

Drake Professors Prepare Teacher Candidates and Promote Literacy in the Field

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Drake University professors Jennifer Thoma and Todd Hodgkinson incorporate valuable resources from standards professional learning opportunities into their courses. Both educators have served as members of the Statewide Literacy Leadership Team and support the vision of providing leadership for implementation of Iowa's Academic Standards in ELA/Literacy. Dr. Thoma and Dr. Hodgkinson demonstrate a shared commitment to equip their students with the knowledge and resources they need when entering the education field.



Incorporating the work from UnboundEd on disrupting inequity in education has been an invaluable tool in my elementary reading and literacy and assessment courses. I especially appreciated the Bias Toolkit to foster discussions about disrupting inequity in education (found here: <https://blog.unbounded.org/bias-toolkit/>). So far, students have had in-depth discussions about rigor and equity. Much of this ties into what we already talk about, so they have been making great connections. This fall, I was able to incorporate the ideas right away, so students could make continuous connections through discussions and written assignments throughout the semester.

Although not a new concept to my students, using the ELA Common Core Appendix A (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf) to examine text complexity has been especially helpful as we make connections to using complex text with all students and how we can scaffold students to help them achieve the core with on grade-level texts. We use this resource when planning read alouds/think alouds that are age-appropriate for the elementary students we tutor. Our secondary education English majors also use this framework when selecting texts for their units of study and in lesson planning.

In our educational foundations course, I incorporated research findings from The New Teacher Project (TNT) during our study of educational achievement, attainment, opportunity, and equity in American public schools. In their recent report, [The Opportunity Myth](#), the TNT highlighted the fact that many students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners lack access to high-quality instruction and even teachers who believe they can meet grade-level standards. The TNT findings reflect the work that needs to be done to close gaps in achievement between students with access to educational opportunity in this country and students without.

Self-Paced Standards Professional Learning Opportunities:

Access [Standards Professional Learning Opportunity modules in ELA/Literacy](#) for a deep dive into the Iowa Academic Standards. The modules include learning around open resources and tools from organizations, such as Student Achievement Partners and UnboundEd. Iowa teachers who are employed by a public or private school can complete the modules for FREE or one license renewal credit (\$105).

In collaboration with the Department of Education and the Iowa AEA system, UnboundEd developed three [Iowa Academic Standards: UnboundEd Equitable Instruction Modules](#). Iowa educators can access these for free through the AEA Learning System.