

Vol. 20, Issue 1
Winter 2020

Newsletter for School of Education and Psychology

UNRAVELLED



Power for Mind & Soul

(Due to COVID-19,
the publication of this issue
was delayed)



Learning from the Great Lesson Books: Outdoor Education Masters Students Benefit from Experiential Learning on Winter Intensive



Ellen White wrote, “Next to the Bible, nature is to be our great lesson book” (Counsels to Parents and Teachers, 1913, p. 54), and the MEd in Outdoor Education at Southern Adventist University is designed so that students are educated through both of these important “books”. Southern’s outdoor education program is unique in that it is one of the few, if not only, programs in an Adventist institution that allows for students to actively learn outside a typical classroom and be in nature. Professor Monty Murdoch, the director of graduate outdoor education, believes that being able to learn in nature is valuable, especially for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. The Bible and the teachings of Ellen White promote the importance of understanding God and His teachings through creation.

As part of the curriculum in the Outdoor Education program, students are able to experience God’s nature and learn its practical applications by participating in several “intensives,” which provide a two week opportunity to travel and visit outdoor education sites and facilities. Professor Murdoch explained that the intensives got their name from days starting early in the morning to ending late in the evening, which involve activities doing anything from meeting with educators to creating outdoor lesson plans for students. As vigorous as it may sound, many of the students greatly appreciate all that the intensive trips

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK

Over the last few weeks, I have had the privilege of visiting several classes in the School of Education and Psychology as part of my work as dean. Every time I approach our building, I am awed by its loveliness as it sits high atop campus, its white columns gleaming. However, my observation time within Summerour has allowed me to witness firsthand the much lovelier aspect of our building—what happens inside the classrooms. Let me help you peek inside.



Tammy Overstreet, PhD

In Research and Design II, I observed students being challenged to understand not just the “hows” of doing research but also the “whys.” In Developmental Psychology class, students learned common characteristics people have due to birth order. In Abnormal Psychology, students debated the merits of specific stances toward issues in psychology. In Elementary Math Methods, students handled manipulatives similar to those they’ll use one day in their own classrooms to help their students conceptualize the big ideas of math. In Inclusive Education, students collaborated in small groups to fine-tune instruction for students with learning differences. In Children’s Literature, students examined award-winning literature in anticipation of reading with their own future students. In one of Counseling course, students learned counseling methods for children and adolescents, and, in another, examined multicultural counseling. In General Psychology, students wrestled with course concepts in small groups.

All of this learning is exciting, and I am so thankful for the work our professors, staff, and students do. Undoubtedly, the best part of my time in classrooms is worship at the beginning of classes when professors link biblical concepts to course content and take time to pray with students. I think God must often smile when He peeks into our classrooms just as I find myself doing.

Learning from the Great Lesson Books

(continued from page 1)

offer. Graduate student Cheryl Craven is an example of one who enjoyed this winter intensive and gave an account of the experience.

According to Professor Bishop, many benefits come from this added requirement. For student teachers, the assessment raises their level of professionalism, builds respect for the teaching profession, and boosts their confidence to succeed. For the School of Education and Psychology, the assessment elevates the level of instruction our professors must provide for our candidates, gives a common professional language to professors and candidates, and demonstrates aspects of our education program’s conceptual framework (informed facilitators and reflective decision-makers) to a national audience.

“The group gained practical experience while observing outdoor education in a variety of settings, from the mountains of North Carolina and the suburbs of Atlanta to the intra-coastal wetlands along the Georgia coast. My greatest takeaway during the intensive was observing the transformative power of nature in an educational setting. Pre-intensive reading included research on the benefits of nature; the intensive brought this research to life. I watched students learn in an outdoor setting while growing academically, in self-confidence and in social intelligence. I watched educators build character in the young people while preparing them for a life of learning and service.”

Cheryl Craven and the other graduate students on the trip recognized that while many lessons can be learned in a traditional classroom, learning in nature is a unique experiential opportunity that benefits everyone involved. Not all learning has to come from a textbook, sometimes learning comes from the great “book” of creation.



Three Education Majors Become First Recipients of the Greenleaf Scholarship

Recipients

Elizabeth Bell

“I have always had a complicated relationship with math, but over my years at Southern in the education program, I have come to respect and enjoy it. Receiving this scholarship has made me more determined than ever to work towards being a great math teacher so that my future students will not only understand, but also enjoy math.”

Paige Barney

“Earning this scholarship means so much to me as I was that student who came home each night and had to have my dad help me with my math. Through my personal and teaching experiences, I have seen that all students can succeed in math if they are willing to put effort in and are given the correct tools. I am excited to see where God will lead me to serve Him in teaching His children.”

Jesse Hoffman

“I am so thankful for the Vanessa Greenleaf Scholarship because it is bringing me one step closer to becoming the educator that God is calling me to be. I can’t wait to see how He uses me in the field of education.”

You too can inspire and encourage students to continue in Vanessa’s footsteps by including a future gift to Southern Adventist University in your will or trust. Contact Southern’s Planned Giving office at 423.236.2832 to learn more about this life-changing opportunity.

Background

In 1979, Vanessa Greenleaf graduated with a major in English and a minor in journalism from Southern Adventist University, which was known then as Student Missionary College. During her time as a teacher, she noticed many students she taught were afraid of trying math. So although she had no previous interest in becoming a math teacher, her passion to help these students overcome their phobia of math fueled her desire to go the extra mile. Vanessa diligently tutored herself and enrolled in math classes to learn more about the subject, and she was able to pass the required tests needed to receive certification as a math teacher. Vanessa’s teaching career was sadly cut short as she passed away in 2013 from cancer. Southern’s education program honors her service and continues her legacy through the Vanessa Greenleaf Scholarship.

Present

Southern’s education program honors her service and wishes to share that her legacy and love for teaching math continues through the Vanessa Greenleaf Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund for Elementary School Math Teachers. The scholarship was established by her parents Floyd and Betty Greenleaf in 2017 to inspire excellence in teaching mathematics for elementary teachers and was to begin awarding in 2021. Due to overwhelming support of donor gifts to the School of Education and Psychology during Southern’s Giving Day, the scholarship was able to award earlier than expected to three students during an education convocation on January 23, 2020.



Professor Bishop with the recipients Elizabeth Bell, Paige Barney, and Jesse Hoffman
(Photos courtesy of Advancement)

UNRAVELED

Volume 19, Issue 2

Editor: Antannia Aguilar

Phone: 423.236.2765
Fax: 423.236.1765
Email: edpsych@southern.edu
Website: southern.edu/edpsych

UNRAVELED is the official newsletter for the School of Education and Psychology at Southern Adventist University.

If you would like to receive future Unraveled newsletters electronically, please email uas@southern.edu and request to be added to the list.

When Professor Matt Tolbert first joined the faculty of the School of Education and Psychology in 2017, he was quoted as saying, “Learning is like breathing; without it there is no life.” He not only believes continual learning is important for his students, but he also applies this belief to his own life. He received a bachelor’s degree in religious studies and then a master’s degree in counseling from Southern Adventist University. He found his calling with students after being asked to teach at Cleveland State Community College and has felt passionate about teaching and learning ever since. Nevertheless, something inside him began to feel restless. He wanted to achieve more that could only be done with higher education, so he began his doctorate degree in Learning and Leadership. As of this year, Professor Tolbert has completed his degree and will be graduating from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Professor Tolbert’s dissertation asked the question, “How do students best learn in the college classroom?” He compared students’ achievement in a traditional classroom versus in a flipped classroom. In the traditional classroom, students are given the information in class and expected to do activities outside of class to demonstrate their learning. In the flipped classroom, students are given activities in class and expected to have learned the material before class.



Professor Tolbert, his wife, and children

At the end, the results were mixed. Overall, no difference was found in performance between the two classrooms. However, more students did prefer the flipped classroom approach. Psychology major Kleber Hernandez has been a student of Professor Tolbert and said: “Personally, a flipped classroom appeals to me more than a normal classroom because it provides more opportunities for students to participate and discuss the topic at hand. Professor Tolbert allowed students to voice their opinion and that created a more relaxing environment in his flipped classrooms.” When asked how this knowledge of students and learning can impact the School of Education and Psychology, Professor Tolbert responded, “If we know the type of learning environment students prefer and can still perform well in, then we can help keep them motivated and engaged so that their experience is more valuable.”

In Professor Tolbert’s research, both the traditional and flipped classrooms evaluated learning using multiple-choice tests. However, due to the nature of a flipped classroom, multiple-choice tests may be an inadequate form of measurement. Professor Tolbert remarked he would have done nothing different for his measurement because it provided a path for future research to answer what assessments work best for measuring learning in the flipped classroom. In general, if he could have done anything differently, he would have started his doctoral program sooner, when his plate was not as full with being a full-time professor and having a family at home. His biggest advice to students considering pursuing a doctorate degree is “start early and don’t stop.”

Jamil and Vanessa Hairston both graduated from Southern Adventist University in 2017. When they graduated, they did not just leave with their bachelor’s degrees in hand, but they were also leaving as a newly married couple. Their lives together began in high school, where Jamil had been attending Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA) beginning his freshman year. In 2011, Vanessa transferred to GCA during their senior year, and they began to date in October. After graduating from high school, they attended Southern and pursued majors within the School of Education and Psychology. Jamil graduated with a bachelor’s of science in clinical psychology; Vanessa graduated with a bachelor’s of liberal arts in education and was certified as a K-8 teacher. Both believe that their programs have been crucial to their daily lives, but they have also been able to explore non-traditional avenues of education and psychology in the field of ministry.

Vanessa’s Story

“I was always split between ministry and teaching. They both had similar elements, and I love both the school and church atmosphere. I went on a mission trip and felt called to teach and had a clear sign from God to pursue that major at Southern.”

How did the time you spent at Southern help you after graduation?

“I currently teach English online and have been able to use a lot of what I learned in my education classes to help scaffold the learning process for my students. I also learned how to be an emotionally healthy leader. The time I spent working for Campus Ministries helped me identify my passions in ministry and helped me develop a deep, intimate relationship with God that is still thriving today.”

What are you doing now?

“I am currently a full-time graduate student at Andrews University and will graduate in 2021 with my Masters in Divinity. I work 6 part-time jobs and travel with Jamil on the weekends doing ministry. I am also the worship pastor at One Place Fellowship on Andrews University’s campus.”

What are your future plans?

“I hope to serve God and humanity through my passions wherever God calls me. I could see myself in a school setting for a while, or as a chaplain. I could also see myself as a pastor or even planting a church alongside Jamil.”



Jamil’s Story

“I decided to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in clinical psychology shortly after graduating from high school. I always knew that I was a good listener, and in high school I worked for a guidance counselor who had studied clinical psychology. I really looked up to him and respected his relational skills with the students. This job eventually encouraged me to want to do the same thing.”

How did the time you spent at Southern help you after graduation?

“I believe that studying clinical psychology in my undergraduate program really helped me sharpen the spiritual gifts that God has given me such as listening, counseling, work ethic, discipline, the art of asking questions, reading between the lines, and empathy. I also learned a lot from working in Campus Ministries and if it was not for that I would have probably never known that ministry would be something that I would actually enjoy doing. Being involved in ministry on Southern’s campus forced me to get used to working for Jesus outside of my comfort zone. I used to think that God could only use me while working in my strengths but I eventually learned that His strength is made perfect in my weakness.”

What are you doing now?

“My wife and I have accepted the call to ministry and we are both currently studying in the Masters in Divinity program at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. I also work at Andrews University’s Andrasen Center of Wellness as a certified personal trainer, and the skills that I obtained from my undergraduate studies in psychology have definitely come in handy. I also serve as an intern in a church on campus called One Place, alongside the super attractive Worship Pastor Vanessa Hairston (my wife) in planning the worship services.”

What are your future plans?

“My future is still unclear but after graduating with my Bachelor’s degree in clinical psychology, getting certified as a personal trainer, and studying ministry full-time it seems to me that God is calling me to journey with people in a deep way. I am unsure of what that job will specifically look like in the future but all of that is in God’s hands. I am willing to go wherever He calls; I just pray He gets me out of Antarctica or what others refer to as Berrien Springs.”

How can you help other students like us discover God’s calling in their life?

Consider a future legacy gift that will provide life-changing opportunities for students at Southern Adventist University. For more information about how you can include Southern in your will or trust, call Planned Giving at 423.236.2832.

Perseverance during a Pandemic

The Dean's Perspective

In recent weeks, we have faced a challenge—COVID-19. A survey of our students indicates our school is still doing great work for God despite a sudden and radical shift in how we are approaching learning. One student's response to the survey sums this up well: "My advisor has done a great job of communicating with me and praying over me, which is one of the reasons why I love this department and school. Thus, I feel that I am equipped with materials I need. If I were to have a question or need arise, I would know who to reach out to." My visits to Zoom classrooms continue to leave me smiling. I'm thankful for the resilience I see demonstrated in our students and for the support their professors offer them in navigating this new normal. Good things happen here in the School of Education and Psychology!

-Dean Oversteet



A Graduate Student's Perspective

In January, I began my dual masters program in School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. As I began my schooling, I accepted the position as Southern's first Graduate Student Case Manager for the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). BIT is responsible for threat assessment as we seek to recognize individuals who are at risk of harming themselves or others. The team also makes recommendations as to which students will meet with the case manager.

As the case manager, I meet with my students in person (now virtually) once a week and check in with them daily. Then I attend meetings to report progress and concerns to the BIT.

My main objective is to connect students with the resources that are available to them. I support these students in all aspects of their life. This can include: academics, career decisions, social skills, mental health, interpersonal communication, physical exercise, sleep schedules, healthy eating, and self care. I am careful not to overstep my boundaries and to connect students with professionals.

My experience within the School of Education and Psychology has helped me understand the importance of a holistic approach to wellness. During my time working with students who are identified as being at risk, I have found that they need connection and support as they seek guidance from professionals.

During the COVID-19 crisis, classes have been transitioned to an online platform. For the BIT students, this meant that I would no longer be able to meet with them face to face. While this concerned me, my professors within the SEP encouraged me to search for ways to continue supporting these students.

Now I call, text, and Zoom with these students to continue offering services and clarification regarding Southern's COVID-19 updates. I have the unique opportunity to be connected with several areas of campus to help students with easy transitions. I am grateful for the life lessons I have learned in the School of Education and Psychology.

-Kim Daniel

Perseverance during a Pandemic

A Professor's Perspective

They say you don't truly understand something until you go through it yourself. On the evening of Easter Sunday, April 12, we went to bed knowing there may be some bad storms that night. We prepared our safe room, but didn't really think much of it as we've seen these types of alerts before. At around 11:20pm, our phones started going off and we heard "Wake up; take shelter immediately." My husband Shawn and I each grabbed one of our boys and dog and ran into the closet. The tornado alert quickly turned into a tornado emergency. Within a few seconds, the power went out, and the winds picked up. As Shawn and I were each covering one of the boys with our bodies, the whole house started to violently shake and the winds were so strong that we could literally feel a shift in the house.

It was terrifying. We heard glass breaking, trees falling, shingles and plywood being torn off the roof, and thunder that seemed to be literally in the closet with us. I can't even describe it. It was nothing like we've ever experienced before. It felt like our house kept getting slammed over and over again by a train. While my anxiety was getting the best of me and rubbing off on our already terrified little boys, my amazing and calm husband starts singing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," and our boys, Xander and Judah, quickly joined in. Through tears and fear, we all sang out loud to try and cover the sounds of the storm. As fast as it came, the tornado left our area. It's crazy how a few minutes can seem like an eternity when you are in a situation like this.

After assessing the damage in our neighborhood and the devastation this tornado had caused, the word "thankful" doesn't seem significant enough to describe what I feel. Our subdivision was destroyed. Out of the 270+ homes in it, only about 30 are still liveable; ours included in that number. We got a lot of damage to the exterior of our house, but it's still standing. I can't help but praise God for our safety and thinking how much worse it could've been.

In the aftermath of the storms, we have been overwhelmed with the amount of love and support we have received. I've had students come to our house and spend all day doing hard labor and help clean up our yard and our loss. Dean Overstreet came and fed our twenty-member friend/family crew. I've had students send care packages for my sons; others volunteer to help our neighbors/friends. I had one student who compiled a list of messages from my students and created a powerpoint presentation with notes of encouragement and support. I've received hundreds of emails/texts/phone calls from current and previous students. My colleague, Professor Wilder, allowed one of my family members who was also affected by the tornado, to stay at his Air B&B free of charge. We have felt so loved and supported. I love my SEP/SAU family and I'm so thankful for all of the help and support.

- Professor Pratt





**School of
Education and Psychology**

P.O. Box 370
Collegedale, TN 37315-0370
edpsych@southern.edu
southern.edu/edpsych
423.236.2765

ONLINE MSeD OPTIONS

Where Faith, Learning, and Professional Excellence Meet



Be an innovator with Literacy

Education. Redesigned curriculum prepares classroom teachers to engage and empower students to be strong communicators and critical thinkers. Teachers may complete the degree online in two years, with one two-week intensive on campus.

Position yourself for advancement with Instructional Leadership.

Southern's online program with one two-week intensive on campus prepares you to transition to a role as a principal or administrator.

Take learning outside with Outdoor

Education. Teachers, youth leaders, and others learn how to meet a variety of educational and emotional needs by immersing children, teens, and adults in God's Book of Nature. This unique intensive-based program focuses on experiential learning, practical skills, and linking others to their Creator through nature. Summer field schools and fall/winter intensives are available.



1.800.SOUTHERN • southern.edu/graduatestudies

