

Newsroom

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STEM Institute team travels to Australia to share knowledge

MARCH 20, 2018



(L-R): Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education Outreach Coordinator Lisa Stueve, Ed.D., and Coordinator Kania Greer, Ed.D., in Sydney, Australia.

Georgia Southern College of Education's (COE) Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i2STEMe) Coordinator Kania Greer, Ed.D., and Outreach Coordinator Lisa Stueve, Ed.D., recently presented "International Professional Development: Lessons Learned" at the inaugural International Conference on Education and Learning (ICEL), held in Sydney, Australia.

Greer and Stueve based their presentation on the Institute's experience working with the STEM Academy of USA in 2017. Together, the Institute and STEM Academy of USA offered a three-day professional development program to 40 STEM educators from six local schools in West Bengal, India, with whom they continue to collaborate.

"Learning is so much more international than it used to be," said Greer. "And the STEM language is international. Math is math, and science is science—no matter where you are."

Greer and Stueve's presentation included conveying concepts that cross-cultural boundaries including authentic teaching and learning, which Greer says can be defined as "bringing real-world problems and opportunities into daily instruction to help create buy-in from

students with problems or scenarios that are relevant to them and their experiences."

The conference included educational professionals representing countries including Sweden, South Korea, China, India, South Africa, Australia, Thailand and the United States. Greer and Stueve made connections with many of the attendees and are in conversations with Swedish colleagues about future collaborations.

"The struggles we have in our schools are fundamentally similar to struggles in other countries," explained Greer. "They want to know how we are addressing our issues, and we want to know how they are handling their issues. Because we live in an international world, our teachers will need to understand diverse classroom settings, and experience with various cultures is vital."

During last year's training in India, i2STEMe visited the local zoo for a project-based learning opportunity. Students evaluated existing animal habitats at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Chennai, Stueve explained, and were asked to work within the parameters of the land available to design improved habitats for some of the residents.

"Authentic teaching includes place-based education, problem-based learning and project-based learning," said Greer. "Students need to be able to relate to the STEM problems [teachers] are presenting them with so that they can feel

invested. This is also an opportunity for [educators] to have students be active in their communities with real-world scenarios that they can collect data and propose real-life solutions for.”

The mission of i2STEMe is to provide professional development, engage in community outreach and seek external funding to promote STEM teaching and learning in both formal and informal educational settings. The Institute hosts many annual events including summer camps, Science Olympiad and the annual Interdisciplinary STEM Teaching and Learning Conference. The Institute was founded in 2012 and collaborates with all colleges at the University to enhance STEM experience and education.

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