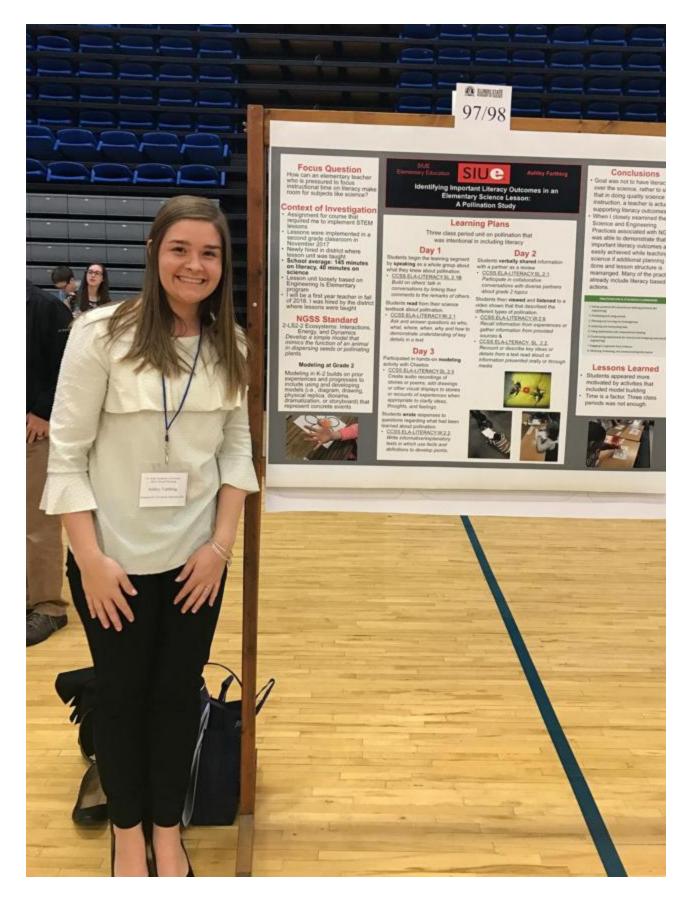


SIUE's Farthing takes top prize for STEM education research at Illinois State Academy of Science annual meeting

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville senior Ashley Farthing can't imagine a future doing anything but teaching. She'll walk across the stage to receive her bachelor's in elementary education during commencement on Saturday, May 5, knowing a classroom of first graders eagerly await her fall 2018 arrival.

Farthing has secured a teaching position at Lincoln Elementary in her hometown of Marion. Her journey at SIUE has featured solid academic coursework, experiential learning opportunities, impactful mentorship and involvement in extracurricular activities, all of which have prepared her for a successful future.

"I have loved my time at SIUE and am grateful for the wonderful elementary education program," she said. "My professors have always been supportive and involved in my education, and I know they truly care about each of us teacher candidates."

Among her list of accomplishments, is first place for her research poster presentation in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Education category at the Illinois State Academy of Science's (ISAS) annual meeting held Friday, April 13. Her project was entitled "Identifying Important Literacy Outcomes in an Elementary Science Lesson: A Pollination Study."

"In an average elementary classroom, 140 minutes are spent daily on literacy instruction, whereas only 40 minutes, on average, are spent on science instruction," Farthing explained. "I was challenged to create a science content lesson series that incorporated multiple modalities of literacy. Students were able to use literacy practices, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, while learning the science concept of pollination."

"It was a great opportunity to practice integrating different subjects into my daily teaching practice," she added. "Through my research, I saw that students were more engaged in hands-on learning and looked forward to each day's science lesson."

According to Elementary Education Program Director Stephen Marlette, PhD, Farthing' s project clearly articulated the strong overlap between literacy and science. He notes that her willingness to share her research findings is an important quality among educators.

"The elementary education program is proud of Ashley," Marlette said. "We are committed to preparing elementary teachers like her who skillfully meet important literacy outcomes in content areas such as science without sacrificing the nature of the discipline." Farthing's scholarship demonstrated her passion and advocacy for the teaching profession, which Marlette emphasizes has been consistently displayed by her cooperating teachers and program instructors.

"As education advocates, teachers must continuously read books and articles to remain on top of important learning research," Marlette explained. "They also engage in discussions with other professionals about student needs. Our program has adopted a field instrument that provides candidates with feedback on how they are doing in this area. Our cooperating teachers and program instructors help shape each of our students for professional success."

The mission of the ISAS is to promote scientific research, the diffusion of scientific knowledge and the unification of scientific interests in Illinois.

Its STEM education category is relatively new, and was organized by SIUE's Jessica Krim, EdD, School of Education, Health and Human Behavior interim assistant dean and associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning.

The <u>SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior</u> prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.