

Graduates of St. Bonaventure's Birth to Grade 12 Literacy program share tales of success

Two recent graduates of St. Bonaventure University's master's level program in Birth to Grade 12 Literacy say the program is a gateway to opportunity that has put them on the path to professional success.

They share their experiences in a question-and-answer format below.

The 12-month, 36-credit-hour program is available in hybrid or online formats. Courses include methods and theory knowledge, learning how to teach reading, foundations of coaching and reading assessment. Intensive week-long clinical experiences are included, perfect for the

working teacher.

At the heart of it all, the program allows students to gain hands-on or virtual field experience, learning to assess and diagnose reading abilities followed by the St. Bonaventure Reading Center practicum (SBURC), and opportunities to provide coaching professional development by and for peers and parents alike.

Q&A with recent graduates Sabrina Irvin and Gina Gerard

Sabrina Irvin, a 2014 undergraduate of St. Bonaventure University who earned her literacy graduate degree in spring 2020, teaches special education at Hinsdale Central School, Hinsdale, New York.

One of your strengths is creating engaging materials for students. How did the B-12 program help you develop that trait?

Irvin: The B-12 education program helped inspire me to create engaging materials for my kids by teaching me that color in the classroom helps students feel welcome. When children feel welcome and enjoy the material they are learning, they are more likely to engage and absorb the materials being taught.

Was there one particular experience in the program that helped you become more comfortable in front of a classroom?

Irvin: I would most certainly say that the Field Block experience is a huge help in the journey of being in the classroom and taking on roles of the cooperating teacher before taking the leap into the teaching world.

How much did the program allow you to grow and evolve as an educator and what lessons did you take from it to use in your classroom every day?

Irvin: The entire B-12 program at St. Bonaventure gives a multitude of opportunities to grow and develop as an educator in the classroom. There is field experience, projects, reports, assessments, and so much more that help contribute to becoming a successful teacher.

Did you teach classes while also taking courses at Bona's? If so, how did that experience help you?

Irvin: As a determined mother of three small children and a teacher already out in the field, I was able to take classes at St. Bonaventure. Thankfully, the classes were flexible, the professors and the scheduling worked with my everyday life schedule, and I was able to work while completing my master's degree.

This experience helped me because for two days a week, it allowed me to see my life through the lens of a child's life — trying to juggle all the important things in life while also completing school work and reaching to achieve my goal.

I love every Bobcat (school mascot) that I work with and wouldn't trade my Hinsdale Bobcat family for anything.

While I love it here, it's not to say there haven't seen trying times, especially amid the pandemic. It was difficult to transition to complete remote learning, but it was an eye opener. There were struggles and there were successes. Today, almost a year later, we take nothing for granted and we plan every day as if we were to go remote tomorrow. It's just a possibility that is so out of our control.

Sg-2 ha2 e()6v(m)10T(an)04(es)0T0W -23(en)ront)gra

wre. stat snse tfi as ih ae tnsrarit fen' gr(X)20 (10f36t)amer, watt sor tt fre ih a r i ofo gw,e p.ast we per.

internships allowed us time to practice what we were learning in the classroom, and I am able to apply what I learned from the program in my own classroom today.

Since the age of five, I have wanted to be a teacher. St. Bonaventure taught me how to do that, and I will forever be grateful for that.

You spent a lot of time helping out in the Reading Center at SBU. How did that experience prepare you for a career?

Gerard:

had to choose one, I would say that my favorite part is the moment when a student achieves something that he/she could not do before. Their eyes light up, and they become so excited.

For example, I was testing one student the other day to see if she could move up a reading level and start to read harder books. I wasn't 100% sure that she would move up, and so I warned her beforehand that this book may be hard and to not become discouraged. She said OK, and started to read. She ended up reading every single word correctly! When I told her how she did, we were both so excited and you could tell from her face just how proud she was. Seeing how much she has grown since September, as well as all of my other students, makes this job so rewarding."

What are your biggest goals as an educator?

Gerard: I want to be the very best teacher that I can be, and so researching new ideas, finding ways to differentiate, and learning new ways to teach various topics are things that I do often. These are ideals that Bonaventure instilled in me, to always be researching and learning various ways to teach subjects so that I can best help my students.

I obviously want my students to be as successful as they can be academically, but I also think that it is very important to help teach them to become good people. My students are a friendly, kind bunch to begin with, but every day we talk about the importance of kindness and making

sure that we trust each other. I want my students to be successful in all that they do, and I want them to be good people. My goal is to help them become the best version of themselves. I want them to be successful in all that they do, and I want them to be good people. My goal is to help them become the best version of themselves. I want them to be successful in all that they do, and I want them to be good people. My goal is to help them become the best version of themselves.

reading at the hands of a qualified and dedicated literacy teacher from the SBU literacy program. Reading is the heart of a skill needed for all of life, and Gina, along with all Bona literacy graduates, has what it takes to make a difference in the reading life of a young person.