A Letter from the Chair

Another academic year in Secondary and Special Education has come to a close. So has my elected term as chairperson. As I reflect on the past two years within SASE, I am both pleased and amazed at our growth and development.

Our key themes for 2014 (Integration) and 2015 (Simplify) gave purpose to our efforts: We catalyzed renewal of our Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program to increase the rigor and reciprocity within our grant-partnered school sites in Newark, Clifton and Bloomfield. Our graduate students experience a professional year that is more intensive and customized to meet the developmental needs of our candidates, as well as their field supervisors and teaching mentors. We have programmatically simplified the dual certification MAT (for Teachers of Students with Disabilities) to systematize inclusive education as meaningful pedagogy rather than a curriculum afterthought. We reopened our Educational Assessment and Intervention Services clinic that will be a part of a suite of clinics at a new complex being built on Clove Road. Perhaps the theme for 2016 will be Growth.

I am grateful to have played a leadership role in elevating the creativity, efficiency and morale of this eclectic department that I joined 13 years ago. This newsletter issue highlights just a few of our full-time and part-time faculty actively engaged in scholarship and praxis that is increasingly localized in its contributions to teacher education. We also have an impressive team of graduate assistants that provide ongoing support to our research faculty and that curate the content for this newsletter. My term would not be complete without expressing my appreciation for appreciating the intelligence and humor that the SASE professional staff members bring to our collective efforts. Thank you to Susan Hagen, Maggie Leckey and Deanna Wolowitz for keeping the trains moving (and more importantly) keeping them on track.

Following a successful NCATE/CAEP visit last year, SASE is positioned to continue to move forward in developing the most sought-after secondary teacher candidates in the state of New Jersey. Beginning Fall 2015, Dr. Jeremy Price from the Department of Educational Foundations will take the helm as interim chairperson. I am both pleased and confident that he will continue our mission to prepare teacher leaders who can improve the lives of their students through excellent teaching.

SASE GA Farewell

It is time to bid farewell to two of SASE’s Graduate Assistants as they embark on the road to student teaching next semester. Michele Missonellie has finished her work with department chair, Dr. Vanessa Domine. Her area of concentration is Physical Education and she has been a GA for three semesters. Tania Seibert has also finished her work and research with associate professors, Dr. Emily Klein and Dr. Monica Taylor. Over the course of the past three semesters, she has worked closely with Dr. Klein and Dr. Taylor on projects linked to their work with the NMUTR. Her area of concentration is English and she hopes to teach at the high school level. Both Michele and Tania will be continuing their educational experiences as student teachers at Mount Hebron Middle School in the Montclair school district. These two GAs will be missed around the office for their inspiring discipline, contagious joy, and enviable intelligence. We wish them the best of luck and a great final semester.
Dr. Schwarzer Presents at TESOL Conference in Toronto, Canada

On Thursday March 26th 2015, Dr. David Schwarzer, associate professor in the Department of Secondary and Special Education, presented at the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference in Toronto, Canada. Dr. Schwarzer was a featured keynote speaker in the panel titled “Transnational Refugee Camps: English Language Teaching in the Eye of the Storm.” Participants in the panel were: researchers from York University in Canada who developed an online teaching preparation program for future teachers of Kenya; the director of an international refugee organization from Geneva; as well as the newly elected Minister of Education from Somalia. This international and eclectic panel discussed the notions of multilingual education and transnational refugee camps.

Dr. Schwarzer and his graduate assistant, Michael Molinno, prepared a presentation called “Teaching the Children of the ‘Other’ in Israel: The Bialik Rogozin Case.” In this presentation, Dr. Schwarzer spoke about Bialik Rogozin, the only K-12 school in Tel-Aviv that openly welcomes children of refugees and other displaced populations. He defined the tempestuous Israeli context in which hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers have immigrated into Israel yet have not been embraced by mainstream Israeli society. Michael developed a five-minute video clip that was a central part of the presentation in order to contextualize the reality of transnational refugees in Israel today. Following the conceptual aspect of this presentation, Dr. Schwarzer then explored the implications that this massive influx of immigrant populations has had on Israeli education in general and on the schooling of these displaced populations in particular. The latter half of their presentation focused on practical strategies that teachers of refugee students could incorporate into their pedagogy in order to become more culturally responsive and, ultimately, effective teachers.

Dr. Monica Taylor’s Visit to Leiden University in the Netherlands

This past January, Dr. Monica Taylor, an associate professor in the SASE department, was invited to be a Visiting Scholar at Leiden University in the Netherlands. During her visit, Dr. Taylor met both formally and informally with doctoral students at Leiden University, sharing with them her knowledge and experiences in the field of education. Dr. Taylor spoke to students about third space as a theoretical framework for education and the ways in which future teachers could use self-study research methodology to inform their own practices; in particular, how students can use a self-study research methodology with alternative validity criteria, including the aesthetic quality of research findings and its impact on the reader. Dr. Taylor also presented her research with fellow SASE professor, Dr. Emily Klein, on the NMUTR residency to a group of teacher educators, who entered into a discussion about field based residency models and the implications for mentor teachers in their role as teacher educators. Three doctoral students at Leiden University met individually with Dr. Taylor to get support and feedback on their developing research topics, which cover the areas of: participatory action research, teacher leadership professional development, and inquiry based science teaching. Dr. Taylor also met with several doctoral students to share her work around feminist pedagogy and feminist research methodology.
NYCoRE Conference: *Justice, Not Just Tests*

This past March, an organization of public school educators known as NYCoRE held a conference entitled *Justice, Not Just Tests*, which Gregory Gallet, a graduate assistant to SASE associate professor Dr. Fernando Naiditch, was fortunate enough to be able to attend. What the conference slogan comes down to is an open statement against the onslaught of high-stakes testing that has become pervasive throughout U.S. schools, taking time away from content and causing anxiety and frustration in teachers, parents, and students alike while also reinforcing racial and socioeconomic oppression. While the audience heard from a number of educators and parents, many of the conference’s presenters were young people who are currently in the New York public school system; the presenters shared their thoughts and feelings on standardized testing with attendees through a variety of mediums that included speeches, poetry, and dance.

Though high-stakes testing was the conference’s focus, it was certainly not the only material covered. The conference had a plethora of different workshops available to attendees that covered a very large range of subject matter, all revolving around the basic idea of progressive, culturally responsive and culturally-inclusive pedagogy. Of the sessions that Gregory attended, he found two to be particularly thought-provoking: one centering on incorporating social justice pedagogy into the curriculum, and the other an open discussion about how sexism interacts with school communities. Many of the sessions included student facilitators and it was a truly unique and valuable experience to be able to attend and participate in the day-long discussion about what can be done to promote the equitable treatment of students and improve the public education system from the inside.

Dr. David Keiser Presents at AERA Conference in Chicago, Illinois

On April 16th, 2015, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) commenced its annual conference in Chicago, Illinois. The theme of this year's conference was "Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Practice." According to Joyce E. King, AERA's president, this theme was "intended to focus our attention on justice—locally and globally—on a spirit of mutually respectful collaborative engagement with our disciplines and modes of inquiry in the context of the world around us" (2015). Over 14,000 students, educators, and researchers from across the United States were expected to attend, one of whom was SASE's own Dr. David Keiser, who presented his paper, "Buddhas Still in Classrooms: Where is the Mustard Seed?" Dr. Keiser's collaborator on the piece was Dr. Aditya Adarkar, a professor in the Classics and General Humanities departments at Montclair State University. Dr. Keiser and Dr. Adarkar began their collaboration in the field of contemplative education eight years ago, and have since presented their work at other educational conferences in the United States. "Buddhas Still in the Classroom: Where is the Mustard Seed?" addresses the need for compassion in the classroom, specifically through the lenses of interdependence, impermanence, and equanimity, understandings of which can be cultivated in teacher education through Buddhist stories and parables. Such stories and parables, the authors argue, "can work to awaken and/ or reinforce compassion and mindfulness in teachers and students" and enable teachers to "reconnect to the art, inspiration, and beauty inherent in the teaching profession” (2015).
SASE Hosts First Annual MAT Fieldwork Candidate Interviews

On April 9th, SASE hosted its first annual Fieldwork Candidate Interview for all students planning to begin their Professional Year in Fall 2015. During this event, students were introduced to members of SASE staff and faculty, including Department Chair, Dr. Vanessa Domine, Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Goeke, Department Administrator/ MAT Advisor, Susan Hagen, MSU Partner School Liaison, Dr. Loretta Bellina and SASE associate professors Dr. Monica Taylor and Dr. Emily Klein. After general introductions and remarks from Dr. Domine and Dr. Goeke, students were divided into groups where they were asked to engage in a collaborative problem-solving activity.

Only using the materials distributed to them, which for certain groups included plastic cups, newspaper, cardboard, sharpie markers, or masking tape, students had to work together to build a bridge that could sustain the weight of one gallon of water for 20 seconds. According to Dr. Klein, “the activity was adapted from part of the NMUTR admissions process and the purpose of the activity was to build community, teach students about some of the ways we think about teaching and learning, and for the faculty to learn a little bit about how students problem solve and work collaboratively so we could better support them in their placements.” While the students brainstormed how to begin their bridges, faculty quietly observed impressive displays of leadership, collaboration, and ingenuity amongst distinct student voices. After a period of silent work and reflection, the students shared their bridge creations with the rest of the students and staff, remarking on the challenges and the educational connections that stemmed from performing their group tasks.

The bridge-building activity was followed by group interview sessions, which were coordinated and led by participating SASE department faculty. After witnessing the wide array of personalities and diverse leaders in the group activity, SASE faculty was then able to spend time learning about the educational perspectives and ideologies unique to each individual student during the group interviews. Prospective Fieldwork Candidates had the opportunity to share their philosophies on teaching, their preferred teaching styles, their methods of classroom management, as well as their visions of ideal classroom spaces of learning. MAT faculty and staff finished the group interviews with a newfound sense of knowledge, and excitement, about the prospect of finding Fieldwork placements to suit the needs, strengths and abilities of the 2015 Fieldwork Candidates.

The event ended with closing remarks from Dr. Goeke, and helpful advice from Dr. Taylor and Dr. Klein about the responsibilities, expectations and obligations of those preparing to enter the MAT Fieldwork Professional Year.
South Mountain School: A New Approach to Free Education

A room full of boys ages 5 through 13 all sit with their faces pointed toward different devices – tablets, netbooks, desktop computers, to name a few – and they are fully engaged in what they are doing, but the room is not silent. They cheer or whine accordingly at the success or failure of various missions they are completing. It may seem that they are avoiding social interaction, but in fact they are all working together and communicating around the same project. Meanwhile a group of girls ages 6 through 14 runs up and down the hallway, chasing each other into different classrooms that do not contain any classes. They are also working together, establishing and rewriting rules. What kind of place is this? Is there learning happening here? If so, what are the benefits of it?

These are some of the questions that an interdepartmental research team at MSU is attempting to answer as those involved participate in and observe life at the South Mountain Co-op in Maplewood, New Jersey. The team is composed of Dr. Susan Baglieri, Dr. Alicia Broderick, Dr. Steven Greenstein, MSU graduate student Kim Robinson, and SASE graduate assistant, Jessica Laquintano. Over the course of this academic year, members of the research team have been volunteering at the Co-op and recording their experiences in order to learn more about what education looks like when many of its traditional structures have been removed. The Co-op does currently occupy the space of a traditional school building, but their model is more closely related to the Democratic school, Free school, and Unschooling movements. This means that there are no required classes or academic activities, no tests or homework that the students do not ask for themselves, and no grades or grade levels. Instead, the school emphasizes the social development that happens between children of different ages and adults in everyday life. They believe in the power of children’s natural curiosity about the world to guide them through various learning paths.

This kind of academic freedom comes with responsibility, however. Students and staff work together to create and enforce community guidelines through consensus. This consensus-building involves weekly community meetings, as well as small-group resolution and mediation meetings when necessary. The goal is to allow students a sense of ownership over their community in order to encourage them to take more responsibility for their behavior in that community. The result is a highly individualized approach to education that will take some time to fully develop. Those at the Co-op are not yet at the stage of research where they can draw definitive conclusions about the Co-op or its model of education, but for all involved it has been exciting and informative to watch the students -- and the school -- transform over the course of this year.
STEM Education is the integration of Mathematics and Science teachers, bringing their content together to make for a more meaningful education for their students. The ‘E’ in STEM stands for Engineering Design, which is the problem solving process inspired and used by engineers. The faculty involved with Inclusive iSTeM at Montclair State is comprised of members with various backgrounds and specialties. To try and quantify what Harry Roman does for this program would do him a great injustice, because not only is he an educational advisor, but also an engineer, inventor, author and so much more!

Harry T. Roman is currently an educational advisor and author for the Charles Edison Fund / Edison Innovation Foundation. He retired early from his 37-year engineering and invention career to devote more time to writing educational resource books and articles, and working at the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in West Orange, NJ, where he is a former park ranger and now a special lecturer and docent. Having worked as a research engineer developing first-of-a-kind products or solutions to a problem, failing and having to re-examine ideas may seem like a daunting task for most, but for Harry that was the part that he really enjoyed: the ‘flying by the seat of my pants’ thrill as he referred to it. His engineering background allowed him to teach fellow employees as well as be an adjunct graduate engineering professor at NJIT for about 10 years. Throughout his R&D career, Harry always made it a point to bring his research findings to local schools to show teachers and students the everyday uses of math and science. Not only did Harry go to the schools, but he often brought the schools to him and his work. While doing robot development work, Harry would invite students and teachers to visit his robotics lab, use the equipment, and offer ideas about how they could use robots to solve problems. Harry used his early retirement not as a time to slow down, but to work more closely with teachers and educators.

Harry’s boyhood hero, Thomas Edison, has a lot of historical influence for his involvement with STEM education. Harry has developed education materials and lectures about invention and creativity at the Thomas Edison National Historical Park and is an educational advisor for the Edison Foundations. What defines professionalism to Harry is giving something back to others, through sharing his thoughts and helping move the field of education along.

No matter what Harry is involved with, it always includes education and educating others. Harry’s earliest inspiration came from a radical course taught by his high school teacher who remained a friend, mentor, and advisor for his entire life. Although intellectually challenging, this integrated science course changed Harry’s approach to problem solving. Now 50 years later, Harry still harnesses that pedagogy into something he calls 360-degree problem solving. Applying his knowledge and experiences as an engineer and inventor, Harry co-teaches the iSTeM I and II courses with Dr. Vince Walencik. Together, they encourage students to view problems from different perspectives in order to end up with more robust solutions. Harry states, “The human mind is ‘wired’, and certainly capable of ‘re-wiring itself’, to handle complexity. We function at our best when we think in a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional way.”

STEM education encourages teachers to teach content in an innovative way that combines science, technology, engineering design and mathematics in order to solve real-world problems. Harry embodies all four disciplines not only from a content perspective but in the way he approaches all problems. “Think simply and you will get a simple solution.”
Around the iSTeM Program

Response to Intervention: Success at Bloomfield Middle School

Creating and maintaining equity in student achievement is a constant battle for most teachers. Every learner is unique and it can be challenging to address individual students’ needs. Math and Science teacher candidates from the dual Certification MAT program in Inclusive iSTeM at Montclair State University are trying a different approach at Bloomfield Middle School (BMS). They have added a new tool to their arsenal, and it is working.

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a system in which students with varying learning needs are tiered by skill level and given explicit instruction based on their specific needs. During the Fall 2014 semester at BMS, seventh and eighth graders who have not yet mastered necessary skills in a particular skill area met with Teacher Candidates in small groups and received 15 minutes of explicit instruction. These instructional meetings took place two to three times per week and continued for three to four weeks, depending on student progress. Dr. Goeke, the advisor to the Teacher Candidates, proudly asserted that “20 out of 21 students in 7th and 8th grade who received intervention responded positively. This demonstrates that even a small investment of instructional time, such as 15 minutes out of an 84-minute block, can result in very meaningful, positive gains for struggling students.”

The teacher candidates tracked the students’ progress and graphed it in order to assess the effectiveness of the RtI interventions. After removing the names of the students, the data was displayed in the main hallway of BMS in the form of a data wall. The data wall has generated a lot of excitement for both students and faculty of BMS. They understand that the graphs show their progress, and they are proud.

There are many methods available to address the unique learning needs of students. However, Dr. Goeke warns that “even when teachers make appropriate adaptations or differentiate the curriculum or materials, it may never have the same impact on accelerating students' progress as RtI intervention.” RtI is one important tool needed by dual educators to meet the needs of diverse learners in inclusive settings.

The Innoventions Summer Institute

Summer 2015 is “gearing up” to be a great one because Inclusive iSTeM is once again proud to be a part of Bloomfield Middle Schools’ Innovention Summer Institute! Directed by Irene Cohen and Danielle Testa, students have the opportunity to experience first hand the power of STEM education, combined with the enjoyment of a traditional summer camp. Throughout the academic year, participating teachers work to implement Content-Driven Design Challenges in their classrooms to enhance students understanding of Science, Technology, Engineering Design and Mathematics. As an extension of that experience, Ms. Cohen and Ms. Testa created The Innovention Summer Institute, which is a five week summer program that challenges students in problem solving skills, decision making, investigative skills, and teamwork as they work to complete various Design Challenges. Students design creative solutions to real-life problems which include multiple disciplines as well as multiple exposures to materials and media. This summer, students will participate in over 20 challenges which include but are not limited to Mindstorm Robotics, surviving the Zombie apocalypse using biomimicry, Minecraft EDU, ‘getting electrified’ with circuits and many more! Thanks to The Innovention Summer Institute, students will be able to “gear up for the future!”
Important Dates - Summer and Fall 2015

Summer 2015

May 18: First Day of Classes (3, 4 and 12 week sessions)
May 25: Memorial Day (no classes)
May 25: 6 week session begins (May 26—July 2)
June 15: 4 week session begins (June 15—July 9)
   8 week session begins (June 15—Aug 6)
July 4: Independence Day (no classes)
July 6: 5 week session begins (July 6 – Aug 6)
July 13: 4 week session begins (July 13—Aug 6)
August 10: 3 week session begins (Aug 10—Aug 27)
August 26: Graduate TFL I/Fieldwork Orientation

Fall 2015

September 1: Opening Day (no classes)
September 2: First Day of Classes
   September 11 for Friday evening & weekend classes
September 7: Labor Day Holiday (no classes)
September 8: Undergraduate TFL I Orientation
September 9: Add/Drop Ends
November 26-29: Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes)
December 9: Wednesday designated as a Monday
   (for Monday day classes only; Wednesday day and
   evening classes do not meet)
December 13: Classes End
December 14–20: Examination Period
November 19: SASE Comp Exam
December 20: End of Semester