

Teaching and Learning Annual Report 2025-2026

Goals, Actions, Evidence 2025-2026

Summary of Activities

The department focused on six core institutional goals: partnership engagement, equality, data-driven quality assurance, innovative learning, recruitment, and scholarship.

The department collaborated with Simon Middle School, Bob Courtway Middle School, and St. Joseph Middle School to offer student observations, fieldwork, literacy interventions, service-learning, and a STEM project-based family night. Internationally, the department led a study abroad program at Stranmillis University College in Northern Ireland and implemented Collaborative Online International Learning with Universidad de La Salle in Mexico. Additionally, a new partnership with Virtual Arkansas and the Arkansas Virtual Academy was established to connect virtual K-12 administration with instructional technology students.

The department promoted inclusivity, regulatory compliance, and professional development. Fifty-six students received support through the ESOL Academy, enabling teachers to earn ESOL endorsements. Online accessibility was systematically enhanced to meet ADA requirements and improve access for online students. Faculty engaged in the Arkansas Universal Design for Learning Community of Practice, obtained three new ISTE certifications, and incorporated ISTE's AI learning modules into teacher preparation courses. Curricula for the MAT, Middle Level, and GATE programs were extensively revised in response to feedback from stakeholders and the SPA. Recruitment and internal support remained priorities, as evidenced by promotional activities at conferences, major fairs, and job fairs, as well as the implementation of a structured peer mentorship program for new faculty.

Challenges and Areas for Adjustment

A primary challenge involved responding to external program audits and state literacy mandates. The department conducted comprehensive course crosswalks and curriculum revisions to address feedback from the TPI-US Science of Reading audit. This process required substantial faculty training in state-approved literacy programs, including Phonics First, LETRS, and the Writing Revolution. Several programs also underwent national accreditation revisions requiring prompt corrective action. The GATE program revised and restructured key assessments in response to SPA feedback. In contrast, the Middle Level program reanalyzed institutional data and submitted a revised CAEP SPA report to align with the 2022 AMLE standards.

Technical and operational challenges included digital accessibility and staffing constraints. Compliance with ADA and Higher Learning Commission guidelines required extensive oversight and mandatory Brightspace training for all course shells. Despite requests for two permanent, tenure-track faculty lines, only two visiting clinical faculty were hired to address immediate K-12 instructional needs. The department also identified insufficient readiness among mentor teachers for technology integration. In response, T&L faculty joined an

external ISTE Community of Practice and developed a Google Site training resource to clarify digital expectations for mentor teachers.

Opportunities for the Teaching and Learning Department

International and Cross-Cultural Experiences

The annual activities reported by T&L Faculty outline multiple avenues for global engagement available to both students and faculty. A notable opportunity is the faculty-led study abroad program at Stranmillis University College in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which enables graduate and undergraduate students to fulfill required coursework with an emphasis on technology leadership, peacebuilding, and cultural studies. Additionally, on-campus students can participate in cross-cultural collaboration through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects, including an interactive Zoom partnership with the Universidad de La Salle, in which students co-developed a comic strip to educate teachers on a specific topic, featuring voiceovers in both English and Spanish.

Hands-on Fieldwork and Community Partnerships

The report highlights extensive clinical and practical opportunities facilitated by strategic K-12 partnerships. Teacher candidates gained traditional classroom experience through student observations at Simon Middle School and through small-group disciplinary literacy instruction at Bob Courtway Middle School. Students also participated in reading assessments and interventions at St. Joseph Middle School, culminating in professional case studies. Partnerships with Virtual Arkansas and the Arkansas Virtual Academy provide opportunities for virtual field observations and guest speaker interactions. Additionally, local STEM project-based learning nights enable students to design and lead large-scale community events.

Advanced Certifications and Specialized Training

Students have multiple opportunities to enhance their professional credentials in high-demand areas. Instructional technology students may obtain official ISTE certification by completing the Leadership and Technology in Instructional Design concentration. Undergraduate candidates can also engage with advanced instructional methods through ISTE's AI for Tomorrow's Teachers modules, which focus on responsible AI integration. For those seeking to work with English Language Learners, the ESOL Academy offers coursework, guest lectures, and support required to earn an official ESOL endorsement.

Academic and Professional Advancement

The department provides robust developmental pipelines for current members. Doctoral

candidates in the PhD program benefit from specialized opportunities to advance academically, including writing workshops and a dedicated PhD bootcamp focused on scholarly publication. Incoming faculty members participate in a structured faculty mentoring program that pairs new hires with experienced educators for ongoing career guidance, collaboration, and support during their transition to the university.