Faculty Focus: Dr. Elizabeth Jakubowski
Mathematics and Children with Disabilities

Dr. Elizabeth Jakubowski has been a part of the Florida State University (FSU) family for 31 years. She is an associate professor of mathematics education in the School of Teacher Education. Her research interests include examining equitable issues in teaching and learning mathematics, including the use of technology in teaching. She earned her Ed.D. in Mathematics Education from the University of Georgia, her M.S. in Curriculum and Supervision from The University of South Florida and her bachelor’s degree in Mathematics Education from The University of Tennessee. When asked how she became interested in mathematics education, she replied, “I’ve always enjoyed mathematics.” She had good teachers in junior and senior high school and has always enjoyed going to math classes.

Jakubowski has had a great deal of experience teaching mathematics. While getting her master’s, she taught eighth graders for four years at Parrott Junior High school in Brooksville, Florida. She co-taught several elective classes in mathematics and worked with other teachers to better understand how to teach mathematics to students with learning disabilities. She furthers her knowledge and expertise about mathematics by going to professional conferences dedicated to mathematics.

Jakubowski likes to help students learn different strategies that can help them succeed in mathematics classes. In addition to her duties at FSU, she tutors students who struggle with mathematics. Her love for this began when she tutored a middle school student who had a learning disability. She tutored this young man until he walked across the stage at his high school graduation receiving a general diploma. She looks back at how he progressed and developed coping strategies that encouraged him to keep learning.

Jakubowski has been involved in multiple conferences where she has been able to present her love of mathematics and children with disabilities. She has presented at the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities and Council for Exceptional Children. She also had the opportunity to work with a group of people who looked at the Florida Compressive Assessment Test to identify mathematics test items with which people with math disabilities would have difficulty completing accurately. Jakubowski is truly an asset to this field and to Florida State!
Elsa Lidia Kamshad is a second-year student pursuing her Master of Science in the online Curriculum and Instruction: Special Education program. She was born and raised in Mexicali, Baja California in Mexico, and currently resides in San Diego, California. She is an early childhood educator at a private school in San Diego where she teaches two and three-year-old children with and without disabilities.

Kamshad values her special education program, as it is close to her heart. Her son was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the age of three. She started teaching herself, researching, and collaborating with others during workshops to learn how her son’s brain functions. Once he started school, even as teacher herself, she felt lost and helpless.

She noticed that a lot of her colleagues struggled to assist students with special needs in their classes. This being said, she closed her eyes and jumped back in school! It has become easier to collaborate with parents and talk about making plans for home and school that assist their children in reaching milestones. Being in the special education program has made her job extremely rewarding and raising her son much easier.

As a student in an online program, Kamshad still face obstacles. The biggest challenge she has encountered is the time difference between Florida and California. Deadlines and online synchronous conferences in classes can get complicated; however, she is grateful for her professors who are helpful in assisting her with these issues. She also values the fact that her professors are always prompt in replying to e-mails and setting up conferences with her to discuss content that may be confusing.

When asked how she manages personal and educational responsibilities, she first thanks her amazingly supportive husband, and then mentions having personal discipline. “You may be exhausted, but you have to ride the wave, push through and continue.” She also credits her mother as being her biggest inspiration in life.

The advice she has for students who want to join the program is “JOIN!” The professors are great and know how to make online learning fun.
Special Education Resources for Students, Parents and Professionals

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
http://www.pbis.org

This website includes information for schools, families, and communities to approach social, emotional and behavior support. Resources include training modules, research, and evaluation tools.

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
http://ectacenter.org

This website includes 85 topics and content sections related to the early childhood provisions of IDEA.

National Center on Intensive Interventions
https://intensiveintervention.org

This website contains supports to help stakeholders implement intensive interventions in reading, mathematics, and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and/or behavioral needs.

IRIS Center
https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu

This website offers resources about evidence-based practices for use in preservice preparation and professional development programs. IRIS then disseminates and offers trainings on those resources.

Center for Parent Information and Resources
http://www.parentcenterhub.org

This website contains resources for parent centers to help them provide support and services to the families they serve. Resources include family-friendly and research-based materials.

Center on Technology and Disability
https://www.ctdinstitute.org

This website provides resources for personal and professional development. It contains a library of multi-media, multi-lingual resources; modules; and an online board that includes both topical and audience-specific discussions.

A complete list of all centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) can be found at https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/find-center-or-grant/find-a-center