



Teacher Education Program | Winter Newsletter – 2021

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Field Experiences Continue, Despite COVID-19

Our preK-12 public and private school partners and their students and parents have endured an incredibly stressful fall, alternating between fully remote teaching, to hybrid contexts, and even teaching in completely in-person contexts. Katy Kopaskey, pictured above, is a VWU alum and first year Kindergarten teacher who has found success in what most would rank the most difficult time to begin teaching. As a member of the VWU Teacher Education Advisory Board, Katy was acknowledged as a “Star teacher who hit the ground running,” by her district's human resources representative. Go, Marlin Teachers!

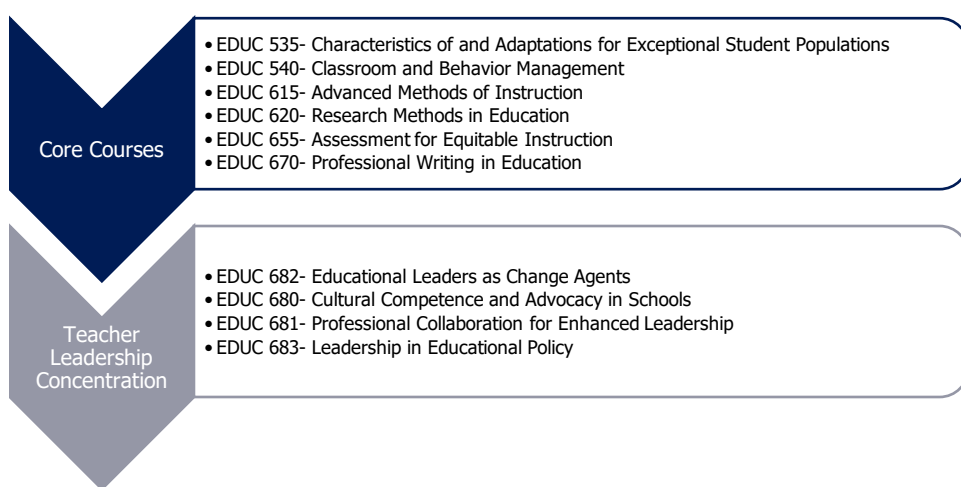
You might imagine how difficult it is for a school district to place VWU teaching candidates in their classrooms during this time. In fact, many PreK-12 school districts across the United States halted all college student placements in their schools due to the pandemic, forcing some teaching candidates to push back their graduation or forego obtaining their teaching license. Thanks to our wonderful PreK-12 partners, 18 VWU teaching candidates were placed and successfully completed their practicum or student teaching experiences last fall. Although the field experiences were different than usual, teaching candidates' statements about their time working with K-12 students were positive and they learned a lot from their cooperating teachers.

It is important to note that managing the paperwork for field experience placements and mentoring a teaching candidate during this time adds another stress to an already incredibly stressful fall for school districts' administration and their teachers. We are extremely grateful for our partners and their continued support even during these trying times.



New Online Graduate Education Degree

We are very excited to announce a new online graduate program beginning in the Fall 2021 semester: A Master of Education with a concentration in Teacher Leadership. The online Master of Education Degree (M.Ed.) with a concentration in Teacher Leadership is designed for licensed teachers who are passionate about teaching and learning and seek to become teacher leaders. Core courses in the program require teachers to take part in reflective and responsive teaching through open-minded reflection on current practices in education with a focus on contemporary reform and education research. Aligned to the [National Competencies of Teacher Leadership](#), the courses within the Teacher Leadership concentration provide educators the tools to become leaders in advocacy, innovation, and to become change agents in their school districts and the educational community at large. Interested in applying or want more information? Call 757.233.8702.



New Undergraduate Education Majors

Starting in the Fall 2021 semester, the Education Department will offer three new undergraduate majors leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree. Two of the majors are designed to lead to Virginia Teaching Licensure: a major in Elementary Education and a major in Special Education. The third major is a non-licensure major in Education Studies. Courses within the majors are specially designed to draw from the foundational knowledge gained from the Core and Pre-admission Coursework spanning the University's four academic schools, while providing teaching candidates with experiences to bridge theory and practice in diverse P-12 contexts. Curriculum changes related to these majors include a pre-admission classroom management course, a new assessment course, and diversity and technology topics which will be threaded through each course as crosscutting concepts. You will learn more about these majors during your advising appointment this spring.



Major in Elementary Education

- PreK-6 Endorsement
- Leads to VA Teaching Licensure



Major in Special Education

- K-12 General Endorsement
- Leads to VA Teaching Licensure



Major in Education Studies

- Education coursework
- No licensure tests required



Congratulations are in Order

This fall, several VWU students in our program earned academic honors or successfully completed student teaching. Please congratulate these students in person when you see them!

Academic Awards

\$10,000 Virginia Teaching Scholarship

- Catherine Ponack
- Antoinette Lloyd
- Hayley Crews

Gateway I (Formal Admission)

- Lindsey Broich

Gateway II (Recommendation to Student Teach)

- Dante Copeland
- Zachary Burkhart
- Katherine Burton

Gateway III (Recommendation for Licensure)

- Hunter Majewski

Hunter Majewski started a long-term substitute position at Pembroke Elementary and hopes to assist in coaching field hockey in the future.

Through an invite from Dr. Mindy Gumpert, VWU Adjunct Professor of Education and President of the Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities (VCLD), **Alyssa Balanta** and **Jessica Duncan** facilitated a session at the VCLD webinar on co-teaching with over 100 attendees.



Faculty Accomplishments

Dr. Clair Berube had a [new book](#) published, "The Investments: An American Conspiracy," by Information Age publishers, which discusses American societal structures and institutions, and the political agenda of dysfunction and investment.

In collaboration with **Dr. Jill Sturts** from the Sport and Recreation Management Department, **Drs. Clair Berube** and **Bill McConnell** provided a professional development session entitled, "Informal Education: Didactic vs. Inquiry-based Methods" to Virginia Aquarium educators and administration.

Dr. Bill McConnell partnered with **Dr. Elizabeth Malcolm** to present, "Understanding Environmentally Sustainable Roof Design" at a virtual conference for the Virginia Association of Science Teaching.

Dr. Clair Berube presented, "Teachers as Researchers: Best Practices in Schools," at a virtual conference for the Virginia Association of Science Teaching.

Dr. Bill McConnell was awarded the 2020 Recognition in Science Education ([RISE Award](#)) for Community Partnership at the annual Virginia Association of Science Teaching (VAST).

Dr. Mindy Gumpert presented at the VAST conference and provided professional development for Chesapeake Public School teachers on "High Leverage Practices."

Dr. Clair Berube authored an [article](#), "Pandemic brings more appreciation for teaching," in the Virginian-Pilot.

Important COVID-19 Related Changes

In light of the necessary and systemic changes in PreK-12 education and teacher education contexts caused by COVID-19, the Virginia Department of Education and the VWU Teacher Education Department have made temporary changes to their requirements.

Temporary Changes to State Licensure Requirements

- *Virtual* and Face-to-Face placements are now acceptable for student teaching until further notice.
- The hands-on CPR training requirement has been waived until July 2021.
- Most admission and licensure tests can be taken at home until further notice.

Temporary Changes to Gateway Requirement

- Testing was intermittently unavailable last spring/summer; thus, we are allowing provisional admission through all Gateways (one at a time) on a case by case basis until Fall 2021.
- Use our website to keep up with your Gateway requirements for both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) programs.

Important Events for Winter and Spring Semesters:

January 4- January Term Classes Begin

January 22- Last day of January Term

January 25 – Spring Classes Begin

January 29 – Last day of Add/Drop period

February 26- KDP initiation- 2:00pm

March 2- KDP Dr. Sues Day with TCA

March 18 & 19– VACTE and ATE-VA meeting

March 24—Progress Reports Available

March 29 – Elementary and Special Education Advising Day

March 29-April 9 – Advising Weeks

April 2 – Faculty Assembly – 1:15pm

April 9 – Last day for dropping a course with automatic W

April 23- Education Port Day Event- 4:00pm

April 28 – Reading Day

April 27- May 4 – Final Exams

April 30 – Faculty Assembly – 1:15

May 8 – Commencement

Welcome New VWU Education Faculty!

Please join us in welcoming two new education faculty, Dr. Clair Berube and Dr. Rebecca John, to Virginia Wesleyan University. Dr. Berube and Dr. John joined us in the Fall of 2020; arguably the strangest semester in our history due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of the context, both were extremely excited to get started last semester and we were happy to have them share their vast knowledge and expertise with the department faculty and students. We hope you have had the chance to get to know each of them already, but if not, we provide a brief bio of each below. When you see them this spring, please make sure to welcome them to VWU!



Dr. Clair T. Berube received her PHD in Urban Studies/Education from Old Dominion University. She also has a B.A. in Psychology from Virginia Wesleyan College and a B.S. and MSED in Education from Old Dominion University. Her research areas include urban schools, the effects of high stakes testing on learning, gender and race in STEM education and problem-based learning. Dr. Berube has experience with grants and with teacher preparation at all levels. She is the author of several articles and books, including a new release entitled "The Investments; an American Conspiracy" (Information Age Publishers, 2020). She loves science, including physics and theoretical physics; psychology including how people learn, and social justice topics in education.



Dr. Rebecca John has an extensive background in PreK-12 teaching, holding positions from elementary to high school in a variety of school environments. She earned her B.A. in Linguistics and Elementary Education from The College of William and Mary, an MS. of Ed in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment from Walden University, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education from Old Dominion University. In addition to classroom teaching at public, private, and international schools overseas, she served as the Interim Associate Director of the Office of Clinical Experiences for ODU prior to joining the full-time faculty of Virginia Wesleyan University. Her research interests include refugee and immigrant families and their experiences with the education system and how trauma-informed and culturally sustaining pedagogy can impact students from diverse backgrounds. She has presented at national and international conferences for education and is an active member of several professional organizations such as AERA and NAEYC, serving as a reviewer for both journals and conferences.