

WERUNGA, ROBAI, N
College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Assistant Professor of Special Education
University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

A. EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

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| <i>Ph. D in Special Education</i> | 2018 |
| <i>University of North Carolina at Charlotte</i> | |
| <i>M. A. In Special Education</i> | 2005 |
| <i>Fayetteville State University</i> | |
| <i>B. Ed (Arts): Swahili and Religious Studies</i> | |
| <i>Egerton University</i> | 1995 |

B. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Professional Association Participation

Council for exceptional Children (CEC)

2015-present *Member*

2015-present *Conference Presenter*

2018-present *Conference Proposal Reviewer*

2020- 2023: Goal 3 Chair- Project 20/20- Creating a Vision for Diversity, Equity and

Inclusion in all CEC: Project 20/20 is a three-year, outcomes-based project driven by all of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), from individual members to our various components (Divisions, Units, chapters, and caucuses). Through the project, we will reaffirm our commitment to social justice and equity while striving to create deliverables that each CEC group can begin to apply over the next three years to help their groups reach the goals of the project. The three main goals of project20/20 are to: 1. Create a more diverse membership AND programs to support a more diverse membership (Diversity Leadership Program, Mentoring, Caucuses, etc., 2. Promote equity and engagement (volunteers, leaders, and participants in CEC professionally and scholarly activities, etc.) by identifying and eliminating barriers that exist, and 3. Provide education and programming to support special educators in serving diverse communities (Webinars, Synchronous Courses, Resources/Tools, Sessions at Conferences, etc)

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/project2020/goal-3-programming>

Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (DDEL)

2016-present *Member*

2016-2018 *Conference Presenter*

2016- 2018 *Student Representative*

2018- 2021 *Secretary*
2020- 2021 *Professional Development Committee member/Planner*

Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES)

2015-present *Member*
2019 *Conference Presenter*
2019-2022 *Member at Large*
2019- 2022 *Member- DISES Membership subcommittee- Help with recruitment/retention*

Teacher Education Division (TED)

2015-present *Member*
2017-present *Conference Presenter*
2017-present *Conference Proposal Reviewer*

Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners

2019- Present *Consulting Editor*

Preventing School Failure

2019- Present *Consulting Editor*

Council for Educational Diagnostic Services

2019-2022 *Member*

CEC Division of Research

2019-present *Member*
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
2015- present *Member*

Massachusetts Council for Exceptional Children (Mass-CEC)

2018-present *Member*
2019 *Conference Presenter*

DESE

2020- 2021 *Participant- Stakeholder Engagement Group — The IEP Improvement Project-(IIP). The IIP currently consists of more than 60 stakeholders from across the Commonwealth currently meeting monthly to begin the task of providing essential feedback and recommendations on the IEP process. The review is focused on providing feedback on draft guidance documents to help streamline and improve the IEP process and product.*

Coalition for Equity, Diversity and Disability (CEDD)

Founded in Early 2020, CEDD is coalition for interdisciplinary collaboration to address the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students with disabilities and their families. The main goals of CEDD are 1. to bring the voices of students, families, and educators to the development and implementation of policy, practices and initiatives impacting diverse SWD, 2. to impact opportunities, achievements and outcomes in programming and services for diverse SWD, and 3. to improve the supports and services for diverse SWD.

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| 2020- present | Member |
| 2020 (May 7th) | Online open house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped with planning of event to discuss/address issues & considerations during Covid19. Helped in facilitating the zoom event (300 attendees) |
| 2020 (May) | Editor, DESE script for contacting parents (COVID-19 follow-up) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided feedback/suggestions to make script more culturally responsive. |
| 2020 (June) | PD- advocating for EL students with disabilities during COVID-19 and beyond (School Personnel working with El's w/disabilities). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In charge of planning for the PD Co-presenter/co-facilitator of PD |
| 2020 (November) | PD – Advocacy for ELLS with disabilities Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for and presenting /facilitating the session. |

Association for Positive Behavior Supports

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| 2016-present | Member |
| 2017, 2018 | Conference Presenter |
| 2017-2018 | CANDO subcommittee member |

Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA)

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| 2019 | Reviewer of conference proceedings |
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2. Professional Honors, Awards and Recognitions

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| 2023 | Grants- FY 23 Total Expenditures- over \$300,000 UML Faculty Symposium, December 2023 |
| 2023 | River Hawk Scholars Academy Faculty Advocate (2023-2024) UML Faculty Symposium, December 2023 |
| 2022 | River Hawk Scholars Academy Faculty Advocate (2022-2023) UML Faculty Symposium, December 2022 |
| 2022 | Nominee- School of Education Teaching Excellence Award |
| 2022 | Nominee- UMass Lowell Undergraduate Mentoring Award |

2021 *Member Spotlight, Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES). I was nominated and selected by the DISES membership committee for my scholarship and service with regards to supporting global special education endeavors abroad and here in the US.*

2017 *The E.G "Ted" Carr Outstanding Poster Award (APBS 2017, Denver CO)*

3. Non-Teaching Activities (Consulting and Other Professionally Related Work)

2021-Present- Faculty Representative- Disable the Label

Disable the Label is a student organization at UMass Lowell whose purpose is to unify and connect students with and without disabilities at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, to destigmatize disabilities and encourage those with disabilities to be more comfortable to reach out for supports and accommodation, and to create allies among students and faculty.

2020- Present: Consultant- SpedEx

SpedEx is a Massachusetts-based dispute resolution option available in certain cases after an IEP has been rejected, or if a mediation or hearing request has been filed. SpedEx helps families and schools resolve disputes concerning free and appropriate public education (FAPE) or the least restrictive environment (LRE).

2020-Present: College of Education Representative Interdisciplinary Minor in Disability Studies faculty group

2019- Present: Affiliate Faculty- Center for Autism Research and Education (CARE)

2018 Special Education Practicum Supervisor (UNCC)
Supervised Special Education teacher candidate's field placements at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Skills

C. RESEARCH

1. Grants/ Contracts/Fellowships

Awarded

Werunga (PI)

2023

Tigert (CO-PI) and Uy, (CO-PI) In-Person Exchange Program: Teaching English Language Learners with Special Needs This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of English Language Programs (ECA/A/L) FHI 360. **(\$167, 296)**

Szczesiul (P1)

2023

Werunga (CO-PI) FY2023: Massachusetts Public K-12 Educator Diversification Grant

(Fund Code: 242) This RFP is designed to support non-profit organizations and institutes of higher education efforts to diversify the Massachusetts educator workforce. If awarded, we Plan to utilize the funds to recruit and support diverse teacher candidates through our Grow Your Own (GYO) partnerships with Lowell and Lawrence Public schools. **(\$393,406)**

Werunga (PI)

2022

Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP)- CADFP is a fellowship program for African institutions in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda to host an African-born scholar to work in projects in research collaboration, graduate student teaching/mentoring and curriculum co-development. With this fellowship I will be working with Egerton University's school of education on modifying existing curriculum to incorporate courses or content that introduce teacher candidates to students with specific learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders **(\$20,040)**

Rosales (PI)

2021

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Interdisciplinary Preparation in Special Education, Early Intervention, and Related Services for Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities who have High-Intensity Needs (CFDA 84.325K). Award# H325K21071 **(\$1,000,000)**

Role: **Senior Personnel**- 1-Identified the grant, 2- Established connection between PI and CO-PI (to satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement of the grant), 3- Provided template for proposal, 4-Provided feedback on the proposal.

Currently working on the grant in collaboration with PI

Werunga (PI)

2021

Mary Bacigalupo Educational Endowment Award. *Parent and Community Broker Training on the Special Education Process and IEP Basics* **(\$1400)**

Werunga (PI)

2019

University of Massachusetts Lowell, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Sustainability Engagement & Enrichment Development (S.E.E.D.) Fund *Empowering Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds to Advocate for and Support their Children with Disabilities* **(\$10,000)**

The goal of this project is to develop targeted training modules **parents and families of** students with disabilities (SWD) from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds in the greater Lowell region so that they can be informed advocates for their students with disabilities.

Role: PI

Not Awarded

Werunga (PI)

2021

The Mellon Emerging Faculty Leaders Award – This Award supports tenure-track faculty who have passed their midpoint review. The award is structured to free the time of junior

faculty who have passed their midpoint tenure review so that they can both engage in and build support systems, networks, and affinity groups that make their fields and campuses more inclusive.

Chenane (PI)

2019

University of Massachusetts Lowell, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Sustainability Engagement & Enrichment Development (S.E.E.D.) Fund-NIH/CDC Internal SEED grants

Youth of Color and the Criminal Justice System

The goal of this project is to (a)conduct formative research to aid in the development of a community informed intervention to minimize the effects of juvenile justice involvement on criminal justice, education and health outcomes for youth of color aged (13-17) with a history of justice involvement, and (b) pilot the intervention with targeted youth of color to assess its acceptability and feasibility.

Role: CO-PI

Werunga

2019

Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation Fellowship for Higher Education

2. Academic & Professional Publications

Book Chapters

Ellis-Robinson, T., Scott, L.A., Banks, J., Lindo, E.J., & **Werunga, R.** (2023). The benefits of sustaining a diverse special education teacher workforce. In E.D. McCray, E. Bettini, M. Brownell, J. McLeskey, & P.T. Sindelar (Eds). *Handbook of Research on Special Education Teacher Preparation*. Routledge. (**Authors contributed equally to the chapter**)

Werunga, R.N. (2020) Writing Instructional Strategies for Elementary Age Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities. In McKenna, J., & Adamson, R. *Pulling Back the Curtain: Inclusive Instruction for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*. New York, NY: Lexington Books, Rowman and Littlefield.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Published

Werunga, R.N. & Lo, Y.-y (in press) Effects of SRSD With Social Skills Prompts on the Writing Skills and Problem Behaviors of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426623120674>

Lo, Y., Kourea, L., **Werunga, R. N.**, Owens, T., & Collins, B. C. (2021). Embedding Parental Input in Instruction of SWPBS Behavioral Expectations for African

American Students. *Preventing school Failure*
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2021.1898321>

McKenna, J., Brigham, F., Garwood, J., Zurawski, L., Koc, M., **Werunga, R.** (2021). A Systematic Review of Intervention Studies for Young Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Identifying the Research Base. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 21, 120-145. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12505>

Werunga, R.N. (2020). The state of homeless black and brown students with disabilities in the era of COVID 19. *DDEL Voices (DDEL Quarterly Newsletter) Volume 10, Issue 2*. Page 4-7.
https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/SPED/93b2239a-b8b1-43e2-bca7-a6ded35ad39a/UploadedImages/DDEL_newsletter_July_2020_Final_1_.pdf

Rivera, C; Haughney, K; Clark, K; **Werunga, R** (2020). Culturally Responsive Planning, Instruction, and Reflection for Young Students with Significant Disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250620951767>

McKenna, J. W., Garwood, J. D., & **Werunga, R.** (2020). Reading instruction for secondary grade students with emotional and behavioral disorders: A focus on comprehension. *Beyond Behavior*, 29, 18-30.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295619900379>

Kourea, L., Gibson, L., & **Werunga, R. N** (2017). Culturally responsive reading instruction for students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in Schools and Clinic*, 53. 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451217702112>

In Review:

Werunga, R.N.; Kim, M; Rosales, R. (In Review) Cambodian American Parents' Knowledge of Special Education Services Provided to their Children with Disabilities *Journal for Family Relations*

Werunga, R.N., McKenna, J.W. & Rosales, R. (In Review). Working with Immigrant Families of Children with Disabilities: Recommendations for Practitioners. *Intervention in Schools and Clinic*.

In Progress

Werunga, R.N., Hsu, H.-Y., McKenna, J.W. (in progress). Kenyan American Parents' Involvement in the education of their children (data analysis/ literature review) (*Community, Work and Family*)

Werunga, R.N. (in progress). Addressing writing needs of students with EBD within existing behavioral programs (drafting 5 pages) (*Positive Behavior Interventions*)

Jez, R. J., **Werunga, R.N.**, Redmond, P. A (in progress). Preservice Teachers as Agents for Social Justice and Equity: Codifying Dispositions and Mindsets Necessary for Change (drafting- full draft) (*Multicultural Perspectives*)

Werunga, R.N. (in progress). A review of research-based academic interventions within response to intervention model at the elementary school level (analysis and draft- 15 pages) (*Preventing school Failure*)

Werunga, R.N. & Lo, Y. (in Progress) Examining the effects of SRSD persuasive writing and self-monitoring on writing and off-task behaviors of African American students with EBD (data analysis). (*Intervention in Schools and Clinic*)

Brote, T & **Werunga, R.N.** (in Progress). Barred From Bonding: Perspectives of Children of Incarcerated Parents on Education and Parental Participation (data collection/analysis) (*Journal of Family Relations*)

3. Other Research or Creative Activities

Collaborations

2020- 2022: UMass Lowell SOE/Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) Teach live Project. This is an ongoing collaboration that is funded through the “Reach Every Reader” project funded by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. Teachlive/Mursion is a virtual reality classroom that offers teachers/teacher candidates opportunities to practice their teaching skills. While the collaboration started as an alternative to field-based experiences due to COVID-19, feedback and student reflections indicated that the benefitted from the opportunity to practice their teaching skills in a low-pressure format, with multiple opportunities to fix errors and reteach lesson, via a virtual reality classroom. I therefore decided to continue this collaboration as a means of providing my students with additional opportunities to practice their teaching skills and reflect on the practices.

Ongoing Projects:

The Effects of Touch Math Instruction on Basic Math Computational Skills of Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of touch math instruction on the basic addition and subtraction skills of students with disabilities. I am conducting two investigations concurrently. The first investigation (Investigation 1) is a parent-implemented intervention of touch math with a 14-year-old student with Autism. The second investigation (Investigation 2) is a teacher/practitioner-implemented intervention with 9 students with emotional and behavioral disorders in an alternative school setting. This project has gone through the IRB approval. We are currently in the intervention phase.

Presentations

a. Guest Speaker/Panelist/ Webinars

2023, October: **Panelist:** *Stories of Impact: A Day for Celebration, Reflection & Looking Ahead.* As a local university partner in the “Reach Every Reader Project (2020-2022)” I was invited to be part of a panel discussion on the teacher candidates experiences using the Virtual Reality portion of the project and the future of Virtual Reality in Teacher preparation programs. Harvard University

2023-2024- **Expert Panelist.** Research Project “Pursuing Equity for Students with Learning Differences in Schools Using Authentic Assessments” [Envision Learning Partners](#)

2023, May: **Facilitator:** “Anti-racist practices, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Special Education”. [SPEDEX](#) Consultants’ Annual Meeting.

2023, March: **Presenter.** [Project 20/20](#) **Town Hall** Project 20/20 is a three-year, outcomes-based **project** driven by all of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), from individual members to various components ([Divisions](#), [Units](#), chapters, and caucuses). I am one of the Goal chairs for this committees; I presented on the progress made in the past 2 years, plans for Year 3, as well as our recommendations to CEC at the 101st Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Louisville KY

2022, October. **Facilitator**, Annual DEIA Leaders’ Summit. This 1.5-hour session brought together diversity leaders and aspiring diversity leaders across CEC to share resources, opportunities, and information about their division/units’ activities in support of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access (J.E.D.I.A.)

2021, October. **Panelist**, CEC-DISES virtual series: DISES Collaborating with CEC Division Colleagues to Highlight Inclusive Practices Around the World.

Werunga, R.N. (2021, July). Panelist 2021 Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership and Project Directors’ Conference. *My topic: Supporting students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds within MTSS Post-Pandemic and Beyond*

Werunga, R. N, Morin, K., & Simmons-Reed, E. (2021, May). CEC DDEL Critical Conversation Series Webinar - Migration and the cultural shift: Perspectives on disability from immigrant families. Invited to speak discuss my work with Cambodian American families who have children with disabilities. *Council for Exceptional Children/Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners.* Virtual webinar.

Werunga, R.N. (2021, April). Guest Speaker. Parent university- Coalition for a better acre. This was a six-week parent engagement program. I was invited as a guest speaker for one of the sessions to speak about engagement, participation and advocating for children with disabilities.

b. National/International Presentations

Werunga, R.N. (2024, March) Kenyan Teachers’ Perspectives on their Readiness for Inclusive Special Education, San Antonio Texas

Werunga, R.N. & Fedha, F.N (July 2023). *Addressing High incidence disabilities Education Gap: An EBD/SLD Pilot Curriculum*. Presentation at the Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference, Bangalore, India

Rosales, R., Rinaldi, C., & **Werunga, R.N.** (2023, May). *A collaborative interdisciplinary approach to training graduate students*. Presentation delivered at the 98th Association for Behavior Analysis International, Denver, CO.

DCD/DISES Collaborative Panel Presentation (2023, March). Supporting Learning **Opportunities** for Displaced Children with Disabilities Through High Leverage Practices. Presentation at the 101st Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Louisville KY

Werunga, R.N. (July 2022). *Immigrant Family Empowerment Through Training*. Presentation at the 100th Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference, Breckenridge CO

Werunga, R.N. (January 2022). *Immigrant Family Empowerment: Leveraging Community Partnerships*. Presentation at the 100th Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Orlando Florida

Werunga, R.N. (November 2021). *Preservice Teachers' Perceptions Regarding their use of High Leverage Practices in a Virtual Reality Classroom Teaching Demonstration*. Presentation at the Annual TED conference, Fort Worth Tx.

Werunga, R.N., Minjeong K, Rosales, R, McKenna, J. (March 2021). *Cambodian American Parents' Knowledge of Special Education Services Provided to their Children with Disabilities*. Presentation at the 2021 Virtual Council for Exceptional Children conference via L.I.V.E!

Redmond, P., Jez, R. J., Hersey, P., Reid, T., & **Werunga, R.** (2020). *Our profession is political: Advancing equity and democratic activism through culturally responsive teacher dispositions*. Recorded paper presented at a meeting of the National Association of Multicultural Education Virtual Conference.

Werunga, R.N., Minjeong K, Rosales, R, McKenna, J, Lo, Y. (February 2020). *Empowering Immigrant Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds to Advocate for and Support their Children with Disabilities*, Presentation at the annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Portland Oregon

Werunga, R.N., Muharib, R., Roberson, C. (November 2019). *Mastering the skills for a successful academic job search*. Presentation at the Annual TED conference, New Orleans LA.

Werunga, R.N. (November 2019). *Leveraging the cultural capital of CLD parents through training*. Presentation at the Annual TED conference, New Orleans LA.

- Haughney, K., Clark, K., & **Werunga, R.N.** (November 2019). *CLD teaching and learning in action: Planning, implementing, and reflecting*. Presentation at the Annual TED conference, New Orleans LA.
- Werunga, R.N. (June 2019). *Lost in translation: examining the barriers to effective involvement of parents of students with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*. Presentation at the annual DISES conference, Montego Bay Jamaica
- Zurawski, L., McKenna, J., Brigham, F., Koc, M., Lavin, C., Garwood, J., & **Werunga, R.** (April 2019). *A systematic review of interventions for young children with EBD*. Paper session to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Toronto, Canada.
- Werunga, R.N. (February 2019). *Addressing Writing and Social Skills Deficits of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities alongside SRSD Instruction*. CEC Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- Werunga, R.N. (November 2018). *Effects of the Self-Regulated Strategy Development with Social Skills Prompts on Writing and Problem Behavior of Students with EBD*. Presentation at the CEC-TED Conference, Las Vegas, NV.
- Werunga, R.N. (November 2018). *Empowering Families to Support Students with Disabilities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*. Presentation at the CEC-TED Conference, Las Vegas, NV.
- Werunga, R.N. (March 2018). *Combining SRSD and self-monitoring to improve writing and self-monitoring Skills of students with EBD*. Invited Presenter, Association of Positive Behavior Support Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Lo, Y., Owen, T.L., Werunga, R.N., Gladney, D. (February 2018). *Culturally Responsive Social skill instruction within SWPBS implementation*. Accepted as STRAND B, Session 2: Presentation with Q&A, at Council for Exceptional Children conference, Tampa, FL.
- Werunga, RN. (February 2018). *Addressing writing and Off-Task Behaviors of African American Students with EBD through SRSD persuasive writing instruction*. Council for Exceptional Children conference, Tampa, FL.
- Werunga, R.N. (November 2017). *The current state of writing instruction in the K-12 public schools*. Presentation at the CEC-TED Conference, Savannah, GA.
- Werunga, R.N. (November 2017). *Effects of SRSD and self-monitoring on writing and off-task behaviors of African American students with emotional and behavioral disabilities*. Presentation at the CEC-TED Conference, Savannah, GA.

Haughney, K. L., Muharib, R., Werunga, R., Park, G., Collins, B. (2017, November). *Teacher preparation across nations: An exploratory comparison of experiences*. Conversation session as part of the national Teacher Education Division Conference, Savannah, G.A.

Werunga, R.N. (June 2017). *A culturally responsive social skills curriculum for African American students in tier 2 SWPBS*. Presented at the Annual Global Perspectives Conference, Arlington, VA.

Werunga, R.N, Owens, Lo, Y., Kourea L., T., & Collins, B. C. (2017, April). *Effects of culturally responsive social skills instruction on rule violation of African American students on tier 2 SWPBS*. Presentation at the annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Boston, MA.

Werunga, R.N & Lo, Y. (2017, March). *Using SRSD persuasive writing to improve writing and self-monitoring skills*. Presentation at the Annual Association of Positive Behavior Support conference, Denver, CO.

Werunga, R.N & Lo, Y. (2017, April). *Examining the effects of SRSD persuasive writing and self-monitoring on writing and off-task behaviors of African American students with emotional and behavioral disabilities*. Presentation at the Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL) student research forum, Boston, MA

Regional/Local Presentations.

Werunga, R.N. Nino, S. Jaboin, S. (March 2021) *Virtual Learning: Empowering Families of Students with Dis/Abilities*. Presentation at the annual Visions of Community Conference, sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (MA)

Werunga, R.N. (November 2019). *Using SRSD with social skills prompts to improve writing and behavior*. Presentation at the annual Massachusetts Council for Exceptional Children, Norwood, MA

Werunga, R.N. (January 2018). *Addressing self-monitoring challenges within the SRSD instructional framework for African American Students with EBD*. Presentation at the annual North Carolina CEC Conference, Winston-Salem, NC

Werunga, R.N & Haughney, K. (March 2017). *Collaboration tips for the novice special education Teacher*. Presented to the Spring 2017 Student Teachers as Part of Professional Development Series at UNC at Charlotte, NC.

Werunga, R.N. (2017, March). *Navigating the parental rights handbook: Accessing the available resources*. Presented to Latino Families at the International Center for Community Development, Concord, NC

Werunga, R.N. (2017, January). *Effects of culturally responsive social skills instruction on rule violation of African American students on tier 2 SWPBS*. Presented at the Annual North Carolina Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Wilmington, NC

Owens, T. L. & Werunga, R.N. (2016, March). *Classroom management*. Veritas Community School, Charlotte, NC.

Werunga, R.N. & Terrell, M (2015, November). *Other health impaired/Transition* (Guest lecture). Belmont-Abbey College, Belmont, NC

D. INSTRUCTION RELATED ACTIVITY

Teaching

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 3200: Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities Spring, 2024

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 6300: Education Diverse Populations Spring, 2024

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 6320: Inclusive Schools Spring, 2024

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities Fall, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities Fall, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 6900: Action Research Fall, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 5101: Foundations of Social Justice Fall, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 5101: Foundations of Social Justice Summer, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
EDUC 5035: Independent Directed Study Spring, 2023

University of Massachusetts Lowell
Fall, 2022

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| EDUC 6900: Action Research University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities | Fall, 2022 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 5010: Foundations of Social Justice | Summer, 2022 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 3200: Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities | Spring, 2022 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 6300: Education Diverse Populations | Summer, 2021 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 4400: Special Education Practicum | Spring, 2021 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 3200: Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities | Spring, 2021 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 3200: Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities | Spring, 2020 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities | Fall, 2019 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 2200: Assessment of Students with Moderate Disabilities | Spring, 2019 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 5010: Teaching Diverse Learners | Spring, 2019 |
| University of Massachusetts Lowell EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities | Fall, 2018 |
| <i>Past courses</i> | |
| University of North Carolina at Charlotte SPED 6691: Seminar in Professional and Leadership Development | Spring, 2018 |
| University of North Carolina at Charlotte SPED 4475: Student Teaching Supervision | Spring, 2017 |
| University of North Carolina at Charlotte | Fall, 2017 |

SPED 4277: Teaching Writing to Students with Disabilities

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Fall, 2016

SPED 3173: Diagnostic Assessment

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Summer 1, 2016

SPED 5275: Teaching Reading to Elementary Students with Disabilities

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

SPED 4277: Teaching Writing to Students with Disabilities

Fall, 2015

2. Other Activity Related to Instructional Function.

Dissertations in Practice

2021-2023

Kristin Gengler: Root Cause Analysis: Investigating Factors Contributing to a High Rate of Students at Risk for Early Reading Difficulties at Tiger Elementary School (Chair)

Dana Lyman Hurley: Factors Contributing to Chronic Absenteeism for Students of Color

2021-2022

Hannah Tolla: Perspectives on Educational Equity: Teacher-Student Racial Mismatch in A Suburban School District (committee member)

Lila Mae Sumer: Perspectives on Educational Equity: Teacher-Student Racial Mismatch in A Suburban School District (committee member)

James Frier: Exploring the Impact of Implementing Culture-Positive Strategies at a Historically “No Excuses” Charter School (committee member).

Laura Miceli: Examining the Implementation of Graphic Organizers in Grade 7 Intervention and English Courses (committee member).

Anna Croce: Effects of Using Content Acquisition Videos on the Learning Performance and Science Attitudes of Ninth Grade Students with Learning Difficulties in an Integrated Geoscience Course (committee member).

2019-2020 **Kaitlyn Herthel Angulo:** Using Social, Emotional, And Academic Learning to Improve Student Perceptions of Engagement, Support, And Climate (Committee member).

Sarah Marandos: Universal Screeners: A Multi-Gated Approach to Intervention (Committee Member).

Mentorship

Graduate:

2023 **Tiana Brote-** - EDUC 5035: Independent study (Research) – Conducting research. Design, data collection and analysis, and reporting (Including Manuscript writing and presentation) Topic: Barred from Bonding: Perspectives of Children of Incarcerated Parents on Education and Parental Participation.

Undergraduate:

Honors Projects -Every year I work with sophomore students who take my courses as honors courses. I provide guidance to the students in the following tasks: a) writing a research-based paper following APA format, b) submitting a proposal to present at the university's annual symposium, c) preparing a PowerPoint presentation, and d) presenting at the symposium.

2022 **Hannah Gould-** Honors Project- EDUC 3200: Topic- Direct Instruction in Reading

2021 **Jillian Tarlin-** Honors Project- EDUC 3200: Topic- High Leverage Practices in Special Education

2019 **Julia Tassinari:** Honors Project- EDUC 2200: Topic- Using Curriculum Based Measures to document Student progress.

Elizabeth Osborne: Honors Project- EDUC 2200: Topic- Using Curriculum Based Measures to document Student progress.

Sarah Fagan: Honors Project- EDUC 2200: Topic- Using Curriculum Based Measures to document Student progress.

Mentoring-other 2022

Senior Project Mentor

Student: Stephanie Alvarez

School: Dr. TJ Owens Gilroy Early College Academy.

Project Title: Identifying Early Signs of Autism and Seeking Early Intervention: A Guideline for Hispanic Parents.

Part of this student's senior project assignment was to find a mentor that aligned with her project focus to guide her through her senior project. She researched and found me via internet. After our initial meeting, I decided to mentor her based on her desire for supporting Hispanic parents with children with disabilities in her community, which clearly aligns with my research interests and current projects. Through my guidance and mentorship, she successfully completed her project which included of a pamphlet to distribute to local libraries, community centers and local medical centers in her community, for access by families in her local community.

2021- present **Honors College Faculty Fellowship-** I applied for and received funding to mentor one undergraduate honor student. I am in the recruiting process for one student. I plan to mentor the selected student in single-case research design through a study that I am in the process of implementing. The honor student will be involved with the intervention and data collection during the study. He/she will work side by side with me in the implementation and data collection as well as graphing and interpretation of the results. This will give the honor student an opportunity to learn how to conduct a single case study and how to interpret results, a critical skill that is needed for those who work with students with disabilities

Advising

2020-Present **Academic Advisor**

- Advising the 2022 BAED cohort through their Junior and senior year

2020 **Evaluator**, EDUC 7000 End of semester, Research Project Presentations.

Workshops and Training

2020

South African TESOL Educators' Exchange Program

Role: Instructor, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Workshops
I participate as an instructor providing the visiting practitioners with tools strategies, tools and resources for managing student behaviors through positive behavior supports.

Course Design

I designed all three pedagogical courses required for preserve teachers to satisfy the moderate disabilities portion of UMass Lowell Dual licensure program. They are listed below.

2020 EDUC 3200: Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities

- 2022 EDUC 5010 Foundations of Social Justice
- 2019 EDUC 2200: Assessment of Students with Moderate Disabilities
- 2018 EDUC 2100: Introduction to Moderate Disabilities

E. SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1. Community Activities Related to Professional Field

- 2022 (November 16) I initiated a collaboration between the Federation of Children with Special Needs (FCSN) and Uhai Health Inc. to provide training to immigrant families of African origin who have children with disabilities. This training, titled “Navigating the Special Education System and Supporting children with disabilities and families” is the first in what is projected to be a series of training that targets this specific group of immigrant families.
- 2022 (June 03) I facilitated a parent workshop title: “Understanding your Child’s IEP”. This training was offered to Khmer-Speaking families through the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA) and was part of the continuous efforts to support local immigrant communities with children with disabilities made possible through the *UMass Lowell S.E.E.D Grant* (secured by Dr. Werunga)
- 2021 (May19) Cambodian Parent and Community Broker Training on the Special Education Process and IEP Basics. This training was offered through a collaborative effort between the Massachusetts Federation of Children and the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA). Dr. Werunga facilitated this collaboration which was made possible through the *Mary Bacigalupo Educational Endowment Award* (secured by Dr. Werunga)
- 2020 – Present Community Member Representative, McAvinnue Elementary school 2019-2020 School Site Council
- 2018- Present Community Member, Lowell Special Education Parental Advisory Council (Lowell SPED PAC).
- 2020- Sept 6: Question and Answer Session with Dr. Werunga
- In this session, Dr. Werunga met with a group of Kenyan Parents with Children with disabilities in the Merrimack region to respond to any questions and concerns they had regarding service and supports for their children. This session was hosted by Cyndy Muchine, CEO and Founder, Kenya Autism Alliance, and a resident of Lowell (Also a mother of a child with Disabilities).

2. Committee Activities (Indicate if department, college, or university level).

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| 2022- July-Present | Faculty advocate, River Hawk Scholars Academy- Working with (and supporting) 10 freshman students who are first generation college students in the college of Fine Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (College Level) |
| 2022- May-October | Member, Research Growth (R1) Planning Commission-Faculty Success Working Group. Our group was charged with identifying challenges, solutions and opportunities pertaining to faculty success as it relates to the university achieving the R1 status. (University level) |
| 2022- March-June | Clinical Assistant Professor Search Committee Member- contributed to the design of the “position announcement”. Reviewed over 40 applications, participated in all zoom interviews and on-campus interviews. Contributed to all decisions, that led to a successful search for the position. (Department level) |
| 2021- April-May | Chair School of Education Moderate Disabilities Adjunct Search. I led the search for adjuncts to teach moderate disabilities courses in the BAED program in the School of Education; I designed the advertisement for the adjunct positions. I then led the review of applications, scheduling of interviews, conducting interviews and making recommendations for the finalists to the department chair (College level) |
| 2021- present | Faculty advisor, Disable the Label (DTL). |

Disable the Label is a student organization at UMass Lowell. the purpose of this organization is to unite and connect students with and without disabilities at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. DTL strives to eliminate all misconceptions regarding learning, physical, neurological, medical, and psychiatric differences, allowing us to disable the stigma of labels. DTL advocates for acceptance and inclusion. **(University level)**

2020-present Member, Interdisciplinary Minor in Disability Studies.

This is a committee that consists of faculty from various departments across campus whose purpose is to brainstorm ways in which we can collaborate and maximize our student enrollments in a mutually beneficial way. This collaboration is beneficial for our BAED program particularly when it comes to supporting our BAED students who are not able to complete the program requirements successively. **(College level)**

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| 2019-present | Affiliate, Center for Autism Research & Education (CARE). The mission of the center is to educate students and the public concerning issues of importance to the autism community. Members of the center conduct interdisciplinary research that is relevant to those with autism throughout the lifespan, with a special focus on underserved populations. The center also partners with local agencies that share similar values of improving the lives of those with autism and their families. (University level) |
| 2020 | Member, Adjunct Search Team- EDUC 2200- Assessment of students with Moderate Disabilities. (Department level) |
| 2019 | Member- Search committee- College of Education Field Coordinator and Advisor (college level) . |
| 2019- 2022 | Co-Chair, College of Education Spring Symposium Planning Committee. Tasks included identifying and reaching out to potential keynote speakers, identifying, and recruiting panelists, and running the symposium. In addition, I moderated the 2022 symposium panelist forum (College level) . |
| 2019-present | School of education Awards committees: Every year I participate in at least one of the awards committees. The various committees are charged with reviewing submitted evidence and unanimously choose the winning submission. Specifically, I have been part of the Outstanding dissertation and outstanding dissertation in practice award committees. In 2021, I was the chair of the Outstanding dissertation in practice committee. |
| 2020- 2021 | Member, College of Education Academic Programs and Student Services committee (A covid-19 Response committee) (College level) |
| 2019- 2020 | Member, Pathways Planning committee UMass Lowell College of Education and Middlesex Community (College level) |
| 2018- present | Member, college Pathways Planning committee- UMass Lowell-Lowell High School Partnership |
| 2018-2020 | Faculty Fellow, BAED Practicum and student teaching Planning committee. |

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| 2018-2019 | Member, College of Education Spring Symposium Planning Committee |
| 2019 | The 2019 Lowell High School Transition Planning Fair (Representative, College of Education) |

Professional Development and Training

National Center on Intensive Intervention Faculty Learning Series

August 2020: Preparing Teachers to Deliver Intervention in Virtual Settings

This webinar five practical strategies for adapting preparation and professional learning experiences to help teachers develop skills for delivering intensive intervention in virtual settings

September 2020: Practice-Based Opportunities for Intensive Intervention

This webinar offered practical strategies for integrating practice-based opportunities into field-based and clinical experiences to help teachers develop skills for delivering intensive intervention.

October 2020: Course Content Resources for Intensive intervention

This webinar highlighted ready-to-use resources on evidence-based practices in reading, mathematics, behavior, and explicit instruction for faculty to integrate within preservice coursework or in-service professional development activities on intensive intervention.

November 3rd- December 14th 2022: Touch math Teacher Training workshop

This project is a result of efforts to ensure that teachers/practitioners utilize research-based programs with their children. I reached out to the Touch math company to solicit free training for my teacher interventionists. I decided to attend the training alongside the teachers to have an insight of what it entails and to familiarize myself with what the teaching procedures

Other Related Pertinent Activities/Experience

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| 2017-2018 | Graduate Research Assistant- Meck60+ Needs Assessment for older Adults at UNC Charlotte, Charlotte, NC |
| 2015-2016 | Graduate Research Assistant-Flex Literacy Project, UNC at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC |
| 2004-2015 | Cumberland County Schools: Special Education Teacher, Fayetteville, NC |

2011-2015

Fayetteville Technical Community College: Part-time ESL
instructor, Fayetteville, NC

1995-1997

Teacher Service Commission- Kenya: Swahili/Religious Studies
Teacher, Nairobi, Kenya