

Faculty Fellowship Project

“A Linear Developmental Model: Redesigning Experiential Learning in an Online Elementary Education Program”

This Faculty Fellowship project reimagines experiential learning within Valdosta State University's Online Elementary Education Program by establishing a structured developmental progression of clinical experiences spanning Pre-K through Grade 5, allowing candidates to develop instructional knowledge, clinical skills, and professional confidence over the course of the program.

Throughout the sequence, candidates will curate a longitudinal electronic portfolio to document lesson planning, instructional artifacts, reflections, assessments, and evidence of professional growth over time. The redesign also introduces a cohort-based supervision model that promotes stronger collaboration among university supervisors, mentor teachers, and teacher candidates while creating greater continuity between coursework and authentic classroom practice.

The project explores how thoughtfully designed online educator preparation programs can provide meaningful, authentic, and developmentally sequenced clinical experiences while maintaining the rigor expected of high-quality teacher preparation. By intentionally aligning field experiences with program coursework and professional competencies, the project seeks to strengthen teacher candidate readiness, improve program quality, and develop a scalable model for high-quality online educator preparation that can inform similar programs across Georgia and beyond.

About Dr. Terry:

Dr. Karen Terry is an Associate Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Valdosta State University, where she serves as Program Director for the Online Elementary Education Program. She oversees one of Georgia's largest online undergraduate elementary education programs, preparing future teachers through innovative online instruction, clinical partnerships, and field experiences. Her research and professional interests include teacher preparation, literacy education, educational policy, online learning, and the thoughtful integration of emerging technologies to improve teaching and learning. Dr. Terry's work focuses on designing scalable, high-quality learning experiences that prepare teacher candidates to meet the evolving needs of today's classrooms.