



FURMAN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHALK TALK

Spring 2021

NEW MASTER'S PROGRAM IN TEACHING LAUNCHED THIS YEAR

In an effort to meet the demand for more secondary teachers in high needs areas across South Carolina, Furman's Education Department launched a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in June 2020. Students complete this intensive three-semester program in 12 months, after which they are certified to teach in grades nine through 12 and earn a pay boost with a master's degree.

Despite starting the MAT in the midst of a pandemic, the program was able to attract stellar candidates in Foreign Languages, Social Studies, English, and Biology. Students were placed at JL Mann and Greenville high schools and completed a practicum during the fall term and a student teaching internship during the spring term.

Program Coordinator George Lipscomb commended the candidates for their efforts during the 12-month program and emphasized "if you're able to teach through this pandemic with all of the accompanying masks, plexiglass, hand sanitizer, e-learning, and the like, you should be able to handle almost anything the classroom can throw at you."

Congratulations to the first class of MAT students: Anna Davis, Rebecca Little, Chelsea Thompson, and Elle Warne!



Q&A WITH MAT STUDENT CHELSEA THOMPSON '21

What drew you to Furman's MAT program?

I was drawn to Furman's MAT program because it was relatively close by in terms of location, seemed affordable, and would quickly get me certified to teach in just one calendar year. The expedited schedule is really what sealed the deal for me; I wanted to earn certification and start teaching full time as soon as possible and Furman's program required the least amount of time of the MAT programs I researched.

How has the program helped you grow as a person and as an educator?

I have learned so much about the best strategies and methods to use when teaching, how to motivate students, incorporating literacy in the classroom, and more. It has also helped me to become more confident in the classroom as the knowledge I gained in class served as a supporting framework for me to build upon with experience. The program has helped me grow as a person by making me more aware of the difficulties faced by our younger generations and introducing me to classmates who would become friends. I am now more conscious of what students might be going through and always thinking of ways I can help them beyond social studies. I have also gained a very good friend and colleague, Elle Warne, who has made the program that much better.

What are your career goals after Furman?

After graduating from Furman, I plan on staying in the Upstate and teaching secondary social studies. Eventually, I would also like to become a cheerleading coach.

FACULTY NEWS

Scott Henderson presented "Laughing Matters: The Challenge of Using Humor in Remote Instruction" at the South Carolina Virtual Adult Education Spring Training Institute on March 5, and "The Dilemma of Charles Sumner" at the virtual spring conference of the National Social Science Association on March 23.

C. P. Glover (Winthrop University) & **Katie Kelly's** "What did you do: What did you say?: Engaging students in brave conversations," was published in the March/April 2021 issue of *Literacy Today*, 32/34.

A book chapter by **Michael Svec** and **Dawn Mitchell** was recently published in the book, *Using Mobiles in Early Childhood and Elementary Settings*. Their book chapter is titled, "The Role of Mobile Technology Within Elementary Project-Based Learning Classrooms."

WELCOME KAPPA DELTA PI MEMBERS FOR 2021!

The following undergraduate and graduate students were inducted into the Xi Epsilon Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi this spring:

Meghan Ackemann, Mary Ball, Donna Byrd, Emma Carmichael, Bryan Haffey, Tamara Hefner, Laura Johnston, Linda Kemp, Langdon Kennedy, Mackenzie Lane, Kate Massey, Grace Mather, Carson McMonagle, Tonya Moore, Elizabeth Mulligan, Elizabeth Palmer, Gretchen Pruden, April Reese, Madison Siekman, Katherine Taylor, Barrett Taylor, Miranda Thomas, Vanna Tsiknias, and Jenna Valero.

BOOST YOUR RESUME

FURMAN OFFERING G/T, R2S, AND ESOL ENDORSEMENTS, MORE ONLINE OPTIONS

For teachers interested in working with diverse learners, Furman University offers:

- **ESOL Endorsement (two courses)**
- **Gifted/Talented Endorsement (two courses)**
- **Read to Succeed Endorsement**

ESOL courses are available entirely online, and additional courses are available in either hybrid or online formats.



Greenville County Schools Teacher of the Year Angelica Childes, a graduate student in Furman's ESOL program with Dr. Bobbi Siefert, has a virtual classroom this year.

For more information about endorsements or degree programs, contact Kay Goodwin at kay.goodwin@furman.edu or (864) 294-3164.

ALLEN, ROBARDS CHOSEN FOR CHILDERS TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Elizabeth Allen and Addie Robards '20 have been named recipients of the Childers Education Foundation Teaching Excellence Award. Allen, a third-grade teacher at Cherrydale Elementary School in Greenville, and Robards, a fourth-grade teacher at Fairforest Elementary School in Spartanburg District 6, both earned bachelor's degrees in education last May. They will receive \$1,500 awards and a small ceremony is planned for May.

"Elizabeth and Addie are wonderful teachers," said Nelly Hecker, Education Professor and Department Chair. "They not only care for their students' growth and well-being, but also engage them in thoughtful, well-developed lessons. We are proud to honor their accomplishments as both teachers and Furman graduates."

A committee of faculty, school administrators, and mentor teachers used three main criteria in selecting winners: love of content, love of teaching, and love of student. The award for first-year teachers was established in 2009 by Marybeth Bunting Childers '80 and her husband, Alfred Childers '80, a former member of Furman's Board of Trustees.



CANTRELL RETIRES AFTER TWO DECADES AT FURMAN

Above, Geneal is shown with induction teachers, their supervisors, and mentors in May 2019, celebrating the successful completion of the group's first year of teaching.

The Education Department's **Geneal Cantrell** recently retired after coordinating Furman's teacher residency program for 20 years.

In a farewell note to the department, Geneal wrote: "Please know that I am always just a call or a click away. Challenging times are ahead for education. But I see them as opportunities to think creatively and find better ways to do what is right for our program, our teachers, our administrators, and most of all the children we serve. After all, that is what we've all been doing for over 20 years, right?"

Geneal's husband, Greg, also recently retired as Deputy Superintendent of Spartanburg School District 6. They have two daughters, Abby Wilson and Amanda McKinney, and four grandchildren, Kyleigh, Trey, Ella, and Anna Beth.

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

UPSTATE SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM AT FURMAN UNIVERSITY

When the Upstate Schools Consortium first began in 1986, Education Professor Herb Tyler and his wife, Lila, coordinated professional development offerings from a little space in Furman Hall. Approximately 30 people, mostly district office personnel, attended sessions on the Furman University campus in the early days.

Much has changed in 35 years. Today, the Upstate Schools Consortium represents 33 large and small school districts, private schools, and colleges and universities in the geographic upstate of South Carolina. Consortium member schools and districts share the costs of bringing nationally known educators for training opportunities to Furman University. The university provides meeting space and Consortium Coordinator Dr. Vernon Prosser and Department Assistant Erikah Haavie plan the events.

In recent years, seminars featuring nationally known educators such as Baruti Kafele, Penny Kittle, and Kelly Gallagher have brought up to 500 educators per seminar to Furman's Younts Conference Center. Larger events were previously held in Furman's McAlister Auditorium. Regardless of the venue, educators leave equipped with fresh ideas and new tools for their classrooms.



Spartanburg School District Six has been a member of the Upstate Schools Consortium for two decades. "The Consortium's professional development opportunities are instrumental to me as an instructional leader in providing us with the very best professional educators in the field to speak on relevant issues and topics in education," said Spartanburg District Six Assistant Superintendent Dr. Donna Gutshall. "We intentionally align our literacy coach professional development with the Consortium events so that we can read the texts the authors have written, discuss what we've learned, and plan for implementation with our teachers. For example, when Diane Sweeney came to speak about



Herb Tyler at an Consortium seminar event

student-centered coaching, we read her book the year before and purposefully revised our coaching cycle model based on the new insights she shared with us."

John Campbell, an instructional coach at Gettys Middle School in Easley, said he has always been able to put new ideas from Consortium seminars to immediate use. "You cannot pour from an empty cup. Make sure you are filling your own cups too. I use the Consortium to fill my cup and I have never been disappointed," Campbell said. "I then turn around and take what I have learned and share it with my teachers."

With the spread of COVID-19, Consortium representatives were prompted to take another look at how to best meet their school and district needs for professional development without compromising safety. Thanks to the support and feedback of district and school representatives, the Consortium was able to launch an expanded list of training offerings this year.

For the first time, all professional development seminars were offered entirely online, using a webinar feature on Zoom. Nearly 2,000 educators viewed the first virtual seminar of 2021 with Harvard University's Brandon Fleming.

"We appreciate Furman University and the Upstate Schools Consortium for their continuous commitment to provide us with quality opportunities to engage in excellent professional development with the best and brightest in the field through the virtual format," said Cutshall. "The virtual format has allowed many of us to re-watch and provided others who could not attend the benefit of asynchronous access so they could watch at their convenience."

For the current seminar schedule, visit furman.edu/upstate-schools-consortium

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2020-2021 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR!



Haley Brady (M.A. '19)
Mt. Lebanon Elementary



Kurt Blocher (M.A. '03)
E. North St. Academy



Demond Criss (Ed.S. '21)
A.J. Whittenberg Elem.



Kayla Dix '05 (M.A. '06)
Paris Elementary



Allison Golden (M.A. '12)
Thomas E. Kerns
Elementary



**Whitney Humphries
(M.A. '15)**
Robert E. Cashion Elem.



**Weslica Johnson
(M.A. '07)**
Southside High



Kary Mitchell (M.A. '00)
Augusta Circle
Elementary



**Alyssa Cameron '14
(M.A. '16)**
Roebuck Elementary
2020-2021
Spartanburg District 6
Distinguished Literacy
Teacher of the Year



**Jessie Wolfinger '12
(M.A. '14, Ed.S. '20)**
Buena Vista Elem.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ALUMNI ON THEIR NEW POSITIONS!

- **Ashley Anderson-Murray** (M.A. '07) Principal, Forest Acres Elementary School
- **Stephanie Beaver** (Ed.S. '20), Assistant Principal, Greenville Tech Charter High
- **Adam Devlin** (M.A. '19) Assistant Principal, Blue Ridge High School
- **Jennifer Gnann** '00, Transformation Coach, S.C. Department of Education
- **Stephanie Reese Goldman** '06 (M.A. '09), Assistant Principal, Lincoln County Elementary School, Ga.
- **Sherrie Jeffries** '98 (M.A. '03) Literacy Coach, Drayton Mills Elementary
- **Molly Mosley** (Ed.S. '20), Instructional Coach, Gateway Elementary

Also to:

- **Lathan Pooser** '05 (M.A. '17) Assistant Principal, Barrow Arts & Science Academy, Winder, Ga.
- **William Roach Jr.** '92 (M.A. '97) State Director-Carolinas, Charter Schools USA



FURMAN AND THE CAMFAM: VIRTUAL BOOK CLUBS AT ROEBUCK ELEMENTARY

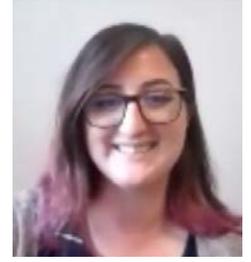
*This semester, students in Dr. Katie Kelly's EDU 331 class teamed up with fourth-graders at Roebuck Elementary School in Spartanburg District 6 for virtual book clubs. Furman students created book trailers to share some of their favorite reads with their new book buddies in Furman alumna Alyssa Cameron's class. Cameron's students viewed the trailers, signed up for the books they wanted to read, and created reading calendars for the month to break up the chapters. The Roebuck and Furman students then discussed the books through Edmodo. It's been a great way for Furman students to learn how to assess the fourth-graders' reading comprehension while sharing their own love of reading. **Alyssa Cameron '14 (M.A. '16)** talks about her class collaboration with EDU 331 this spring:*

YES, this has been the BEST experience! The willingness to be open with each other... to grow to be a better reader AND human... the willingness to support each other... the incredible engagement and self-motivation... the intentional self-reflection... were absolutely amazing to me, and yesterday when we Zoomed, those smiles were truly genuine. When I stopped to look around my room, every single child was talking, smiling, and fully participating.

Book clubs are for everyone. Yesterday, a student who was deaf was signing her thoughts. Her translator was speaking to translate for everyone in the Zoom and her Furman student made this completely normal. I happened to pop in and she said "Hi, Miss Cameron. Right now, Emma is talking and sharing her ideas." Her entire group was glued to the screen, listening, nodding, and ready to respond. Her voice mattered, just as much as everyone else's even though we "heard" it in a different way.

It's been a full year since COVID began in the school system and during this year, the news/conversations have been so focused on all of the negative. It can be so overwhelming to consistently hear the negative and still try to find the good every day. Yesterday I stood in my classroom and watched the impact that intentional

TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY with Reilly Mahan



In the new Furman Graduate Studies blog, Reilly Mahan '17 (M.A. '20) discusses her approach to learning about diversity through readings on Native American culture and experiences, such as "Frybread: A Native American Family Story" and "Water Protectors." This method has allowed her to engage her students in real conversation about real struggles that are happening all over the nation and the world.

"It's so much more than history. It's our current world experience, it's our current America and what it looks like right now," said Mahan. "It's so much more meaningful to talk about main ideas, details, and author's purpose with real techniques that actually mean something."

View the complete vlog post by Reilly and check out the **new Graduate Studies blog** at furman.edu/graduate-studies/posts/

HAWTHORNE, EDUCATION MAJORS TEAM UP FOR MATH RESEARCH

Mathematics Education Professor Casey Hawthorne recently worked with Olivia McGuirt, Katie Taylor, Charles Michael, and Mikayla Miley on a math-related research project conducted at the Stone Academy. In connection with the project, Charles and Mikayla wrote a paper that was recently accepted for publication in the *Ohio Journal of School Mathematics*. Olivia and Katie presented their work at the Research Council on Mathematics Learning in February and Olivia also presented her work in a TEDx talk at Furman, "Children's Mathematics: Creating a New Generation of Learners." The talk is now available on YouTube.

Book clubs (continued)

conversations and readings had on 40 kiddos (big kids and little ones). There was true joy in words and faces because they had empowered themselves and each other to truly believe that each of them can make a difference in the world by being inclusive and being intentional with their actions.

Kids are often limited by what adults think they can do, especially in schools right now. And these book clubs proved so clearly that kids are ready to talk, ready to grow, and able to have BIG conversations. Reading DOES make a difference... and so will these kiddos!



MARSHALL '89 RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHING

Lea Noblin Marshall '89 was recently named the Florida Education Innovator of the Year by the James Madison Institute in Tallahassee, Fla. The award is presented each year to an individual who demonstrates innovation and distinction in education.

Marshall, a theatre teacher at Leon High School in Tallahassee, Fla., was recognized by state Rep. Chris Latvala, chair of the House Education Committee, as an educator who has been “doing incredible things during the pandemic.”

Marshall has taught theatre at all levels, from preschool through high school. Her passion for theatre began as a child while participating in the Young Actors Theatre in Tallahassee.

While at Furman, she studied abroad for a semester in Stratford and London, which she has described as a life-changing experience. She also formed close bonds with professors at Furman. “I loved Dr. Doris Blazer,” recalls Marshall. “She is still such a presence in my pedagogy.”

“My ever-evolving teaching philosophy is that the only thing I am responsible for as a teacher is how the students feel in my classroom. Do they feel seen? Do they feel valued? Do they feel the joy that can come with learning new things? Those are my burdens. And I find that this is especially difficult during a pandemic teaching year,” said Noblin.

“Once the students feel seen, valued, and a sense of joy over the subject matter, then, and only then, do they take on the responsibilities that are theirs alone, to learn and to be a productive member of our ensemble.”

Her first play, “Shakespeare’s Bachelorette,” was published last year. It melds Shakespearean characters, pop culture, and reality TV.

Marshall and her husband, Adam '87, have three children, Millie, Maxx, and Rosalea. Her sister, Catherine Heath, and her husband, Shawn, and her brother, Jeff Noblin, and his wife, Dean, are all Furman alumni as well. Lea was also profiled in an article in the Tallahassee Democrat:

<https://www.tallahassee.com/.../leon-teachers.../5519941002/>

Meet Erin Van Meter '15

After earning her undergraduate degree at Furman, Erin received a Master of Speech Pathology (MSP) degree from the University of South Carolina last year. She was also named Outstanding MSP Student of the Year and is a member of the Delta Omega Society in Public Health.



Her story: “I became interested in speech-language pathology when I was a nanny for an infant who had a bottle-feeding aversion. His mother was trying to return to work after maternity leave and was concerned about his calorie intake in her absence. After researching solutions to his situation, I learned that speech language pathologists provide therapy for people who have feeding and swallowing difficulties, and I decided I wanted to help children receive the nutrition they need for healthy growth and development.

“As a pediatric SLP, I will help children to eat, think, and communicate – three of the most essential skills. My primary area of interest is pediatric feeding disorders, and I will provide therapy for infants and children to ensure they develop the feeding skills they need to thrive.

“My education background has been incredibly helpful as a pediatric speech pathologist, and the rigor of the education program at Furman prepared me well for the demands of graduate school.”

Erin currently works with Kidnetics, a department of Prisma Health Children’s Hospital.



We were excited to welcome back alumni Whitney Becker '14 (M.A. '16), Kelsey Milian '20, Kelly Rae '16 (M.A. '19), and Melissa Wells '09 (M.A. '10) for a special alumni panel last month. They shared their graduate school journeys with education majors.

WHEN THINGS CHANGE ALL THE TIME... OR, TEACHING DURING COVID-19

DEMOND CRISS (ED.S.'21)
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
A.J. WHITTENBERG SCHOOL OF
ENGINEERING

Q: What are you doing to keep your students excited about learning?

Be present at the moment. Only having two days for instruction for the first two months at the beginning of the



school year, so many thoughts go through my head as a teacher. Teaching new material, reviewing previous concepts, checking to see if students completed their eLearning assignments, and assessing students are the many things that are on the plate for a teacher at this time of year. How can I get everything done? Through the mist of the "to-do list," I have taken one major thing from this situation: be present at the moment. I am free of worry when my students know that I am fully engaged with them. Taking time to deliver interactive read aloud and participating in getting to know my students through breaks are ways to keep students engaged. Just consider that some students may not have had an adult or teacher read to them during the months since being in the brick and mortar. Therefore, taking the time to read aloud to students had them use their inner conversations (thinking about their reading) and have accountable talk (talking about the reading) opportunities with meaningful texts across various genres.

Q: Are there any units that you're particularly proud of?

Here are the two key units that I am extremely proud of during this year with COVID-19. The first unit, "Think, Talk, and Write about Reading," was a highlighted unit that I facilitated with my students. The particular lesson on accountable talk empowered my students to have conversations with more than one answer or point of view. Instead, students were invited to think critically about what their peers were saying and respond in meaningful ways. This lesson was very helpful in establishing the classroom culture since

students only had two days of in-person instruction.

After the lesson, students reflected on how they participate in the discussion as well. Students normally who were quiet had the opportunity to share their ideas and the normally vocal students had to be more invested in listening. This particular lesson established classroom expectations that value participation in meaningful conversations surrounded by meaningful texts.

As an engineering elementary school, the mission is to find creative ways to incorporate engineering principles within the core curriculum. The "Engineering Design Project: Native American Homes" unit was a hit due to allowing students to learn the curriculum in-person and develop a project through eLearning. The students built a structure used for shelter and protection from the weather and elements of the specific region they selected. The major criteria were that the home must be no more than 8 inches tall and 12 inches long. Also, the students had to use the natural resources and no more than 4 pipe cleaners and 12 inches of string. The students had to answer questions about their project, including one about how/why their structure would protect the tribe.



Q: What suggestions do you have for teachers on being successful in a virtual environment?

During my first year of teaching, I learned two important words:

flexibility and positivity. In this profession, a person needs to know that things change all the time and the question is how will you respond? Are you going to complain about the change or are you going to be a change agent? A teacher has a major responsibility to influence their students to strive for the best people that they can be. So a teacher needs to practice and exhibit flexibility and positivity. You will make mistakes, but know that you are running a marathon not a sprint. In the words of my amazing mentor, Mrs. Middlebrooks, "Have some grace for yourself, learn from this experience, and know that this too shall pass."

Educational Studies

- Katie Ball
- Addie Brown
- Cammie Douglass
- Lauren Ghighi
- Annie Liu
- Elizabeth Palmer
- Hailey Wilcox

Music Education

- Joshua Brown
- Cigi Curry
- Jake Henjes
- Kam Jacoby
- Vanna Tsiknias

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE
CLASS OF 2021!**

Elementary Education

- Ellie Greenfield
- Tyah Hunter
- Langdon Kennedy
- Olivia McGuirt
- Charles Michael
- Katie Taylor
- Barrett Taylor
- Stephanie Thomas
- Kelsey Wong



Congratulations to **Addie Brown** and **Ellie Greenfield** '21 (top row) for receiving Outstanding Scholar and Leader in Education Awards at the Spring 2021 Academic Awards in recognition of their outstanding work as graduating seniors.

Addie, a double major in Educational Studies and Communication Studies, also received the Endel Medal for Excellence in Rhetoric and Oratory.



Lauren Ghighi and **Erikah Haavie** '21 were elected to Furman's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic society.

Lauren was also chosen as the recipient of the Baggott Ministerial Award. Erikah was selected as the recipient of the Endel Award for Excellence in Communication Studies, the highest award given by the department.



Alumni Elizabeth Allen '20, Miller Leeson '20, Greg Peterson '18, and Harmony Thomas '20, shared their advice with education majors on how to thrive as first-year teachers during a Zoom panel discussion in April. Thanks for all the words of wisdom, everyone!

ELIZABETH PALMER '21 RECOGNIZED AS WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Elizabeth Palmer '21, an Educational Studies major from Georgetown, S.C., was recently named Woman of the Year by Make-A-Wish South Carolina in recognition of her fundraising efforts for the organization.



She has collected more than \$10,000 to grant wishes to children with critical illnesses. Her work with Make-A-Wish South Carolina began last year with an internship as part of Dr. Lorraine DeJong's EDU 506 class.



WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES!

We thank Addie Brown '21 (top row above), Hailey Wilcox '21 (top right), Kate Massey '22 (right), and Helena Sherman '22 (above) for their hard work as student representatives on the Education Department's Marketing and Recruitment Committee!





Erikah Haavie photos

HONORING PEARLIE HARRIS (M.A. '83)

Her presence has seemed larger than life over the years, especially in her teaching role in Greenville County Schools during desegregation. Now, Pearlle Harris is literally larger than life as the centerpiece of a massive mural project, which was recently installed at the eight-story Canvas Tower in downtown Greenville. Harris, who received a Master of Arts in education from Furman University in 1983, was humbled by the tribute. "Education is so important in Greenville, and I am so proud of the honor," she said. "It (the mural) is an inspiration and I hope it will be an inspiration to all of the community." An avid volunteer in the community, Harris is the namesake of Bon Secours Health System's Pearlle Harris Center for Breast Health. The mural also has another Furman connection. Sage Criss, pictured to the left of Harris, is the daughter of Demond Criss (featured on page 8) and Shaniece Criss, an assistant professor in the Department of Health Sciences.

-- Tina Underwood



Even during the pandemic, students in Heller Service Corps have been looking for ways to give back to the Greenville community. Their projects this semester have included thank you cards to first responders (including teachers), collecting teddy bears, and making bracelets for young patients at Prisma Health. Shown with Elementary Education major Barrett Taylor '21 (at right) are Kristen Janes and fellow majors Gracie Campbell '23 and Ali Collins '23.

FIND US ON INSTAGRAM @TEACHEREDUCATIONATFURMAN