

Michelle J. Sobolak

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EDUCATION

2008	Ph.D.	University of Pittsburgh, Major: Reading Education
2003	M.Ed.	University of Pittsburgh, Major: Reading Education
1999	B.S.	Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Major: Elementary Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2019-present	Director of Teacher and Professional Education, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA
2018-present	Associate Professor of Practice, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA
2013-2018	Co-Director of Teacher Education, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA
2012-present	Director, Reading Center, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA
2012- present	Program Coordinator, English, Social Studies and Reading, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA
2011-2018	Assistant Professor of Practice, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
2009-2011	Assistant Professor, Professional Studies in Education Department, College of Education Educational Technology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA

2007-2009	Adjunct Professor, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
2006-2009	First Grade Teacher, Shaler Area School District, Glenshaw, PA
2004-2006	Reading Coach, Shaler Area School District, Glenshaw, PA
2005	Teaching Assistant, Instruction and Learning, College of Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
2001-2004	Title I Reading Specialist, Shaler Area School District, Glenshaw, PA

GRANTS

Jacobs, K. B., & Sobolak, M. J. (2019). Using Simulations to Support Teacher Candidate's Developing Professional Practice. Central Research Development Fund (CRDF). (\$3340).

Sobolak, M. J. & Jacobs, K. B. (2019) Using Simulations to Support Teacher Candidates' Developing Professional Practice . Donna and Ian Mitroff Award. (\$2,100). Project Director.

Sobolak, M. & Conway, S. J. (2017) Implementing a Video Coaching Platform to Provide E Mentoring during Clinical Experiences with Teacher Education Students. University of Pittsburgh Innovation in Education Awards. (\$6,020). Project Director.

Conway, S.J. & Sobolak, M. (2016) The Racial Gap between Teachers and Students: Parents' Perspectives, University of Pittsburgh, Office of Diversity. (\$1,500).

Sobolak, M. & Conway, S.J. (2016) Supporting ALL students: Working effectively with LBGTQIA+ students, University of Pittsburgh, Office of Diversity. (\$800).

AWARDS

2013	School of Education, Teaching Excellence
2012	University of Pittsburgh, CGSE, Extra Mile Teaching Award

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- Mattix, A. A., & Sobolak, M. J. (in press). Beyond the gender rules: Positive gender role models in children's literature. *Focus on Elementary*.
- Sobolak, M.J., Mattix Foster, A. A., & Crawford, P.A. (2017). Validating the visual: Illustrations as mentor texts. *Childhood Education, 93*(2), 176-180.
- Crawford, P. A., Sobolak, M.J., & Mattix Foster, A. A. (2017). Knowing and growing with mentor texts. *Childhood Education, 93*(1),82-86.
- Sobolak, M. & Mattix Foster, A. A. (2016). Sharing the pen: Interactive writing in the early years. *Early Years Bulletin, 3*(4), 8-9.
- Sobolak, M. J. & Mattix Foster, A. A. (2015). Word sorts: Using word building blocks to bolster literacy development. *Early Years Bulletin, 3*(1), 19-21.
- Mattix, A. A. & M. Sobolak (2014). The gender journey in picturebooks: A look back to move forward. *Childhood Education, 90*(3), 229-233.
- Wanless, S. B., Sobolak, M. J., Arlotta-Guerrero, A., & Crawford, P.A. (2014) Key strategies for supporting urban children's development. *CUE'd In, 1*(1), 1-5.
- Sobolak, M. J. & Mattix, A. A. (2012). The power of children's literature as a literacy instruction tool. *Focus on Elementary, 25*(1).
- Jalongo, M.R. & Sobolak, M. J. (2011). Supporting young children's vocabulary growth: The challenges, the benefits, and evidence-based strategies. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 38*(6), 421-429.
- Sobolak, M. J. (2011). Modifying robust vocabulary instruction for the benefit of low socioeconomic students. *Reading Improvement, 48*(1), 14-23.
- Calvert, L. & Sobolak, M. (2010). Three strategies for teaching when content is not well known. *The Teaching Professor, 24*(6).

Book Chapters

- Sobolak, M. J., & Mattix, A. A. (2014). Using children's literature to explore positive gender role models. In J. K. Dowdy, & K. Cushner (Eds.), *Reading between the lines: Activities for developing social awareness literacy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield.

Book Reviews

- Sobolak, M.J. (2017). Using what works: Elementary School Classroom Management. *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org>

Sobolak, M.J. (2012). Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to college. *Focus on Elementary*, 24(4).

Invited Columns

Jacobs, K. B., Meyers, C. K., Sobolak, M. J., & Crawford, P. A., Genest, M. T. (in press). Page turners: Books for children. *International Journal of the Whole Child*.

Genest, M. T., Jacobs, K. B., Meyers, C. K., Sobolak, M. J., & Crawford, P. A. (2019). Page turners: Books for children. *International Journal of the Whole Child*, 4(2), 95-99.

Crawford, P. A., Genest, M. T., Jacobs, K. B., Meyer, C. T., & Sobolak, M. J. (2019). Page turners: Books for children. *International Journal of the Whole Child*, 4(1), 75-81.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

International

Crawford, P.A., Sobolak, M.J., & Arlotta-Guerrero, A. (2017, May). *Mentor texts for Language, Literacy, and Learning*. International Journal of Arts and Sciences (IJAS)
International Conference for Education, Catania, Sicily.

Mattix Foster, A. A., Sobolak, M. & Solum, K. (2016, May). *Children's literature: The potential bridge to social justice education*. International Journal of Arts & Sciences (IJAS)
International Conference for Education, Boston, Massachusetts.

Mattix Foster, A. A., Sobolak, M. J. (2016, April). *Using children's literature to teach social justice*. Association for Childhood Education International, San Jose, Costa Rica.

Mattix Foster, A. A., Sobolak, M. & Solum, K. (2016, January). *Reading social justice: Using children's literature for equity and action*. Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, HI.

Sobolak, M. J., & Mattix-Foster, A. (2015, March). *Girls on the run: An examination of females in children's literature*. Association of Childhood Education International, Washington, D.C.

Sobolak, M. J., & Mattix, A. A. (2014, April). *The gender journey in picturebooks: A look back to move forward*. European Teacher Education Network, Leipzig, Germany.

Sobolak, M. J., & Mattix, A. A. (2013, April). *The Power of Children's Literature as a Literacy Instruction Tool*. European Teacher Education Network, Hasselt, Belgium.

Sobolak, M. (2010, January). *Effects of Amount of Vocabulary Instruction for Low Socioeconomic Students*. Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, HI.

National

Bartow Jacobs, K. B. & Sobolak, M. J. (2020, April). *Integrating technology-driven alternative spaces in teacher education: Using simulations to support pre-service teachers' developing practices*. American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (Conference canceled)

Sobolak, M. J., & Bartow Jacobs, K. B. (2019, December). *Pre-service teacher professional skills development: Utilizing technology-driven simulations to support pre-service teachers' developing practices*. American Reading Forum, Sanibel, FL.

Bartow Jacobs, K. B., & Sobolak, M. J. (2019, November). *From assignment, to online engagement, to in-person experience: Using simulations to support pre-service teachers' differentiation practices*. Literacy Research Association, Tampa, FL

Bartow Jacobs, K. B., & Sobolak, M. J. (2018, November). *From approximation to contextualization: Using technology as a bridge from literacy teachers' professional learning to professional practice*. Literacy Research Association, Palm Spring, CA.

Bartow Jacobs, K. B., & Sobolak, M. J. (2018, April). *"It gave me an opportunity to apply what I learned.": Using computer simulations to develop preservice teachers' lesson planning practices*. American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

Bartow Jacobs, K. B., Sobolak, M. J. (2017, December). *Pre-service teachers' decision making around lesson planning: Using computer simulations to develop professional practice*. Literacy Research Association. Tampa, FL.

Bartow Jacobs, K. B., Sobolak, & M. J. Clare Matsumura, L. (2016, April). *Virtual simulation as a space for developing professional practice in teacher education*. American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.

Sobolak, M. J., & Bartow Jacobs, K.B. (2017, December). *Designing Spaces for Professional Practice: Simulations as Sites of Learning within Literacy Teacher Preparation*. American Reading Forum, Sanibel, FL.

- Sobolak, M., & Bartow Jacobs, K. B. (2016, December). *Remapping "The Field": Virtual practice as a site of learning within literacy preparation*. Literacy Research Association, Nashville, TN.
- Sobolak, M. (2014, April). *CASE: Combined accelerated studies in education*. Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success, Irvine, CA.
- Sobolak, M. (2012, November). *Preparing future literacy educators: The role of situated learning and approximations*. Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, Richmond, VA.
- Machado, C., Sobolak, M., & Jiang, Y. (2011, August). *Am I really a Leader? Teachers' Perceptions about the Leadership Roles they can play Beyond the Classroom*. National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Portland, OR.
- Machado, C., Sobolak, M., & Jiand, Y. (2011, August). *Mirror, mirror on the wall: What teachers' reflections reveal about the type of leadership being exhibited in K-12 schools today*. National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Portland, OR.
- Sobolak, M. (2010, November). *Creativity and the Literacy Classroom: A natural and essential fit*. Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, Omaha, NE.

Regional

- Sobolak, M. & Machado, C. (2012, February). *To lead or not to lead: What motivates today's teachers?* Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, SC.
- Sobolak, M. & Mattix, A. (2012, February). *Reading specialist candidates: Are pre-service teaching programs doing enough?* Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, SC.
- Johnson, S., & Sobolak, M. (2011, February). *Preparing Pre-service Teachers for Culturally Diverse Schools and Communities: Examining Beliefs and Self Awareness*. Eastern Educational Research Association, Sarasota, FL.
- Sobolak, M. (2011, February). *Creativity and the Language Arts Classroom: An essential fit in times of high-stakes testing*. Eastern Educational Research Association, Sarasota, FL.
- Sobolak, M. (2010, April). *Modifying Robust Vocabulary Instruction for the Benefit of Low Socioeconomic Students*. New England Educational Research Organization, Portsmouth, NH.

State

- Sobolak, M.J., Bartow-Jacobs, K. B. (2019, October). *Leveraging Online Tools and Actors to Reimagine and Strengthen Teacher Preparation*. The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators. Harrisburg, PA.
- Sobolak, M., Bartow-Jacobs, K. B. (2016, October). *Rethinking Literacy Teacher Preparation Using Virtual Simulations*. Keystone State Reading Association, Seven Springs, PA.
- Kish, J., Sobolak, M., Driver, T., Groegler, E. (2015, January). *Promoting Thinking Skills with Vocabulary and Comprehension Strategies*. Pennsylvania Title I Improving School Performance , Pittsburgh, PA.
- Machado, C., Sobolak, M., Laverick, D., Johnson, S., Muchtar, A., & Evering, L. (2011, October). *Putting Students First: Responding to Student Learning Needs, Curriculum Evaluation, and Program Development through four Scholarships of Teaching and Learning Projects at Indiana University of Pennsylvania*. Pennsylvania Council of Trustees, Indiana, PA.
- Sobolak, M. & Evering, L. (2010, October). *Supporting Diverse Learners: Cultural Bridging and Content Area Reading*. Keystone State Reading Association, Hershey, PA.
- Johnson, S., Sobolak, M., & Evering, L. (2010, September). *Assisting Pre-service Teachers in Effectively Developing Family, Community, and School Relationships in a Diverse Society*. PASSHE Diversity Summit, Kutztown, PA.
- Sobolak, M., Johnson, S., & Calvert, L. (2010, March). *Assisting Pre-service Teachers in Effectively Developing Family, Community, and School Relationships in a Diverse Society*. PA-NAME, Indiana, PA.
- Sobolak, M., Kish, J., & Driver, T. (2010, January). *School-Wide Reading Improvement through Vocabulary Building*. Pennsylvania Title I Improving School Performance , Pittsburgh, PA .
- Sobolak, M., Kish, J., & Driver, T. (2009, January). *School-Wide Reading Improvement through Vocabulary Building*. Pennsylvania Title I Improving School Performance , Pittsburgh, PA .
- Wanless, S., Sobolak, M., Crawford, P., Arlotta-Guerrero, A., & Kestenberg, E. (2014, October). *Creating Nurturing Spaces Where ALL Kids Thrive*. PAEYC and Allegheny County Family Support Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

INVITED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sobolak, M. J. (January 11, 2019). *The developmental spelling inventory and word study across K-12*. Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3, Homestead, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (August 17, 2017). *Implementing research supported spelling and word study in the elementary grades*. Propel Braddock Hills, Pittsburgh, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (July 11-13, 2017). *The word study, spelling and reading connection*. Souderton Charter School Collaborative, Souderton, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (January-April, 2016). *The differentiated elementary classroom*. Shadyside Academy Junior School, Pittsburgh, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (March 14, 2014). *Utilizing modified read alouds to develop comprehension and tier 2 vocabulary*. Shaler Area School District, Glenshaw, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (February 15, 2013). *Differentiating instruction: RTI-like model*. Shaler Area School District, Glenshaw, PA.

Sobolak, M. J. (March 14, 2011). *Differentiating reading instruction*. West Allegheny School District, Pittsburgh, PA.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Co-Editor, Children's Literature, International Journal of the Whole Child
Member, Ad hoc Committee, The PA Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators, 2016
Member, Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers
Member, Eastern Educational Research Association
Member, International Reading Association
Member, Keystone State Reading Association
Member, National Association for the Education of Young Children
Reviewer, Early Childhood Education Journal
Reviewer, Journal of Research in Education
Reviewer, PACTE Annual Journal
Reviewer, Pearson Higher Education Textbooks
Reviewer, ReadWriteThink.org
Reviewer, The Reading Teacher
President, Keystone State Literacy Association- Teacher Educators, 2019-2021
Present-Elect, Pennsylvania Reading Teacher Educators, 2017-2019
Vice President, Pennsylvania Reading Teacher Educators, 2015-2017

SELECTED UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2014-2015 School Council, co-chair, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh
2012-2015 School Council, representative, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh

CERTIFICATIONS

Pennsylvania teaching certificate, K-8

Pennsylvania teaching certificate, reading specialist K-12

INSTRUCTION

Graduate

Applied Principles of Remediation
Comprehension and Vocabulary
Creativity and the Elementary School Child
Curriculum and Instruction
Disciplinary Literacy
Elementary Reading Practicum
Instruction and the Learner
Issues and Trends in Literacy
Language and Language Processes
Literacy Assessment and Intervention Models
Reading in the Content Areas
Reading/Writing Methods I (PreK-grade 1)
Reading/Writing Methods 2 (grades 2-4)
Teacher Leadership
Teaching Primary Reading and Language Arts

Undergraduate

Children's Literature to Enhance Emergent and Beginning Readers
Family, Community, and School Relationships in a Diverse Society
Literacy for the Developing Reader (grades 2-4)
Literacy for the Emergent Reader (PreK-grade 1)
Reading/Writing Methods I (PreK-grade 1)
Values and Education in a Pluralistic Society- Synthesis Course