



*CUE teacher candidate Leah Charette with her first-grade students at Coyote Ridge Elementary School*

## **Congratulations to CUE's Spring 2024 Grads**

The [UNC Center for Urban Education](#) (CUE) is grateful to three of our spring 2024 graduates for sharing their thoughts on why they wanted to become teachers and how their experience at the Center prepared them for a career in teaching. Meet Paul Lang, whose focus is Elementary Education, Leah Charette, whose focus is Early Childhood Education, and Kayla Perry, a Special Education major. These three dedicated teacher candidates expressed gratitude for the program, faculty, and mentors at CUE and are looking forward to starting their full-time teaching positions this fall.

When we asked why the candidates aspired to be teachers, they referred to the positive impact teachers have had on their own lives and their desire to provide the same care and support for future generations. Charette, who is currently student teaching first grade at Coyote Ridge Elementary in the Adams 12 School District, is especially interested in students who require additional support. "I have four younger siblings who inspired me to become a teacher. They all struggled in school in some way or another, and I knew I wanted to be a safe space for children like them," said Charette.

Each of these three teacher candidates was drawn to CUE because of the hands-on nature of the program and said their coursework at CUE has prepared them to serve the needs of diverse populations in the Denver metro area. Lang, who is working as a fourth-grade paraprofessional at Eiber Elementary School in Jefferson County Public Schools, said, "The faculty at CUE constantly challenged me to check my own biases to ensure I was teaching inclusively and equitably."



*Black Americans bulletin board created by CUE teacher candidate Kayla Perry*

Perry, who currently works Meadow Point Elementary School in the Cherry Creek School District in K-5 special education, said she enjoyed learning with and from diverse classmates and professors throughout her time at CUE. "My experience at CUE helped me build my confidence," Perry said. Because CUE students work as paraprofessionals during their time in the program, they are able to quickly and repeatedly apply the lessons they learned in class to their own students the next day. The process facilitates mastery of the skills required to successfully teach in urban classrooms.

CUE professors and mentors provide advisory and outreach services to teacher candidates, which help them navigate the higher education system. Perry said, "The teachers at CUE are very supportive and understand what we are going through as paraprofessionals and parents."

By helping students access financial aid and scholarship support, CUE leadership removes some of the financial burden of paying for education. Lang said, "Not having to worry so much about the cost of the degree allowed me to focus on becoming the best teacher possible."

We asked the teacher-candidates what advice they have for future CUE students. Charette suggested, "Taking classes while working in a classroom can seem overwhelming, but CUE makes it feel so easy." She added, "It's important to go into the program with an open mindset, really

implement what you are learning, and use your knowledge to further your teaching practice.”



*CUE spring 2024 graduate Paul Lang with his fourth-grade students at Eiber Elementary School*

Lang advised future teacher candidates, “Take your Praxis test early on to avoid it being a source of stress while you’re taking classes! Also, focus on your end goal and remember that every step, no matter how small, is moving you closer to that diploma.” Perry’s advice centered on the importance of maintaining open communication and reaching out to classmates and teachers for support. Lastly, she urged future teachers to, “Have fun and be yourself.”

Congratulations to all of our spring 2024 graduates:

Leah Charette, Taylor Cody, Chloe Cubbison, Brittany Curtis, Argelia Garcia, Denisse Gonzalez, Mikayla Jennings, Rachel Kusner, Paul Lang, Christina Mendoza, Savannah Opferman, Erica Osborne, Kayla Perry, Rehab Siddig, Martha Thomas, Naomi Williams, and Xuelian (Jane) Yang

## **Join Dr. Yemi Stemberge for an Immersive Design Studio This Summer**

The [UNC Center for Urban Education](#) is hosting Dr. Yemi Stemberge for two three-day, immersive instructional design studios this summer: June 11–13 and July 24–26. These sessions will take place at the Lowry campus.

You’ll plan culturally responsive learning experiences that have the potential to close equity gaps and engage students in rigorous and meaningful opportunities to learn. The Immersive Design Studio is open to all educators interested in gaining tools for artful thinking. The discussions and activities will most appeal to classroom teachers, coaches, and administrators with responsibilities for supporting instruction. The content draws on Dr. Stemberge’s [books](#),

Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An Equity Framework for Pedagogy (2020) and Brilliant Teaching: Using Culture and Artful Thinking to Close Equity Gaps (2023).

The registration fee is \$925 per person and includes expert guidance from Dr. Yemi, lots of time for reflection and planning, and interaction with small groups to brainstorm and cement learning. Continental breakfast and lunch are included each day.

Reserve your spot today and [register here!](#)

## Thinking about Becoming a Teacher?

We are enrolling new students for the fall 2024 semester. Call Dr. Rosanne Fulton, Director, UNC Center for Urban Education, at 303-637-4334 or [email](#) for more information.

Watch our [short video](#) to learn more about the CUE teacher-preparation program.