

Aaron Brazelton, Secondary English Language Arts Education major, received the International Exchange Alumni Award for the month of February 2014. The award is given by the U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Alumni Affairs division. The honor is given to one exchange alumnus – of more than one million across the United States – each month.

He has been honored for spearheading the creation of The Serbia Fellowship Experience, an educational and social partnership between Honors College, the University of Novi Sad and the municipality of Blace, Serbia. The Experience involves students in working closely with Serbian youth, creating and implementing plans to better equality both in Serbia and in the USA. The collaborative is the first student-led initiative in Serbia, which Brazelton

first visited as a high school exchange student. The partnership is funded by the UA College of Education, Division of Student Affairs, and Honors College. Brazelton notes “they all help develop us into leaders who’ll impact communities across the world. I’m so glad I decided to come to UA.”

The Fellowship Experience group had its first trip to Serbia in 2013, when it helped implement anti-bullying curriculum from the Heritage panel, a program started by the YMCA. Brazelton helped start a UA branch of the Heritage Panel. The curriculum “addresses the negative behaviors of bullying, cliques and exclusion” according to Brazelton.

## Students Meet Children’s Author, Lester Laminack, at the Alabama Reading Association Conference

On November 15 and 16, 2013, eighteen students in CEE 370-001 attended the Alabama Reading Association (ARA) conference in Mobile, with Dr. Shannon Henderson. For three days, the teacher candidates attended sessions devoted to furthering their understanding and ability to teach reading and writing to elementary school students. The teacher candidates also had the opportunity to meet and participate in sessions with renowned children’s author Lester Laminack.



# Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching: Making a Difference

The Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) is a voluntary pact of mutual understanding among a group of colleges and universities acting through their schools, colleges, or departments of education to provide opportunities for quality student teaching placement and supervision in a setting outside the United States.

In this newsletter, we hear from four students who have participated in the COST program: Brittany Johnston, Jessica Steele, Lindsey Brown, and Abby Alexander.



## **Brittany Johnston**

My name is Brittany Johnston and I'm a 2009 graduate of the University of Alabama. I am currently studying for a M.Ed in Learning, Diversity, and Urban Studies at Vanderbilt University, Peabody College. Upon graduating in July 2014, I am moving to Siem Reap,

Cambodia. I have accepted my first full-time teaching position as a Kindergarten teacher at Jay Pritzker Academy.

During the Spring 2013 semester, I was fortunate to teach in New Zealand through the COST Program, an experience that offered immense personal and professional growth. Wanting international experience prior to applying to COST, I searched the seemingly endless opportunities.

This landed me in Costa Rica for a 10-day volunteer experience with Magnificat Travel in December 2010, and in South Africa for a 3-month volunteer-teaching assignment during Summer 2012.

I probably would not be where I am today had COST not been affiliated with the University of Alabama. I may not have been as eager to volunteer abroad, I may not have been accepted to the graduate schools of my choice, and I almost certainly would not have received a job offer through International School Services without teaching experience. I am grateful for the COST Program, as it was and continues to be influential in guiding me in my personal, educational, and professional aspirations.

## **Jessica Steele**

My name is Jessica Steele and I was a part of the COST Program in 2009. The COST Program was an amazing opportunity, which I grabbed with both hands. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Freeman, of the UA College of Education, for recommending the program to me. For my placement, I travelled to Port Elizabeth, South Africa where I spent the semester working in a Grade R and Grade 6 classroom at Collegiate Junior School. Collegiate is a private, all girls Junior School (Grades R-7) and



High School (Grades 8-12). South Africa's school system is radically different to that of the United States in that schools have very little government funding or follow through support; therefore, the parents' required school fees fund many institutions privately.

This experience opened my eyes to the struggles still rife in South Africa since the apartheid era and the need for a radical shift in the educational pedagogy. Education is provided for all, but the quality of education is solely dependent upon your financial standing and beyond that, few teachers are trained or equipped to teach students with special needs. This has resulted in the creation of special schools, which exclude learners with learning and physical disabilities from their general education peers.

My experience in South Africa opened my eyes and deepened my passion for quality educational provision for those who need it most. After my internship I returned to the states emblazed with the goal of returning to South Africa to do my part. The COST Program equipped me with the confidence and provided me the opportunity to be a part of the change. I spent a year teaching Grade 6 in the states before returning to South Africa. After teaching at a special needs school and serving as a member of the school's governing body and school management team, educating my colleagues on current educational pedagogy, I was presented the opportunity to join an educational non-profit called Ubuntu Education Fund. At Ubuntu I serve as the Mentor Teacher, where I focus my energies on strategic development, curriculum design and empowering educators from the township, through professional development, to equip the young scholars we work with, from our Early Childhood Programme right through to the Adults with the skills, knowledge and confidence required to be successful in the world of work and ultimately stabilize their families. I can honestly say, without the COST Program I could have never achieved my dream of working in the development world to provide quality education to all.

Last, but certainly not least...thanks to my experience in COST experience in South Africa, I met and married my best friend! Pretty important detail, don't you think?

### **Lindsey Brown**

I can still remember finding the one COST program brochure in the Clinical Experiences office, laid haphazardly on the shelf. At that moment I was intrigued but never thought, this would be a life changing moment. Questions flooded my brain "How could I afford a trip

like this? Could I make it out there on my own? Could I be away from my family that long? How would this affect graduation? How would this affect me finding a job?"

After many long discussions with Yolanda Eubanks, Clinical Experiences advisor, mentor, and friend, I began to think traveling overseas to complete my student teaching

just might be an option. I learned that there were many scholarships to help fund my trip and I could make choices on what country I would like to go to. I could also live with a family in my designated county. In addition, I could complete my degree, graduate early and begin searching for jobs sooner. Too good to be true? This was the immediate question from both myself and my parents. The answer, no. It was not too good to be true. This adventure was within my grasp.

Mounds of essays, background checks, and visa applications later, I was given the news that would change my life. I would be completing my student teaching in Geelong, Australia. I would be living with the McCoy family. I would be traveling with my wonderful friend and classmate Holly Simpson. I also had received scholarships to help pay for the trip. I was elated, nervous, and scared. Prior to this trip, I had never been on an airplane and I had never been outside the country. On May 25, 2008 I packed my bags, said a tearful goodbye to my family and travelled across the world to my new home.

During the eighteen hour flight, there was a lot of time to think. I wondered who this family was. What are they like? Will they like me? Will I like them? Will it be strange and awkward living in their house? My questions were all answered when my "Mum", Kay picked us up from the airport with happy face balloons and great big hugs. I arrived at my new home to find a house full of people and animals. Emily, Mitch, and Holly were my new



siblings and Bruce my Dad. There were cows, horses, cats, dogs, chickens, birds, hermit crabs, and fish and the home was filled with more love that I could have ever hoped for. This loving family took me on trips to show me the sights of their country, helped me plan my trip to Bali, Indonesia, gave me a graduation party and always made me feel at home.

I cannot express how grateful I am for the McCoy family. How do you thank someone for opening their home and their hearts to you so freely? I guess you invite them to America! After departing Australia in September of 2008, the McCoy family began planning their trip to America to spend Christmas of 2009 with me and my family. It was the greatest experience to have both of my families that love me so dearly, together. Since then, the McCoy family have been to the states twice and we have traveled together to Disney World both times. In 2013, the McCoy family opened their hearts and their home again to me and my husband. As a wedding gift, the McCoy family gave us plane tickets, a place to live, and found us jobs in Geelong, Australia. After many sleepless nights, my husband and I decided to quit our jobs to grab hold of this wonderful opportunity that was given to us. We arrived in Geelong on October 22, 2013 and we are currently living with the precious McCoy family. I never would have thought I would be back here, typing this article from our home computer in Geelong, Australia.

The COST program changed my life. It forced me to "get out of my comfort zone." It allowed me to find a different side to myself. I found that I am courageous, brave, unpredictable, and adventurous. When I began looking for jobs, I found that these attributes, given to me through my COST experience, came in handy. Prior to my COST experience, I was rigid, predictable, a rule follower, and in constant need of routine. After interviewing for many teaching positions, I took time to really ask myself what I wanted to do with my life. I remember thinking "what is my calling?" My new found courage allowed me to make the next greatest decision of my life. I found that teaching students with special needs was my calling, what I wanted to do with my life.

Since 2009, I have received a Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of West Alabama. I also became a special education teacher at New Hope Elementary for two years. I then moved on to become the Autism Resource teacher at Beaverdale Elementary School. I am currently an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapist for students with autism in Geelong, Australia.

The COST program changed my life forever. It gave me the opportunity to explore another country, learn new and innovative teaching techniques, and brought me

together with my Australian family, the McCoys. I am so blessed to have had this opportunity and encourage others to take the risk. Take a leap of faith. "If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you."



### **Abby Alexander**

My name is Abby Alexander. I am originally from Tallassee, Al. I graduated from The University of Alabama in the Fall of 2012. I completed my last semester of college abroad in New Zealand. I traveled and studied under the COST Program. It was the best decision I have ever made. I never believed I would be able to afford an opportunity like studying abroad since I was paying for my own college. I used financial aid and worked to save for a year in order to fund my journey. I made amazing friends that I am still in contact with for over a year now. I gained a new family that I am very close to. I have been back to visit twice since I left in November 2012. I now work as a governess or private teacher in the Outback of Australia currently. I have been here for 18 months and have made even more friends. I would never have had the courage to take on a career like this if it wasn't for the COST Program. I plan to stay here for the next year and I am most certain I will have many more job opportunities after this experience and the experience I gained in New Zealand. I have seen so much of the world and can't wait to see so much more. I was afraid to leave the safety of college, but through COST I was able to leave in a structured manner, which made me feel safer. After traveling in New Zealand I had the courage to go out on my own. I have grown so much as a person just from this program.



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