Professors in the Furman Literacy Program know what it’s like to be a public school teacher. They know the trials and successes that we have every day. They give you real-world examples of how to teach different strategies to different types of learners. The reading strategies we learned are extremely helpful in the classroom.”

—Amanda Walkup
Special Educator, Bryson Middle School

Furman’s literacy program gives teachers powerful techniques to teach the reading and writing processes critical to literacy development. The new master of arts concentration in literacy prepares education professionals for add-on certification as a reading teacher.”

—Renita Schmidt
Literacy Program Coordinator

**Literacy**

With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, literacy achievement has become a high stakes component of school accountability. Since schools are required to show adequate yearly progress in several disciplines, literacy strategies have become an important component of instruction in all grade levels, pre-K-12. Furman’s advanced program in literacy—designed for practitioners who hold an initial or professional certificate at the early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary, or pre-K-12 level—will help teachers improve their classroom practices and will prepare teachers who wish to work as literacy coaches or specialists.

The Master of Arts degree with a concentration in literacy is a 39-credit program of study. It consists of a 15-credit core of courses required of all degree candidates and 24 credits of required courses within the Literacy concentration. Candidates who wish to be recommended to the State Department of Education for add-on certification as a “Reading Teacher” must complete the degree requirements and obtain a passing score on the appropriate Praxis II area sub-test.

**Master of Arts Concentration: Literacy**

**Program of Study (39 credits)**

**Core** (12 credits of required study)
- EDFD 602 Learning Process Theory (3)
- EDFD 604 Statistics and Measurement in Education (3)
- EDFD 606 Research in Education (3)
- EDFD 608 The Culture of Schooling in America (3)

**Concentration** (21 credits of required study)
- EDRD 640 — Current Trends in Literacy Research and Practice (3)
- EDRD 641 Teaching Reading and Writing in Content Areas (3)
- EDRD 729 Literacy Methods (3)
- EDRD 747 Critical Survey of Children’s Literature (3)

**OR**
- EDRD 748 Critical Survey of Literature for Young Adults (3)
- EDRD 749 Assessment and Instruction in Reading and Writing (3)

**Prerequisites:** EDRD 640, 641, and 729 or approved equivalents.

- EDRD 965 Pracitcum I: Assessment of Reading and Writing (3)
- EDRD 966 Pracitcum II: Advanced Assessment of Reading and Writing (3)

**Prerequisites:** All courses in the reading concentration — EDRD 747 or 748, 640, 641, 729, 749, and 965— must be completed prior to beginning EDRD 966. Must be the last course in the Literacy sequence. May be taken concurrently only with EDFD 879.

**Related Hours** (3 credits required)

**Choose one of the following:**
- EDRD 750 Scholarly Reading and Writing (3)
- EDRD 641 Teaching Reading and Writing to PK-12 English Language Learners (3)
- EDOL 720 Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Education (3)

**Exit Requirement** (3 credits)
- EDFD 879 Master’s Seminar in Education (3)

**Prerequisites:** Must be the last course in the degree program. May be taken concurrently only with EDRD 966.
The relationships that I have with the faculty and staff at Furman have been priceless. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to walk into class and have a conversation with a professor who understands your needs and concerns, especially as a beginning teacher. It is comforting to know that there are people available who will listen to you and are more than willing to help. —Lisa Guenther

Ellen Woodside Elementary School

Q & A

with

Merianna Neely,
Jesse Bobo Elementary

What factors influenced your decision to enter Furman’s Literacy program?

I was planning on pursuing a master’s degree in early childhood education, but found out from Dr. Schmidt that the literacy master’s program was going to be open in the fall of 2007. I wanted to pursue a degree in early childhood education to help students learn to read. The master’s in literacy would allow me to learn specifically about reading instruction. It was a perfect fit!

How did interactions with the Furman Graduate Studies faculty and staff affect your overall experience?

Kay Goodwin worked patiently with me to plan out my graduate studies. She remembered me and remembered the different commitments that I had. She helped me plan out my graduate studies in a way that worked best for my schedule. This personal attention has made my overall experience with graduate studies wonderful.

How are you using principles you learned in the Literacy program in your classroom?

I know that I am a better teacher when I am in class. The coursework in Furman’s Literacy program is challenging and engaging. Our discussions in class encouraged me to try the reading and writing strategies immediately. The assignments encouraged me to implement reading strategies that are research-based in my classroom.

What aspects of the Literacy program made the biggest impact on you, personally and/or in your career?

With a strong emphasis on meeting standards, the Literacy program has allowed me to read current research about reading and writing strategies that are best for students. The relationships with the professors in the program allowed me to ask questions about school requirements and how to work within them to provide students with authentic and engaging learning opportunities.

What makes the Literacy program at Furman unique?

Furman provides a small, intimate class atmosphere, which makes it unique. The professors seek to build relationships and are ready to provide help in any way that they can. I would highly recommend this program to other educators. No matter how many years you have been teaching, the coursework is relevant and challenging both personally and professionally.

“...The professors had us try out different strategies that they presented in class. This allowed me to go back to my classroom confident in my presentation of a particular strategy because I already had first-hand experience with it. The professors did a great job of taking the time to find out where we teach and the grade levels that we teach. They used that information to present topics that were relevant to what we were teaching at that particular time.” —Lisa Guenther

Ellen Woodside Elementary School

Faculty

Renita Schmidt, Ph.D.,
Literacy Program Coordinator,
(right)
Nelly Hecker, Ph.D.,
Chair, Education Department
Paul Thomas, Ph.D.

Graduate Studies in Education

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