



ZOOMING DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

The Coronavirus crisis inspired a new wrinkle in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program – the Zoom dissertation defense. Since the first dissertation defense in April, 2019, 15 more dissertation defenses have taken place, with several more on the way. Since March 9, 2020, when Monmouth moved to online instruction, all of those defenses have been conducted over the Zoom program.

“Zoom has worked really well for doctoral defenses,” says John Henning, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Education. “More people are attending due to the convenience,

and Zoom features allow us to mimic a face-to-face defense really well.” Henning adds that the “share” feature allows doctoral candidates to present their research much as they would in a room on campus, and the “breakout” feature allows the dissertation committee to meet separately from the rest of the group to discuss their feedback to the candidate.

“Of course, it hasn’t changed the fact that doctoral candidates get very nervous before their defense,” said Henning. “I don’t think Zoom has a feature for that yet.” Henning adds that he is pleased to see so many students attending the defenses –

twenty at the last one. “To see the process is an important part of the learning experience.”

During the Coronavirus crisis, the School of Education has continued to celebrate successful doctoral defenses on social media, and classes have been conducted through Zoom. “In many ways the program has not missed a beat, although I am sure the doctoral students would like to see their classmates in person.” Henning credits program director, Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D. with keeping the program energized during these difficult times.

EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK MALES



“Education can either be an opportunity or it could be a barrier, it all depends on where you are sitting.” Vernon Smith, Ph.D.

The inspiration for the Empowering Young Black Males program originated with an interest in discovering what makes successful black males. Empowering Young Black Males is a mentoring program designed to provide support for Neptune high school students. Its main goal is to promote academic achievement among youth.

Vernon Smith, Ph.D., is the leader of the program. His work focuses on research surrounding empowering young black males and the influence of family involvement on the success of black males

When Smith was a family and marriage therapist in the Bahamas, he decided to pursue a doctorate at the University of Florida. As Smith reviewed the research on black males, he noticed that most researchers were viewing black males from a deficit perspective.

“I started to think, what about the black males that are achieving? I was thinking about myself, and

many others,” says Smith. He decided to approach the topic systemically by examining the foundations of supportive families and households that raise successful black males. Smith’s research showed that these parents had high expectations for their kids and they wanted them to achieve success. “There is structure, and accountability for them,” says Smith.

Much of Smith’s work and research has focused on the importance of mentorship and the ability to establish an academic institution where students share their struggles and know that they are supported in their academic path for success. Upon Smith’s arrival at Monmouth, he was excited to learn that the focus of the Educational Counseling program is social justice.

“I started to think about how we can use the research of black males who have made it to college, and help mentor others,” says Smith. From there, Smith proposed the idea of establishing a mentoring program for black males.

Smith describes the goal of empowering young black males as an opportunity for Monmouth University to provide those who may sometimes feel isolated and not connected a chance to grow and give back to the community. Smith hopes that all the students in high schools and universities could have equitable opportunities and feel valuable in the community.

For Smith, learning the difference between equality and equity is important, and educators should always strive for equity because each student’s needs are different. “We have to teach equitably, and not equally, because each student’s needs are different,” says Smith. Smith’s vision for the program’s future includes enlarging the mentoring program, and providing mentorship for brown and black students in more high schools.

By: Hanan Al Asadi



ADVENTURE ABROAD

This year's School of Education study abroad experience took place in China over a twelve day period during winter break 2020. Students had the opportunity of learning about the Chinese education system, visiting tourist attractions, and interacting with a different culture. They also took Education 300 taught by Tracy Mulvaney, Ed.D.

The trip was completed before the world learned of the COVID-19 outbreak, and fortunately, no one on the trip became ill from the virus.

The students visited a number of tourist attractions, including the Tea House, the Great Wall of China, and the Summer Palace. "We rode our bikes by the Great Wall, and got to go to Disneyland in Shanghai " said Mulvaney. Moreover, during the trip and while they were walking around, the students interacted extensively with curious Chinese citizens. "Many of them hadn't seen westerners, so they were practicing their English, which was pretty cool," says Mulvaney.

Even though the trip took place during academic exams in China, students from the Education 300 course still had the chance to interact with Chinese teachers and pupils during breaks and lunch time. "Although students couldn't teach in Chinese schools, they still had a great experience," said Mulvaney.

During the trip, the students got to journal and write their reflections on the trip. "Students' reflections showed cultural differences, and overall surprises," said Mulvaney. As Americans, we are used to the melting pot and interacting with different people on a daily basis. However, in China "If you are not part of the one culture, you are different," says Mulvaney.

In the School of Education, the concept of teaching through interacting is highly important. Through providing international trips every year, the Education 300 course allows students to broaden their horizons and learn about completely different cultures.



Photos: Students visited the Summer Palace, the Forbidden Palace and Great Wall.

Written by Hanan Al Asadi

FLEXIBILITY, RESILIENCY, AND STAMINA

"The resilience you all have shown to both finish the edTPA and then teach students online during a pandemic is nothing short of outstanding. Your students are so lucky to have you as their teachers" Professor Jason Fitzgerald to the Spring 2020 SOE Graduates

Students in Monmouth's teacher preparation program convincingly demonstrated they have the flexibility, the resiliency, and the stamina for the teaching profession. Challenged like no other class before them, this spring's teacher candidates helped their mentor teachers and students make the enormous transition from face-to-face to virtual learning in P-12 settings. This year's clinical interns were part of one of the largest educational innovations in history.

During their full time clinical internship, Monmouth students co-taught virtual lessons, worked with students in small groups, graded papers, and provided individualized instruction through phone calls. Below are some parting comments and memories for the newest group of Monmouth students.



Aliyah Frank

"Attending Monmouth University to study elementary education was the best decision I could've ever made. The professors and peers that I've worked with have helped to shape me into the student and teacher I've become today, and I am eternally grateful."
Aliyah Frank



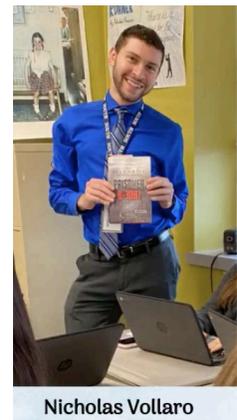
Emily Berger

A huge thank you to Monmouth University's School of Education for their constant support throughout my four years. This hands on program allowed me to experience real world classroom and begin my journey in teaching. Grateful for the time and experience at Monmouth."
Emily Berger



Janet Downing

"I loved how Monmouth got me into the classroom so soon. It solidified my decision to become a teacher, in addition to learning lots of different strategies and ideas that I hope to use in my own classroom one day"
Janet Downing



Nicholas Vollaro

"Don't be afraid to learn from your students. They teach you as much as we teach them"
Nicholas Vollaro

"Although this year didn't end how we wanted, it was great to be able to teach this awesome group of kids. This class has allowed me to learn the qualities it takes to be a good teacher. Working with this class has been amazing and I'm forever grateful for this experience. I wouldn't change it any other way." Erica Autiero



A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

“Now that we are in the Covid-19 experience, this culture walk has gained even greater value. I am so thankful that we were able to do this before the quarantine.” Ruth Morris, Ed.D.

Great teachers know their students really well. Recently, future teachers in the ED 250 class learned more about their students by participating in a service learning project at Amerigo A. Anastasia elementary school. This project has allowed future teachers to learn more about their community while providing their services through tutoring. “Having the students go into the elementary school was wonderful because they can see the neighborhood where the school exists, meet the teachers, staff and children,” says Ruth Morris, Ed.D, professor in the education department at Monmouth University.

The idea of doing a culture walk was sparked when multiple professors suggested that students have the potential to learn more about their students by visiting their neighborhoods and interacting with their students at a deeper level. Students were provided with articles

about prior culture walks and the perspectives of people and educators who had participated in such projects. Further, Morris explains that she had been engaged in a culture walk in her previous career as a preschool teacher.

“Looking back on this experience, I had a completely different perception and understanding of my students when I was able to be in their homes and see them for who they really are, rather than what I perceive them to be, just in the classroom.”

In addition to interacting with the kids at the elementary school, students went on exploring the Long Branch community where they learned about different community services, and their role in supporting the community members. Further, as students walked through the Long Branch downtown, they were gratified by the great hospitality afforded to the culture walk project. “They were very welcoming, and very

encouraged that we were coming,” says Morris.

Students' reflections on their experience was shown in their weekly journal entries where they were able to express their thoughts, feelings, and awareness on their daily interactions. “I found that students' entries were very rich with expressing recognition of things that they did not know,” says Morris.

Morris explains that the culture walk is an expansion of what was already established. The service learning partnership with Amerigo A. Anastasia Elementary school was established in 2017 with the Buddy and Me service learning project. “The whole vision is to challenge the students to develop their cultural understanding,” says Morris.

Written by Hanan Al Asadi



THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION GOES VIRTUAL

Pictured above is the School of Education's Communication, Marketing, and Events Planning (CMEP) team during one of their Zoom meetings in April, 2020. The CMEP meets weekly to plan and coordinate the School's events, to find new ways to promote the School of Education's accomplishments, and to communicate with constituents.

The work of the CMEP continued through the spring as the School of Education transferred all in-person events to virtual meetings due to the virus. This required coordinating numerous Zoom meetings with students and faculty. Student events like the The Sophomore Connection and the Speech-Language Pathology program orientation for new students continued without a hitch, along with planning new Zoom meetings to provide more opportunities for the deans, faculty and advisors to listen to students concerns during this time. Regularly scheduled meetings like monthly SOE full faculty and staff meetings, faculty committee work, and the Dean's Advisory councils proceeded seamlessly.

The move to an virtual workspace was not as difficult as it could have been. Mary Kate Kane, secretary for the dean's office explained, "The CMEP team has a four year history of working together to plan and execute complex projects. We have trained each other in new strategies of communication and project management tactics since working from home. We are grateful to have a strong team supporting the School of Education."

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SPRING ACADEMIC AWARDS

Congratulations to the School of Education's Spring 2020 Academic Award winners

Excellence in Teaching Literacy
Jill H. Epstein

Excellence in Interdisciplinary Elementary Education
Gillian S. Bazel

Excellence in School Counseling
Jenna Fleming

Excellence in Student Affairs
Jihad Johnson

Excellence in Educational Leadership
Wendy Morales

Excellence in Teaching English as a Second Language
Kimberly A. Faragasso

Excellence in Early Childhood Education
Katherine A. Traina

Excellence in Special Education, Undergraduate
Kelly M. Schuld

Excellence in MEd Special Education
Bryanna M. Roos

Excellence in Speech-Language Pathology, Graduate Level
Abigail Wortman

Monmouth University-William Roberts Charitable Foundation Outstanding Teaching Award Spring 2020

The Monmouth University-Roberts Charitable Foundation Award was instituted in 2006 by Life Trustee William Roberts to recognize outstanding secondary school teachers who made an important contribution to the education of current Monmouth University students.

Amy Grimm, American Literature II & Creative Writing, Middletown South High School

To best address the request for a few words about my philosophy of teaching, the briefest and most accurate phrase I can share is that from the jump, my approach has been student-centered. I do not presume or pretend to have all of the answers going into a conversation with students of any age or ability, but rather prefer to encourage discussion, share observations, and facilitate authentic learning experiences.

Nominated by Nicholas Vollaro

Ms. Amy Grimm, is an outstanding teacher. There are so many methods she uses to ensure that she is teaching to all of her students. When I had Ms. Grimm as a student in high school I truly loved going to her class. I always knew that I would be doing something interesting. American Literature is not everyone's favorite topic and there are some sections that can be tough to make interesting to the students. This did not stop Ms. Grimm though from ensuring there was a fun and engaging lesson for us in class. In fact, Ms. Grimm is the teacher who got me into writing. I developed my love for writing in her class due to her expressing and showing her love and interest in it as well. She always encouraged me to go above and beyond especially when it came to my writing. One of my most memorable pieces from her class was my personal narrative.

Nagla Bedir, Psychology Teacher, Perth Amboy High School

I believe education is the only way to rid the world of the ignorance that plagues it. It first dawned on me the first day of wearing a hijab. I was taking a crowded bus when I spotted an empty seat next to a man. As I neared, the man shot me a dirty look and immediately walked to the other side of the bus when I sat down beside him. This moment clarified something for me, the genuine belief that this person, this other human being, would not be so disgusted by me if he was better informed; if he was simply educated in how my humanity was equal to his own. My approach to teaching stems from this particular experience. I want my students to have diverse knowledge, interact with worlds they are not part of, critically analyze the world they are in, and to ultimately feel empowered to leave their mark on the universe. It is my responsibility as a teacher to guide students in the tools they need to succeed for the rest of their lives.

Nominated by Leslie M. Valdez

She expressed a genuine care for her students. She taught in a way that ensured we understood the material as she related it to our everyday lives, making us depict what she was teaching us, something no other teacher ever did for me. Besides being heavily knowledgeable in the subject area, what set her apart from other teachers was how she took time out of the beginning of class to address current events that

had been directly affecting some of my classmates. She addressed things such as racism and inequality, but she did it in a way that never singled anyone out or placed the blame on anyone, instead she had the courage to speak on behalf of her personal experience which gave students the opportunity to open up and share theirs.

Pamela Dixon Kuhn, Science Teacher, Toms River North High School

As an advocate for original science research in the public high school realm for over a decade, I believe the experience is transformative for students, regardless of their ability or achievement level. My goal is to implant an independent, student-driven research course in all public high schools in the U.S. The three-year research program develops students' critical thinking skills while engaging in the scientific method and developing an interest in science and math education in higher learning institutions, thereby fulfilling a need for more American scientists and engineers.

Nominated by Omar Shah

Mrs. Dixon motivated me to follow my dreams because she would always work so hard in everything that she did. Therefore, by me seeing her work hard I naturally just followed her lead in working hard. I always worked hard for everything because I do not want to be given anything, I want to earn everything that I get in life. But she made me realize that in life excuses will never get you anywhere, but hard work will get you to where you want to go in life. After all, I truly cannot thank Mrs. Dixon for everything that she did for me. She helped show me how to improve my life.

SPRING 2020 FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



Alyson Pompeo-Fargnoli, Ph.D.,

Pompeo-Fargnoli, A. & Fargnoli, A. (2020). The mental health impact of the COVID19 crisis: The battle ahead for inpatient survivors. *Psychosomatics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psym.2020.04.001>



Michelle Schpakow, Ed.D.

Schpakow, M. L. (2020). Synthesizing geologic data into an argument for plate tectonic theory. *Science Scope*, 43(5), 42-51.



Vernon S. Smith, Ph.D.

Davis, E. S., Wolgemuth, J. Haberlin, S., Smith, V. S. Smith, S. (2019). Stay-at-home dads' experiences with their children's elementary schools. *Journal of School Counseling*, (17) 1-23, 1-35



Lilly M. Steiner, Ed.D.

Paratore, J.R., Steiner, L.M., Dougherty, S. (2020). Developing effective home-school partnerships. In R. Bean (Ed.), *Effective Practices in Literacy*. 2nd Ed. New York: Guilford.



Vecihi S. Zambak, Ph.D.

Magiera, M.T. & Zambak, V.S. (2020). Exploring prospective teachers' ability to generate and analyze evidence-based explanatory arguments. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 6(2), 327-346.

STAFF ACCOLADEG



Colleen Finnigan

Colleen Finnigan, Office Coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education, was named the 2020 Student Employee Supervisor of the Year by The Office of Student Employment at Monmouth University.