

ROBAI NASABA WERUNGA, PH.D.

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A. EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

1. EDUCATION

Ph. D - Special Education **2018**

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Dissertation: Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development on the Writing Skills and Problem Behaviors of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (Ya-yu-Lo, Advisor)

M. A. - Special Education **2005**

Fayetteville State University

B. Ed (Arts): Teaching Swahili and Religious Studies **1995**

Egerton University

Professional Educator Credentials

Special Education: General Curriculum (K-6)- License # 1002384 –North Carolina

Special Education: Intellectually Disabled (K-12)- License # 1002384 –North Carolina

2. ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

University of Massachusetts Lowell

2018-Present Assistant Professor School of Education

Carnegie Foundation

2025 Visiting African Diaspora Fellow, Egerton University, Africa (May-August 2025).

2023 Visiting African Diaspora Fellow, Egerton University, Africa (May-August 2023).

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

2016-2018 Adjunct Professor

2015-2018 Teaching Assistant

2015-2018 Research Assistant

Fayetteville Technical Community College

2012-2015 Instructor, English as a Second Language (Basic & Intermediate).

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Cumberland County Schools

2007-2015 Special Education Teacher (Inclusion)

2003-2007 Special Education Teacher (Separate-self-contained)
Fort Bragg/ Liberty Schools, Fort Liberty NC
 2001-2003 Long-Term Special Education Substitute Teacher

Big Lakes Developmental Center, Manhattan KS

2018-2001 **Community Integration Trainer**- Provided support for social integration for adults with intellectual disabilities. I had a case load of 4-8 adults with disabilities.

Job coach- I partnered with local employers in the community (i.e., grocery stores, fast food was 2-10 clients. I worked with each client on a one-on-one basis.

Teacher service Commission, Kenya

1995-1997 High School Teacher (Religious studies and Swahili)

B. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

1. Funded Grants, Fellowships and Projects

i. Internal

- | | | |
|------|----------|---|
| 2025 | Project | Bridging Pathways: A Multidisciplinary Mentoring Program to Empower Underrepresented High School Students in Psychology, Education, and Engineering |
| | Funder | |
| | Purpose | To create a versatile high school mentoring program that spans three disciplines: psychology, education, and engineering. By establishing a high school mentoring program led by first-generation or culturally diverse graduate students, this initiative will support students interested in these three disciplines, ultimately strengthen the pipeline to higher education, and increase workforce diversity in these fields. |
| | Role | CO-PI (Anita Li, PI) |
| | Amount | \$14800 |
| | | |
| 2024 | Project: | Know Your Rights: Pedagogy for Newly Arrived Immigrants Interacting with Police. Community-Engaged Research and Scholarship Fund. |
| | Funder | University of Massachusetts Lowell, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Sustainability Engagement & Enrichment Development (S.E.E.D.) fund |
| | Purpose | To improve the knowledge of Newly Arrived Immigrants regarding their rights, including how to interact with law enforcement as victims, suspects, or witnesses. A collaboratively developed educational intervention can play a vital role in ensuring newly arrived immigrants' physical and legal protection. |
| | Role: | CO-PI (Amber Ruf, PI) |
| | Amount: | \$10,000 |
| | | |
| 2024 | Project: | Examining the Efficacy of Touch Math in Developing and Remediating Basic Computation Skills of Students with or at Risk of Math Disabilities. |

	Funder:	University of Massachusetts Lowell, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Sustainability Engagement & Enrichment Development (S.E.E.D.) Fund
	Purpose:	To conduct research on the efficacy of Touch Math, a commercially available Mathematics program in developing and/or remediating basic computation skills of students with or at risk of learning and behavioral disabilities in alternative placements in the Greater Lowell region.
	Role	P.I
	Amount	\$15,000
2022	Project:	“The effects of Touch Math intervention on the number recognition skills and 1–2-digit addition/subtraction skills of students with significant cognitive disabilities”.
	Funder:	UMass Lowell Honors College: Honors Fellowship
	Purpose:	To support and mentor an undergraduate honors student in conducting single case research.
	Role:	P. I
	Amount:	\$1500
2024	Project:	Parent and Community Broker Training on the Special Education Process and IEP Basics.
	Funder:	Mary Bacigalupo Educational Endowment
	Purpose:	To provide training to families of children with disabilities on their rights and responsibilities regarding their children’s supports and services.
	Role:	P.I
	Amount:	\$1400
2019	Project:	Empowering Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds to Advocate for and Support their Children with Disabilities.
	Funder:	University of Massachusetts Lowell, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Sustainability Engagement & Enrichment Development (S.E.E.D.) Fund
	Purpose:	To conducted interviews with local immigrant families of children with disabilities to understand their experiences and challenges in working with schools to support their children with disabilities. Results from these interviews informed the ongoing work to support and empower immigrant families to advocate for their children with disabilities. (1publication, 1 manuscript under review, 4 international conference presentation and 1 local conference presentation)
	Role:	P.I
	Amount	\$10,000
ii. External		
2024	Project:	Responsive Opportunities for Personalized Educator Systems and Supports (ROPESS).
	Funder:	Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition National Professional Development Program.

	Purpose:	To increase the number of certified bilingual teachers in southeastern Massachusetts – and in the Merrimack Valley cities of Lowell and Lawrence.
	Role:	Senior Project personnel (Leider Christine, P.I)
	Amount	\$3.4 million
2024	Project:	Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP)
	Funder:	Institute of International Education
	Purpose:	To provide special education expertise to Egerton University's school of education in developing a special Needs program within their teacher preparation program.
	Role:	P. I
	Amount:	\$ 20,040
2024	Project:	Massachusetts Public K–12 Educator Diversification Project (Fund Code: <i>UEI: LTNVSTJ3R6D5 DUNS: 956072490</i>).
	Funder:	Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education.
	Purpose:	To diversify the Massachusetts educator workforce. Funds utilized to recruit and support diverse teacher candidates through our Grow Your Own (GYO) partnerships with Lowell and Lawrence Public schools.
	Role:	CO-PI (Szczesniul Stacy, P I)
	Amount:	\$175,000
2023	Project:	In-Person Exchange Program: Teaching English Language Learners with Special Needs.
	Funder:	U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of English Language Programs (ECA/A/L) FHI 360.
	Purpose:	To design and implement a two-week intensive workshop/training for teachers from Southeast Asia, on supporting English language learners with disabilities.
	Role:	P.I (Uy, P, CO-PI)
	Amount	\$167, 296
2023	Project:	Massachusetts Public K–12 Educator Diversification Grant (Fund Code: 242)
	Funder:	Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education
	Purpose:	To diversify the Massachusetts educator workforce. Funds are utilized to recruit and support diverse teacher candidates through our Grow Your Own (GYO) partnerships with Lowell and Lawrence Public schools.
	Role:	CO-PI (Szczesniul Stacy, P I)
	Amount	\$393,406
2022	Grant	Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP)-
	Funder	Institute of International Education
	Purpose	To provide special education expertise to Egerton University's school of education in modifying existing curriculum to incorporate content that introduce teacher candidates to students with specific learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders.
	Role	P. I
	Amount	\$20,040

2021 Project: 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

Funder: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

Purpose: To prepare special education personnel in an interdisciplinary, cross-institutional cohort model to address gaps in interdisciplinary training of personnel who serve students with special needs.

Role: **Senior Project Personnel- 40% effort** (Rocio Rosales, P. I)
 I played a critical role that led to the funding of the project as follows:

- *I identified the grant.*
- *Established connection between PI and CO-PI (to satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement of the grant),*
- *Provided template for writing the proposal, and a sample proposal*
- *Provided critical feedback throughout the proposal writing process.*

Amount: \$914,000

2. PUBLICATIONS

i. Peer Reviewed

- 2025 **Werunga, R. N.** (2025) Mitigating issues of overrepresentation of African American students in office disciplinary referrals: The potential of universal FBA Training. *RETHINKING Behavior* 8 (3) 9-16
<https://mslbd.org/what-we-do/rethinking-behavior/>
- 2024 **Werunga, Robai N.;** Kim, Minjeong; and Rosales, Rocio (2024) "Cambodian American Parents Perspectives and Knowledge of Special Education Supports for their Children with Disabilities," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement: Vol. 19. 12.* 1-23.
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea/vol19/iss1/12/>
- 2024 **Werunga, R. N.** (2024) Check-in-Check-out Intervention for Jose: A collaborative approach to behavioral intervention for a student from a CLD Background. *Journal of Case Learning and Exceptional Learners:*
<https://doi.org/10.20429/jclel.2024.020103>
- 2023 **Werunga, R.N.** & Lo. Y.-y (2023) 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/10.1177/10634266231206749>
- 2021 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>
- 2021 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>

- 2020 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>
- 2020 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>
- 2017 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>

ii. **Book Chapters**

- 2023 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)**
- 2020 **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.

iii. **Other publications**

- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.** (2024). Empowering Parents of Students with Disabilities through School, Community, and Family Partnerships. *Exceptional Parent page 26-29* (Magazine)
- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.**, Rosales, R., & Rinaldi, C. (2024). Responding to disparities in special education professionals: An interdisciplinary approach to special education personnel preparation. In A. Markelz, (Ed.), *TED 2024 Conference Proceedings: Forging Ahead (pp 130-140)*. Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2020 **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. [DDEL Voices](#)

iv. **Under Review / In Progress**

Cleaver, S & Werunga, R. N. (Under Review). The Three Pillar Teacher: Research-Based Strategies for Succeeding as a Special Education Teacher in Today's Classroom (Book). *Teachers College Press*

Werunga, R.N., McKenna, J.W. & Rosales, R. (Under Review). Working with Immigrant Families of Children with Disabilities: Recommendations for Practitioners. *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal*

Werunga, R.N (In progress) Preservice Teacher Perspectives on the Use of HLPs in Virtual Reality Classrooms.

Werunga, R.N., Hsu, H.-Y., McKenna, J.W. (in progress). Kenyan American Parents' Involvement in the education of their children's education

Werunga, R.N., Fedha, F., Kiveu, N., Ng'eno, J., Barmao, A., & Sang, A. (in Progress) Kenyan Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on their Readiness for Inclusive Special Education

3. PRESENTATIONS

i. Invited Speaking Engagements

2024, March **March: Keynote Speaker.** 15th Biennial International Conference. Research For Innovative Solutions in the 21st Century: Topic-*The Role of Teacher Education Programs in Preparing Teacher Candidates to Work with Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classrooms Kenya.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8a7vx04Fsc>

2023 Dec **December: Keynote Speaker.** Empowering Minds: Introducing English Language Learning for Disabled Students in Indonesia. A webinar for Indonesian Special Needs and English Language Educators. Topic: *The Importance of Holding students with Special Needs to High Standards.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cckAYCCY2c>

2023 April **Facilitator:** "Anti-racist practices, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Special Education". [*SPEDEX Consultants'* Annual Meeting](#)

2021 **Guest Speaker.** Parent university- Coalition for a better acre. This was a six-week parent engagement program: Topic: engagement, participation and advocating for children with disabilities

ii. Panelist

2024, July Panelist: US Department of State: Office of English Language Programs, at the 4th Annual Black ELs and Professionals and Friends International Symposium.
[*Panel session slides*](#)

2024 March , **Expert Panelist,** *Identifying and Supporting Children With Diverse Learning Needs.* [*Campaign for Grade Level Reading \(CGLR\).*](#)

- 2023-2025 **Expert Research Panelist**, Local Advisory Board- Project 3: Classification Systems at the [Learning Disabilities Research Consortium](#) (LDRC) Center at MGH Institute of Health Professions in partnership with the Florida Center for Reading Research and the University of Virginia: **Role: Provide my expert advice and recommendations** on the grantee’s decision-making around aspects of the research process, including (1) recruitment, (2) iterative development of the toolkit and PLC prototype, (c) assessing the feasibility of sustainment, and (d) broad dissemination of research findings and innovations to scientific and non-scientific audiences.
- 2023-2024 **Expert Research Panelist**. Research Project “Pursuing Equity for Students with Learning Differences in Schools Using Authentic Assessments” [Envision Learning Partners](#). **My role on the panel is to advise and provide feedback on the** appropriateness of project aims, research questions and research design before and during the project.
- 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, March **Panelist:** *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 committee; I presented 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
- 2023 March *DCD/DISES Collaborative Panel Presentation:* Supporting Learning Opportunities for Displaced Children with Disabilities Through High Leverage Practices. Presentation at the 101st Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Louisville KY
- 2022 October *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.). I was one of the panelists representing the Project 2020 Team
- 2021 October CEC-DISES virtual series: DISES Collaborating with CEC Division Colleagues to Highlight Inclusive Practices Around the World.
- 2021 July *Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership and Project Directors’ Conference.* Topic: Supporting students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds within MTSS Post-Pandemic and Beyond <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx7R4xO7dQQ>
- 2021 May *CEC DDEL Critical Conversation Series Webinar - Migration and the cultural shift: Perspectives on disability from immigrant families.* Invited to 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.

iii. Conference Presentations

National/International Presentations – 30 total (26 as first or solo presenter)

- 2025 **Werunga, R.N.** & Haughney, K. (October 2025). *Leap Into Case Learning with the Journal of Case Learning and Exceptional Learners (JCLEL)*. Presentation at the Annual Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) conference, Denver Colorado.
- 2025 Haughney, K & **Werunga, R.N.** (July, 2025). *How to Publish in the Journal of Case Learning and Exceptional Learners (JCLEL)*. Presentation at the Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2025 **Werunga, R.N.** & Fedha, F.N (July 2025). *A survey of Kenyan Secondary Teachers on their Preparedness to Support Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classrooms*. Presentation at the Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2025 **Werunga, R.N.** (2025, March). The effects of Touch Math intervention on basic computation skills of students with EBD. 102nd Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference Baltimore, MD
- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.** Rosales, R., Rinaldi, C. (2024, November) Responding to ***Disparities in Special Education Professionals: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Special Education Personnel Preparation***. Presentation at the Annual CEC-TED Conference, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.** (2024, June) *Kenya's Secondary Teachers' Perceptions on Inclusive Education*, Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference Panama City, Panama
- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.** Rosales, R., Rinaldi, C. (2024, June) *A Culturally Responsive Collaborative Interdisciplinary Approach to Training Special Education Personnel*, Annual Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) conference Panama City, Panama
- 2024 **Werunga, R.N.** (2024, March) *Kenyan Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on their Readiness for Inclusive Special Education*, 102nd Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference San Antonio Texas
- 2023 **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
- 2023 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.
- 2022 **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
- 2022 **Werunga, R.N.** (January 2022). *Immigrant Family Empowerment: Leveraging Community Partnerships*. Presentation at the 100th Annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Orlando Florida.
- 2021 **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.
- 2021 **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!
- 2020 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.
- 2020 **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
- 2019 **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.
- 2019 **Werunga, R.N.** (November 2019). *Leveraging the cultural capital of CLD parents through training*. Presentation at the Annual TED conference, New Orleans LA.
- 2019 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.
- 2019 **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
- 2019 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.

- 2019 **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
- 2018 **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 Annual CEC-TED Conference, Las Vegas, NV.
- 2018 **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.
- 2018 **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.
- 2018 **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.
- 2018 **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.
- 2017 **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.
- 2017 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.
- 2017 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.
- 2017 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
- 2017 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.
- 2017 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

Local Presentations / Regional presentations- 11 (9 as first or solo presenter)

- 2023 **Werunga, R.N** (November 2023). *Advocating for Global Inclusive Special Education Through Training and Family Empowerment*. UML Faculty Research Symposium
- 2023 **Werunga, R.N** (November 2022). Immigrant Family Empowerment: Leveraging Community Supports. UML Faculty Research Symposium
- 2021 **Werunga, R.N** (March 2021). *Reimagining Teaching Experience for Preservice Teachers During Covid19*. UML Faculty Research Symposium
- 2021 **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)
- 2019 **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
- 2018 **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
- 2017 **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.
- 2017 **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
- 2017 **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
- 2016 Owens, T. L. & **Werunga, R.N.** (2016, March). *Classroom management*. Veritas Community School, Charlotte, NC.
- 2015 **Werunga, R.N.** & Terrell, M (2015, November). *Other health impaired / Transition* (Guest lecture). Belmont-Abbey College, Belmont, NC

C. INSTRUCTIONAL RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Course Design

2018	EDUC 2100	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2019	EDUC 2200	Assessment of Students with Moderate Disabilities
2020	EDUC 3200	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities

2022	EDUC 5101	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2025	EDUC 6126	Multilingual Learners with Disabilities: Policy & Practice

2. Teaching

University Massachusetts, Lowell 2018- Present

***indicates Redesign/Substantial Revisions to the course**

2025, Spring	EDUC 6300	Educating Diverse Populations
2025, Spring	EDUC 3200*	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2024, Fall	EDUC2100-LA*	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2024, Fall	EDUC 5101-1	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2024, Fall	EDUC 5101-2	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2024, Fall	UMLO 1000-1-205	River Hawk Scholars Academy Support Pod
2024, Summer	EDUC 5101-1	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2024, Summer	EDUC 5101-2	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2024, Spring	EDUC 3200 - 1	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2024, Spring	EDUC 6300-1	Educating Diverse Populations
2024, Spring	EDUC 6300-2	Educating Diverse Populations
2023, Fall	EDUC 2100*	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2023, Fall	EDUC 6900	Action Research
2023, Fall	EDUC 5101	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2023, Fall	UMLO 1000-1-205	River Hawk Scholars Academy Support Pod
2023, Summer	EDUC 5101	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2023, Spring	EDUC 5035	Independent Directed Study
2022, Fall	EDUC 6900*	Action Research
2022, Fall	EDUC 2100	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2022, Summer	EDUC 5101	Foundations of Social Justice in Education
2022, Spring	EDUC 3200 -1	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2022, Spring	EDUC 3200 -2	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
	EDUC 4400	Special Education Practicum supervision
2021, Summer	EDUC 6300	Educating Diverse Populations
2021, Spring	EDUC 3200-1	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2021, Spring	EDUC 3200-2	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2021, Spring	EDUC 4400	Special Education Practicum Supervision
2020, Fall	EDUC 2100-1	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2020, Fall	EDUC 2100-2	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2020, Spring	EDUC 3200 -1	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2020, Spring	EDUC 3200-2	

2020, Spring	EDUC 3200-3	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2019, Fall	EDUC 2100-1	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2019, Fall	EDUC 2100-2	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2019, Spring	EDUC 5010	Teaching Diverse Populations
2019, Spring	EDUC 3200-1	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2019, Spring	EDUC 3200-2	Methods of Teaching Students with Moderate Disabilities
2018, Fall	EDUC 2100-1	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities
2018, Fall	EDUC 2100-2	Introduction to Moderate Disabilities Course Design

University of North Carolina at Charlotte 2015-2018

2018, Spring	SPED 6691	Seminar on Professional and Leadership Development
2017, Fall	SPED 4475	Student Teaching Supervision
2017, Spring	SPED 4277:	Teaching Writing to Students with Disabilities
2016, Fall	SPED 3173:	SPED 3173: Diagnostic Assessment
2016, Summer	SPED 5275	Teaching Reading to Elementary Students with Disabilities
2015, Fall	SPED 4277	Teaching Writing to Students with Disabilities

3. Dissertation Support

2024/2025	Leyna Malone	Enhancing instructional leadership to improve outcomes for students with disabilities: the impact of professional development on principal walkthrough practices in ICT classrooms	Chair
	Jefferey Schoonover	Improving instruction through targeted, actionable feedback in a Co-teaching model: The impact of using a classroom walkthrough Instrument emphasizing high-leverage practices for inclusive classrooms	Chair
2022/2023	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	
	Robyn Ann Grant	Investigating Classroom Factors that Lead to MTSS Referrals of Emergent Bilinguals in A Suburban School District	
2021/2022	Hannah Tolla	Perspectives on Educational Equity: Teacher-Student Racial Mismatch in A Suburban School District	

	Lila Mae Sumer	A Descriptive Case Study of Warm Demanders: Warm Demander Traits and the Mitigation of Disproportionality in Discipline.”
	James Frier:	Exploring the Impact of Implementing Culture-Positive Strategies at a Historically “No Excuses” Charter School
	Laura Miceli	Examining the Implementation of Graphic Organizers in Grade 7 Intervention and English Courses.
	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
2018-2019	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).

4. *Student Mentoring*

Graduate- Independent Directed Research

2023 Tiana Brote
EDUC 5035: Independent study (Research) – 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. Under my mentorship, Tiana Brote was the Winner of UML’s 2023 Graduate Student Research Symposium. [UML 2023 Student Research Symposium](#)

Undergraduate- Honors Project

2024 **Arina Kondakchyan:** EDUC 3200: Topic- Literature Review of Curriculum-Based Measurement
Sarah Pontbriant: EDUC 3200: Topic- Literature Review of Curriculum- Based Measurement
Cieran Hancock: EDUC 3200: Topic- Literature Review of Curriculum- Based Measurement
2022 **Hannah Gould:** EDUC 3200: Topic- Literature Review of Direct Instruction
2021 **Jillian Tarlin:** EDUC 3200: Topic- High Leverage Practices in Special Education
2019 **Julia Tasinari:** 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.

Senior Project Mentoring

2022 **Stephanie Alvarez:** *Dr. TJ Owens Gilroy Early College Academy (California)*
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 and goals to guide her through her senior project. She researched and found me via the internet. Through my guidance and mentorship, she successfully completed her project which included a pamphlet to distribute to local libraries, community centers and local medical centers in her community, for access by families in her local community.

5. **Advising**

2020- **Academic Advisor**

Present I have been serving as an academic advisor to students in the BaEd undergraduate program since 2020

6. **Professional Development and Training**

2022	July	TED Policy Training
2022	December	Touch math Implementation Training workshop
2020		National Center on Intensive Intervention Faculty Learning Series
	August	Preparing Teachers to Deliver Intervention in Virtual Settings
	September	Practice-Based Opportunities for Intensive Intervention
	October	Course Content Resources for Intensive intervention

D. SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1. **Service to the University**

Department Level service

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| • Academic Advisor | 2020/present |
| • Chair, SOE Ed. DiP Award committee | 2022 |
| • Assistant Professor Search Committee Member | 2022 |
| • <i>Chair, Adjunct Search.</i> Led the search for adjuncts to teach moderate disabilities courses. | 2021 |
| • SOE Faculty Representative: Undergraduate Open House | 2021 |
| • Member, Adjunct Search Team- EDUC 2200- Assessment of students with Moderate Disabilities | 2020 |
| • Academic Programs and Student Services committee (A covid-19 Response committee) | 2020/2021 |
| • Pathways Planning committee UMass Lowell College of Education and Middlesex Community | 2019/2020 |
| • Member- Search committee- College of Education Field Coordinator and Advisor | 2020 |
| • SOE Awards committees: Every year I participate in at least one of the awards committees. <i>Responsibilities:</i> Reviewing applications and selecting winners. | 2019/Present |
| • SOE representative: Lowell High School Transition Planning Fair | 2019 |
| • College Pathways/ Grow- Your Own initiative: Lowell/Lawrence High school Partnerships. | 2018/Present |
| • BAED Practicum and student teaching Planning committee | 2018/2020 |
| • Member, College of Education Spring Symposium Planning Committee | 2018/2019 |

College level service

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Member, FAHSS Faculty advisors' Hub | 2024/Present |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|

- FAHSS Curriculum Committee: Review and vote on curriculum changes across FAHSS college. 2024/Present
- Member, Interdisciplinary Minor in Disability Studies Committee. 2020/2022
- Co-Chair, College of Education Spring Symposium Planning Committee. 2019/2022

University level service

- SOE representation- Faculty Senate 2025/Present
- Faculty Marshall, 2024 UML commencement ceremony
- English Language Learner Support Initiative Task Force 2024
- Dean Search Committee: College of Fine Arts Humanities & Social Sciences 2024
- Seed Grant Competition Panel Reviewer 2023
- 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. 2022
- *Faculty advocate*, River Hawk Scholars Academy- Working with (and supporting) 10 freshman students who are first generation college students 2022/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. 2021/Present
- *Member*, *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 through interdisciplinary research and dissemination. 2019/Present

2. Service to the community.

- 2022 ***“Navigating the Special Education System and Supporting children with disabilities and families”*** collaborative presentation in partnership with [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.
- 2022 I facilitated a parent workshop titled: ***“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 Cambodian American Parent and Community Broker Training on ***the Special Education Process and IEP Basics***. This training was offered through a collaborative effort between the [Federation of Children with Special Needs 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 Site Council](#)
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. As a SpedEx consultant, I help families and schools resolve disputes concerning free and appropriate public

education (FAPE) or the least restrictive environment (LRE) by reviewing relevant information and interviewing all parties, then providing recommendation towards resolving the dispute at hand
<https://sites.bc.edu/spedexconsultation/consultants/>

- 2020 **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).
- 2018, Community Member, [Lowell Special Education Parental Advisory Council](#)
 Present (Lowell SPED PAC).

3. Professional Memberships and Service

Organization	Service Activities
Journal of Case Learning and Exceptional Learners (JCLEL)	2025- Present- Associate Editor - Responsibilities: Screening submissions for relevance, quality, and alignment with the journal's scope; managing the peer review process; making editorial recommendations based on reviewer input and personal evaluation of the manuscript, ensuring ethical and academic standards for all submissions.
U.S Department of Education	2024, December 10- Participant - Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Forum hosted by the U.S. Department of Education . Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building 400 Maryland Avenue, Southwest, Washington, D.C., 202
Council for exceptional Children (CEC)	Member (2015-present), Member, Kwoledgeans Skills Conference Presenter (2016-present), Conference Proposal Reviewer (2015-present). Chair - Goal 3: Project 20/20- Creating a Vision for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in CEC Project 2020 (2020-2023).
Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (DDEL)	Member (2016-present); Conference Presenter (2016-2018); Student Representative (2016- 2018); Secretary (2018- 2021); Professional Development Committee member/Planner (2020-2021)
Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES)	Member (2015-present); President- Elect (2025-Present); Membership Officer (2023- 2024); Lead conference Planning member (2023-present: DISES-Kenya, 2025) Conference Presenter(2019-present); Member at Large (2019-2022); DISES Membership subcommittee (2019- 2022);
Massachusetts Department of	2020-2021Participant- Stakeholder Engagement Group — The IEP Improvement Project -(IIP). Responsible for providing

Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)	feedback on draft guidance documents to help streamline and improve the IEP process and content.
Coalition for Equity, Diversity and Disability (CEDD)	2020- present (Member); Online open house planning of event to discuss/address issues & considerations during Covid19 (2020); Editor, DESE script for contacting parents during COVID-19 (2020); Professional development facilitator- “advocating for EL students with disabilities during COVID-19 and beyond”
Association for Positive Behavior Supports (APBS)	Member (2016-present); Conference Presenter (2017,2018); CANDO subcommittee member (2017,2018)
Teacher Education Division (TED)	Member (2015-present); Conference Presenter (2017-present); Conference Proposal (2017-present Reviewer).
Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners (Journal)	2019- Present Consulting Editor
Preventing School Failure (Journal)	2019- Present Consulting Editor
The Special Education Research Accelerator (SERA)	2020- present Research Partner
Massachusetts Council for Exceptional Children (Mass-CEC)	2018-present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Presenter
Division for Emotional and Behavioral Health (DEBH)	2015- present Member
Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDS)	2019-2022 Member
Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA)	2019: Guest Reviewer- conference proceedings
Journal of Behavioral Education (Journal)	2023: Guest Reviewer

Journal of Special Education Preparation. 2023:
Guest Reviewer

E. Professional Honors and Awards

- *2024 Grants- FY 24 Total Expenditures- over \$250,000
[UML Faculty Symposium](#), November 2024
- *2024 River Hawk Scholars Academy Faculty Advocate (2024-2025)
UML Faculty Symposium, November 2024
- *2024 FY24 Internal Seed Grant Recipient (PI)
[UML Faculty Symposium](#), November 2024
- *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
- *2023 Nominee- Finalist- [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#) Board of Directors. I was nominated and I underwent a rigorous 6-month vetting process that involved three interview stages. I successfully completed all stages and was slated for election by the CEC members. I was the only junior faculty among the 6 candidates slated for election.
- *2022 **Faculty Advocate:** River Hawk Scholars Academy (2022-2023)
UML Faculty Symposium, December 2022
- *2022 **Nominee-** School of Education Teaching Excellence Award- Nominated by students
- *2022 **Nominee-** UMass Lowell Undergraduate Mentoring Award – Nominated by students.
- *2021 **Member Spotlight,** Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES). I was nominated and selected by the [DISES](#) Board of Directors for my scholarship and service with regards to supporting global special education endeavors abroad and here in the US.
- 2017 **Outstanding Poster Presentation Award** The E.G "Ted" Carr Outstanding Poster Award, *Association of Positive Behavior Support International Conference*, (Denver CO).