Professional Background

Dr. Jane Leatherman is an Associate Professor of Special Education and serves as the director for the special education program in the College of Education and Public Policy. Our programs are for undergraduate and graduate students desiring a license or increased knowledge in special education. Dr. Leatherman received her PhD in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She teaches classes at the undergraduate and graduate level on inclusion, methods for students with disabilities, collaboration, and assessment. Her research interest and writing foci are inclusion best practices, attitudes toward inclusion, and collaboration, and best practices for pre-service and in-service teachers in special education. She has 29 years in special education and early intervention. Before college teaching, she was a teacher and also an administrator in different early intervention programs. She has taught at the post-secondary level for 24 years in 3 different states.

The collaboration theme is put into service through a variety of organizations that deal with special education. She has been on the Board of Directors for the Fort Wayne Center for Learning (FWCL) for 6 years. FWCL is a non-profit center designed for students with specialized learning needs in auditory and visual processing areas.

Community Engagement

She has been very involved with the Fort Wayne Autism Speaks chapter coordinating the IPFW Special Education Program as one of the co-sponsors of the Walk Now for Autism Kick-off in the summer and the walk held each fall. This collaboration has lasted 4 years and is growing strong. For the 2013 year she is on the planning committee.

For the last 3 summers we have offered a graduate level course as an Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders and opened the first evening of the course to the public. We had approximately 100 people in attendance with the open sessions and then 8-10 practicing teachers enrolled in the graduate course. At the open session, we provided an overview of ASD and therapies; we also provided agencies an opportunity to supply marketing materials as resources for the participants (public and our students). Also in the course, the students connected with a family with a child with ASD and completed an assignment.

Most recently, she has been involved with a large project in Indiana called Hands in Autism, an organization designed to assist local communities to design dissemination programs and infrastructures for their local community. She is one of the founding members to help provide resources to families and professionals on different areas of autism. She continues to connect with our community to provide information and resources for professionals, students and their families with special needs.