Faculty Initiative Fund: Language & Literacy

PURPOSE

Faculty from UAF (Drs. Siekmann and Marlow), UAA (Dr. Coulter) and UAS (Dr. Richardson) received funding through the Faculty Initiative Fund (FIF) to align graduate programs in Language and Literacy across the University of Alaska's Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau campuses.

As noted in the FIF proposal,

"Faculty from UAA, UAS and UAF will align existing graduate certificates/statewide endorsements in Language and Literacy (respectively: Language and Literacy Education, Reading Specialist, Second Language Acquisition, Literacy and Bilingual Education), identify institution specific expertise and coursework to be shared across all three programs, and establish structures and procedures to maintain collaboration, program alignment, and foster joint research/publication and grant writing to benefit all three programs, Alaska’s schools and their personnel, and most importantly Alaska’s children."


During our meetings we discussed overall programmatic goals, compared course descriptions, and established a shared theoretical framework. The following activities were carried out during each of the meetings:

May Meeting

Reaffirmed the need to develop meaningful post-baccalaureate options for language and literacy teachers across the State of Alaska.

Recognized ways in which collaborating across MAUs could leverage different disciplinary expertise to meet the needs of teachers from across the state.

Identified a shared theoretical orientation, approaches to instruction and assessment which aligned with sociocultural theories, asset-based pedagogies and supported an inquiry stance for candidates across programs of study.

Recognized a shared commitment to teacher action research (TAR) as one mechanism for engaging teachers in inquiry that focused on improving their own instructional practices. Brainstormed approaches to integrating the TAR process throughout the program through cyclical and iterative experiences.

Cross-compared syllabi and discussed key assignments in detail to avoid duplication and identify opportunities for candidates to extend conceptual understandings and how they apply to classroom practice.
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Faculty began discussing the possibility of a place-based PhD in "Language, Literacy and Linguistics". In meetings with Dr. Collins, Director of the Graduate School at UAF and Dr. Lopez, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at UAF, faculty noted the following key points.

- The aligned GC/MA/MEd programs could serve as preparation for a place-based PhD program in the area of Language, Literacy and Linguistics.
- Coordinating with UAF's Indigenous Studies PhD program, the program would support teachers and communities seeking to address the language and literacy needs of Alaska's Indigenous communities.
- The program would support teachers, schools and districts to address the English Language Learner and English Literacy needs of K-12 students.
- The program would not compete with any existing programs in Alaska.
- The program would draw from a pool of 300 GC/MA/MEd graduates (approx. 200 since 2012; approx. 100 anticipated by 2017).
- The program would require 1.5 additional FTEs divided between UAF and UAS/UAA.

August Meeting

Refined shared understandings about teacher action research in relation to specific courses that could be shared across all three programs. We developed the sequence of TAR1 (ED671) during the first summer, TAR 2 (ED680) during the second summer for candidates in all three programs; and TAR3 (ED681) during the third summer for candidates continuing on to the Reading Specialist M.Ed and the M.A. in Applied Linguistics.

During TAR 1, candidates:

- explore their sociocultural identities (and the significance of identity in teaching) including biases as teachers, researchers and observers
- step into the space of being an “academic” and take on roles as teacher-researchers
- develop confidence and agency as educators
- learn about the writing process, receiving and providing constructive feedback -
- become a discourse community of teacher action researchers
- work with academic texts by reading widely and reading critically
- increase persistence with academic texts
- engage in ethnographic observations and by differentiating between evidence and interpretation

During TAR2, candidates:

- refine observational skills and approaches to support students
- build awareness that multiple and varied forms of assessment are necessary to measure what students can do
- engage in multiple mini TAR cycles of observing, reflecting, planning and implementing
  - integrate theory, research and practice
  - refine data collection and documentation procedures and practices
  - develop systematic approaches to analyzing data
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Cross-compared relevant courses in the three programs and identified placement of key assignments such as CITI training and preparing the IRB protocol.

Identified questions and challenges around TAR 3 and the final public facing document that might replace a theses/project/portfolio.

Alignment of the theory courses in EDRE/EDRL 674 and LING - reaffirmed shared theoretical orientation and mutual benefit for some students to take both classes. Working towards shared readings and specific readings in each class that carry through the ontological orientation and make discipline specific contributions.

Faculty reviewed course specific 'key assessments' and relevant accreditation standards for ILA and TESOL/CAEP accreditation. Faculty determined few if any changes were needed to continue to meet accreditation requirements.

Identified shared electives:

- Candidates pursuing the M.Ed. in Reading through UAS will have access to two elective courses offered by UAF (LING 602 Second Language Acquisition; LING 610 Theory and Methods of Second Language Teaching).
- Candidates pursuing the Graduate Certificate (GC) in Language and Literacy through UAA will have access to LING 602 Second Language Acquisition (currently as an additional course, potentially to be added as an additional requirement).
- Candidates pursuing the M.A. in Applied Linguistics will have access to two electives offered by UAS (EDRE 674 Developing Readers; EDRE 675 Reading and Cognition) or offered by UAA (EDRL 674 Foundational Theories of Language and Literacy Development; EDRL 675 Language and Literacy Methods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading Specialist M.Ed. (UAS)</th>
<th>Graduate Certificate in Language and Literacy Education (UAA)</th>
<th>M.A. in Applied Linguistics (UAF)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer 1</strong></td>
<td>TAR 1 - EDRE 671</td>
<td>TAR 1 - ED671</td>
<td>TAR 1 - ED671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td>EDRE 674 CITI Training</td>
<td>EDRL 674 CITI Training</td>
<td>LING 602 CITI Training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elective (LING 602)</td>
<td>LING 602 (?)</td>
<td>Elective (ED674)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
<td>EDRE 675 IRB protocol</td>
<td>EDRL 675 IRB protocol</td>
<td>LING 610 IRB protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elective LING 610 or EDRE 678</td>
<td>EDRL 679 (Fall or Spring)</td>
<td>Elective (ED 675)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2</th>
<th>TAR 2 (EDRE 680) 3 credits shared plus 3 credits focusing on literacy teaching</th>
<th>TAR 2 - EDRL 680 (6 cr.) initial data collection initial analysis data talks</th>
<th>TAR 2 (LING 680) 3 credits shared plus 3 credits focusing on language teaching initial data collection initial analysis data talks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>EDRE 681 data collection and analysis data talks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elective (LING 611 or 650) data collection and analysis data talks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>EDRE 696 data collection and analysis</td>
<td>LING 660 data collection and analysis data talks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall (UAS) or Spring (UAA)</td>
<td>EDRE 679 (Fall or Spring) data collection and analysis</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 3</td>
<td>TAR 3 - Professional Writing (ED698) 3 credits over the summer Publishable paper (“degree by exam”), no proposal defense, no thesis defense</td>
<td></td>
<td>TAR 3 - Professional Writing (LING699)</td>
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### Bi-weekly Meetings (August through December)

Continued conversations of shared TAR classes, aligning course content in theory classes, and the final public facing document that might replace a theses/project/portfolio.

### Next Steps:

In December, faculty will seek a Return on Investment study in order to judge the feasibility of pursuing a common PhD in Language, Literacy and Linguistics.

Formalize governing structure of aligned programs.