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## College awards tech mini grants for 2020

June 9, 2020

The College of Education values innovative classroom and teaching practices. In encouraging faculty to provide students with unique and rigorous coursework, the College issued a call for proposals to receive Technology Innovation for Teaching mini-grants in early Spring 2020.

“These grants will support faculty members in their endeavors to learn about and utilize emerging technology in innovative ways to enhance student engagement, learning, and motivation, as well as enhance their own teaching,” said Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D., co-chair of the College’s Technology and Instructional Resources Committee. “We decided to host this opportunity prior to the onset of COVID-19 and the shift to distance learning, however, we feel it only emphasizes our drive to be progressive. We find that the ongoing commitment to technological innovation and integration is vital to our College’s success for faculty and students.”

A total of \$5,000 in funding was available, and proposals were accepted for any class setting including face-to-face, online, or hybrid.

Recipients of the COE’s 2020 technology mini-grants include: Michelle Reidel, Ph.D., Selçuk Dogan, Ph.D., Heather Scott, Ed.D., Nancy Remler, Ph.D., and Nedra Cossa, Ed.D.



**Michelle Reidel, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of Middle Grades and Secondary Education, received a \$2,500 grant from the College to assist with the delivery of instruction to Master of Arts in Teaching graduate students as they work to earn initial teaching certification through the College’s fully-online programs. According to Reidel, the MAT Middle Grades and Secondary Education programs will utilize the funds to pilot The Teaching Channel, a video coaching platform that includes a video observation tool for students to record their teaching practice, a virtual library complete with context experts and modeling of classroom best practices, and a platform to build personalized modules or utilize existing classroom modules.

“The pilot of The Teacher Channel will assist the program’s faculty in determining which video coaching platform we will commit to using long-term, as we want to ensure the best option for our teacher candidates,” said Reidel.



Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction for the Department of Elementary and Special Education, **Selçuk Dogan, Ph.D.**, received a \$1,000 grant to pilot test new technology by incorporating it within an online, graduate level course that is geared to provide practicing teachers with professional development opportunities.

“Teachers in this course will be using innovative technology tools to facilitate their professional learning and work in more efficient ways,” said Dogan. “The course will be fully integrated with technology to develop assessment tools using Rubric Maker, to get peer feedback using Peermark, and to analyze assessment data with WebDataRocks. Through Slack’s mobile capabilities, instructor-student interaction will be promoted”



**Heather Scott, Ed.D.**, program director for MAT Middle Grades and Secondary Education programs, is utilizing the \$720 she received to purchase GoReact accounts to use for the fall MAT Secondary Education students in their student teaching semester. GoReact is an interactive video assignment platform that allows faculty members to easily provide feedback, grading and critiquing.

“Student performance during field experiences has historically been assessed through face-to-face observation,” said Scott. “As the MAT program is moving fully online in fall 2020, there is an awareness that face to face observation will not be available for students who are outside of our travel radius. However, the spring 2020 pilot study using GoReact software for remote supervision has made us hopeful that effective observation and feedback is still possible.”



Associate Professor of Middle Grades and Secondary Education, **Nancy Remler, Ph.D.**, received \$500 in funding to participate in an online workshop offered through the Online Learning Consortium called “Adaptive Learning Fundamentals and Courseware Exploration.”

“As students juggle work, school and family responsibilities, they rely more heavily on mobile technologies to communicate and to complete academic work,” said Remler. “That technology reliance applies especially to preservice teachers, whose frequent travel between the University and K-12 field placements makes flexibility in learning a necessity. Now, COVID-19 elevates the necessity to offer flexible learning opportunities to all students. Through this online workshop, I’ll enhance my knowledge of adaptive learning pedagogy and useful technologies for such pedagogy.”

Remler will make adaptations to her coursework based on the knowledge gained from the workshop activities and plans to purchase equipment to record and produce her own podcasts for her courses as well.



**Nedra Cossa, Ed.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of Elementary and Special Education, is utilizing the \$250 awarded to purchase Camtasia, a software suite for audio and video production that includes screen recording for tutorials.

“The software allows course instructors to record audio and video while during class presentations as well as recording group meetings,” said Cossa. “This also allows me to record audio of images on my computer. My hope is to improve the quality of course instruction by providing opportunities for more personal connection in an asynchronous format.”

Members of the College's Technology and Instructional Resources Committee include: Bryan Griffin, Ph.D., William Reynolds, Ph.D., Jackie Kim, Ed.D., Chelda Smith Kondo, Ph.D., Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D., Charles Hodges, Ph.D., Shelli Casler-Failing, Ph.D., and Lacey Huffling, Ph.D.

Posted in [Faculty Highlights](#)

Tags: [Heather Scott](#), [Lacey Huffling](#), [mete](#), [Michelle Reidel](#), [Nancy Remler](#), [Nedra Cossa](#), [Selçuk Doğan](#)

## [College of Education awards internal research and scholarship support for 2020-21](#)

June 9, 2020

Each year, the College of Education (COE) provides internal support for faculty research and scholarship projects in efforts to support the institutional research agenda of the College, have a significant impact on the college's outreach to P-12 and community constituents, and enhance the college's capacity to conduct significant education scholarship. The COE hosts opportunities for internal research/scholarship support by competitively reviewing annual proposals for seed grant funding as well as requests for a research assistant position filled by a current graduate student.

The College's Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Committee awarded funding for four projects in Spring 2020, and one research assistantship for 2020-2021 was granted to a College faculty member. Applications were reviewed by the Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Committee who served as the advisory body to the senior leadership team, including the dean.

Faculty members Anne Katz, Ph.D., Amanda Glaze-Crampes, Ph.D., Selçuk Dogan, Ph.D., and Aslihan Unal, Ph.D. (collaboratively), and Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D., were recipients of internal seed grant funding. Sally Brown, Ph.D. was awarded the research assistantship.



**Anne Katz, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading, is completing a literacy study in which middle school students from a local urban school will simultaneously complete a project alongside pre-service teachers at Georgia Southern. All students will read short stories from “Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks” by Jason Reynolds, as well as complete reflective journal entries, participate in literature circle discussions, and draft place-based writing short stories inspired by the text. Middle school students will create arts-based collages that connect to their writing. At the completion of the book, students will visit the University classroom to participate in writing and visual literacy conferences with the COE’s pre-service teachers, allowing them to provide literacy instruction and coaching.

Katz plans to follow up with the pre-service teachers by conducting a post-study survey and semi-structured interviews to have them describe their identity as a literacy teacher.





**Amanda Glaze-Crampes, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of Middle Grades and Secondary Education, will be purchasing 3-D classroom materials for teacher education research conducted in-field while teaching human evolution in Georgia. Glaze-Crampes is actively engaged in the Human Evolution Summer Teaching Workshop in partnership with the University of Florida, where conversations about evolution are viewed through an anthropological lens. This approach provides students with hands-on learning opportunities with 3-D replicas printed, to scale, of actual fossils vital to the study of human evolution.

Her research will then seek to quantify the impact of a human evolution teaching unit on student achievement and student/teacher perceptions of evolution as guided by the question: Does the implementation of a human evolution teaching unit with embedded strategies for conflict mitigation and 3-D printed materials positively impact student performance relative to evolution content? Following the study, the 3-D replicas will be permanently housed within the College for teachers to check out for use in their classrooms.



**Selçuk Dogan, Ph.D., and Aslihan Unal, Ph.D.,** faculty members in the Department of Elementary and Special Education, are focusing on the importance of ongoing improvement and evaluation of graduate online education courses.

“The purpose of our non-experimental, mixed-method design study is to examine the perceived effect of an innovative, new generation course on teachers’ knowledge and skills essential to instructional planning and teaching methods,” said Unal.



Dogan and Unal will conduct before and after interviews with eight teachers varying in years of experience. Data as well as performance and artifacts from the teachers’ performance will demonstrate current and improved pedagogical competencies and evidence a bigger picture of the intersection of teachers’ perception and actual practice. The results of this research will suggest how innovative elements such as facilitation, peer review, teacher-teacher interaction, and group work, are effective in improving teachers’ knowledge and practice and open a door for the benefits of using sophisticated ways for teachers’ professional learning in online environments.





**Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D.**, associate professor in the Department of Leadership, Technology and Human Development, is partnering with a colleague from Stephen F. Austin State University, Summer Pannell, Ph.D., to explore the impact of restorative discipline practices on rural schools. Restorative discipline offers a more holistic approach to behavior management by placing value on personal change rather than compliance. McBrayer and Pannell will provide virtual education and development on restorative discipline practices to the leadership of elementary and secondary schools in rural Southeast Georgia to assist with a top-down approach for change in the schools' practices. While research on the effectiveness of restorative practices has been conducted in urban schools, there is a gap in literature supporting the impact on rural schools.

"Perhaps the most important, and most highly debated, responsibility of today's principal is to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff," said McBrayer. "To combat rise in violence and unwanted behavior, many schools have adopted zero tolerance policies that place an emphasis on rule-following and consequences that are predetermined regardless of the mitigating circumstances or situational content. Restorative discipline can offer an approach that acknowledges the importance of relationship building and builds a cohesive, positive school climate. These practices promote healthy decision-making skills."



In efforts to support research in a variety of ways, the College also awarded a research assistant position to a faculty member for the 2020-2021 academic year for research/scholarship support.

**Sally Brown, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading was awarded this position after a competitive review of proposals.

Brown is currently working on a project titled “Valuing Emergent Bilinguals as Literate Beings.” The project draws from two previous years of data collection at an elementary school which will be combined with additional work in the field. In-depth analyses will examine the ways emergent bilinguals interact with their English-only peers using multiple modes for communication purposes. Specifically, semiotic sources will be investigated that illustrate the ways emergent bilinguals make meaning from read alouds. In other words, how can teachers tap into the strengths students bring to reading comprehension experiences? This research counters deficit practices found in many classrooms across the U.S. and offers educators specific strategies to act against print-centric school curricula.

The COE Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Committee became a standing committee in 2007 and awarded its first grant in November 2008. Current members of the COE Research Committee include: Antonio Gutierrez de Blume, Ph.D.; Alma Stevenson, Ph.D., chair; Carl “Kip” Sorgen, Ph.D.; Ellen Whitford, Ed.D.; Beverly Miller, Ph.D.; Barbara Serianni, Ph.D.; Amanda Glaze, Ph.D.; and Alex Reyes, Ph.D.

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# Georgia Southern recent graduate named regional award winner for school library media

June 9, 2020



*Dixie Shoemaker, Ed.S., loves to have fun with her students to encourage reading and literacy education.*

Two weeks before participating in Georgia Southern University's virtual graduation to earn an Ed.S. in instructional technology from the College of Education, Dixie Shoemaker became the recipient of the prestigious 2020 East Georgia Regional Library Media Specialist of the Year award from the Georgia Library Media Association (GLMA). The honor recognizes K-12 library media specialists whose instructional collaborations foster student engagement and achievement through innovative programs.

"I was honored and humbled that so people would take the time to nominate me," said Shoemaker.

Shoemaker is entering her sixth year as the media specialist at Copeland Elementary School in Augusta, Georgia. Prior to that, she served as an elementary classroom teacher for nine years.

"As a classroom teacher, I found myself being the one that always jumped on the newest technology and would help others learn how to use it," she said. "I loved my kids, and I still wanted to be with them, so I did extensive research on what jobs I might want to do with technology. Once I figured out I wanted to work as a library media specialist, I did additional

research to find what schools offered this program, looking at their reviews, flexibility and affordability."

As such, she landed at Georgia Southern in 2013, where she completed a master's in instructional technology in 2015. Shoemaker secured her current job before completing her degree.

"I love my job," she said. "I get to use my job and experience to help even more people than before. I tell my students I have 615 kids because they are all my kids. I get to help them all."

To expand her abilities even further, Shoemaker enrolled in the University's Ed.S. in instructional technology program in 2018.

"I must have lost my mind to go back to school with a one-year-old," she said. "But I couldn't help it. I am a lifelong learner, and this degree makes me more useful."

In light of the current distance learning situation around the nation, Shoemaker said the timing of her specialist degree could not have been better.

“This degree did two things for me,” she said. “It solidified my knowledge about how to teach both teachers and students to be 21st century learners. It also prepared me to easily transition my school over to distance learning and provide a marriage, so to speak, of technology and education.”

When COVID-19 hit, Shoemaker was ready.

“Not one of my teachers complained,” she said. “They were willing to learn and we worked together.”

To help keep in touch with the students Shoemaker created her own daily show, offering support to teachers and students with information on resources available to them while away from the school.

Right now Shoemaker is focused on the present but sees many paths for the future.

“I love exploration,” she said. “So who knows (what’s next), but right now I am happy. There is so much more I want to do for my students and teachers right where I am.”

Posted in [Alumni Highlights](#), [Degree Programs](#)

Tags: [Dixie Shoemaker](#), [instructional technology](#)

## Research experience opened doors for graduate student’s future

June 9, 2020



Alex Allmond

Alex Allmond recently secured an internship in Gwinnett County Public Schools, the largest school district in the state of Georgia, to complete the requirements for an Ed.S. in school psychology from Georgia Southern University. While her exceptional academic performance no doubt helped Allmond become a candidate of consideration, she says it was her research experience that made her stand out from other candidates.

In 2018-2019, Allmond served as an editorial assistant for the College of Education (COE) professor Sally Brown, Ph.D., to help edit the journal *Talking Points*. Allmond continued her work with Brown the following year, serving in a graduate assistant position funded by a COE seed grant, “Extending the Knowledge Base of 21st Century Multilingual Young Writers: A Holistic Writing Scale.” As a result, Allmond assisted with Brown’s research on emergent bilingual learners.

“This work stood out on my resume and in my interview,” said Allmond. “It made them take a second look and want to take a chance on me.”

Brown’s research is based on field experiences conducted in Savannah-Chatham County elementary schools observing literacy classroom instruction for diverse students including many who are learning English as a new language. At the heart of the case study, Brown reiterated that the traditional classroom approach emphasizes tested skills whereas emergent bilingual students are in need of support that acknowledges their diverse background knowledge and experiences.

“If you had to break down this research into the simplest of terms it is about giving credit to bilingual students for the work they have done and accomplishments they make,” said Allmond. “There can be a bias for working with these students that hinders their literacy and does not accurately depict their ability. The hope is to reframe educators’ perspectives when working with bilingual students.”

While Brown collected data in the classroom with students, Allmond said she was able to contribute through background research to complete the literature review and utilize her knowledge in assessment to organize and analyze the data.

“I enjoy the mentorship relationship,” said Allmond. “It was a positive experience for me and has helped me in my classes and with students.”

Brown and Allmond were recently informed that their co-authored article, “Constructing My Word: A Case Study Examining Emergent Bilingual Multimodal Composing Practices,” was published in the *Early Childhood Education Journal*.

While this is Allmond’s first peer-reviewed, published article, she is no stranger to research. Attending Georgia Southern for her undergraduate degree in child and family development, Allmond was in the University’s Honors Program where she completed a thesis project on measuring goals for adults with developmental disabilities utilizing photo technology.

“When I was in high school, I knew I wanted to major in child and family development because I wanted to work with children,” explained Allmond. “I had experience with summer camps and nannied, and I loved it.”

During her undergraduate studies, Allmond said access to service-learning at the University helped to open her eyes to many opportunities. It was, however, assessment and helping children with disabilities that intrigued her most.

“A school psychology graduate student visited one of my classes and told us about the field,” she said. “And during one of my service-learning opportunities working with adults with disabilities, I realized that I truly enjoyed working with them and completing assessments that could help them get the services they need. Everything fell into place, and I was able to be a part of the Ed.S. in school psychology program at Georgia Southern.”

Allmond’s dream job is to work with preschool evaluations for special education.

“It’s like a puzzle,” she said. “I want to help identify what a student needs and help them to succeed. At a young age, it is important that students are getting the development support they need. I want to be one of the first to help influence the view of special education and help form positive relationships for that student and their parents and supporters.”

As a part of the completion of the specialist program for school psychology, Allmond will also execute an action research project. In efforts to continue to consider the diverse needs of students she will serve, Allmond has chosen to complete research on the preparedness and practices of working with transgender students.

“I know I will work with transgender students in my career, and I want to know how other school psychologists were prepared for this specific population and what they are doing to work with them that they feel is successful. I want to be informed to work with all students.”

Allmond feels that she is on the right path.

“My ultimate goal is to work in a school system,” she said. “That’s where I want to be. I love what I do.”

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Tags: [Alex Allmond](#), [Sally Brown](#)