

ISSUE 9 | FALL 2023

IGPE

Fall Bulletin

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**HEAR ABOUT OUR
UPDATES**

IGPE Director Announcement

As we step into the new school year, I am ecstatic to extend a warm welcome to all our wonderful partners, esteemed faculty, and students in the International Graduate Programs for Educators. Your dedication and passion for education continue to inspire us, and I am confident that this academic year will be marked by excellence and innovation.

I am delighted to share some exciting updates regarding our projects and collaborations. This year, we are embarking on new and meaningful partnerships through the Global Book Hour initiative. This initiative not only aims to enhance literacy skills but also fosters a global perspective by exploring diverse literature and themes from around the world. This program aspires to instill a love for reading and cultural understanding in students, preparing them to be well-rounded learners in an increasingly interconnected world.

Furthermore, our commitment to excellence in teacher education is reflected in our collaboration with campus partners through the International Professional Development Schools Consortium. We are creating unique opportunities for our students to engage in practical, hands-on experiences that enrich their teaching skills and cultural competency. I am excited about the positive impact these initiatives have on our global community.

I am thrilled about the positive impact we have and will continue to collectively make in the realm of education this year. Here's to a year marked by profound growth, meaningful collaborations, and a shared commitment to excellence. Thank you for being an essential part of SUNY Buffalo State's International Graduate Programs for Educators.

Wishing you a rewarding and fulfilling academic year ahead!



BRANDON KAWA
IGPE DIRECTOR

Alumni Spotlight

Hi there, I'm Rislene Macena, and I want to take you on a ride through my journey. It's a story of resilience, a love for teaching, and embracing opportunities, no matter where they take you. I'm 31 years old, and I grew up in Brasília, Brazil, in a low-income family. I studied English in a Brazilian Public Institution called CIL.

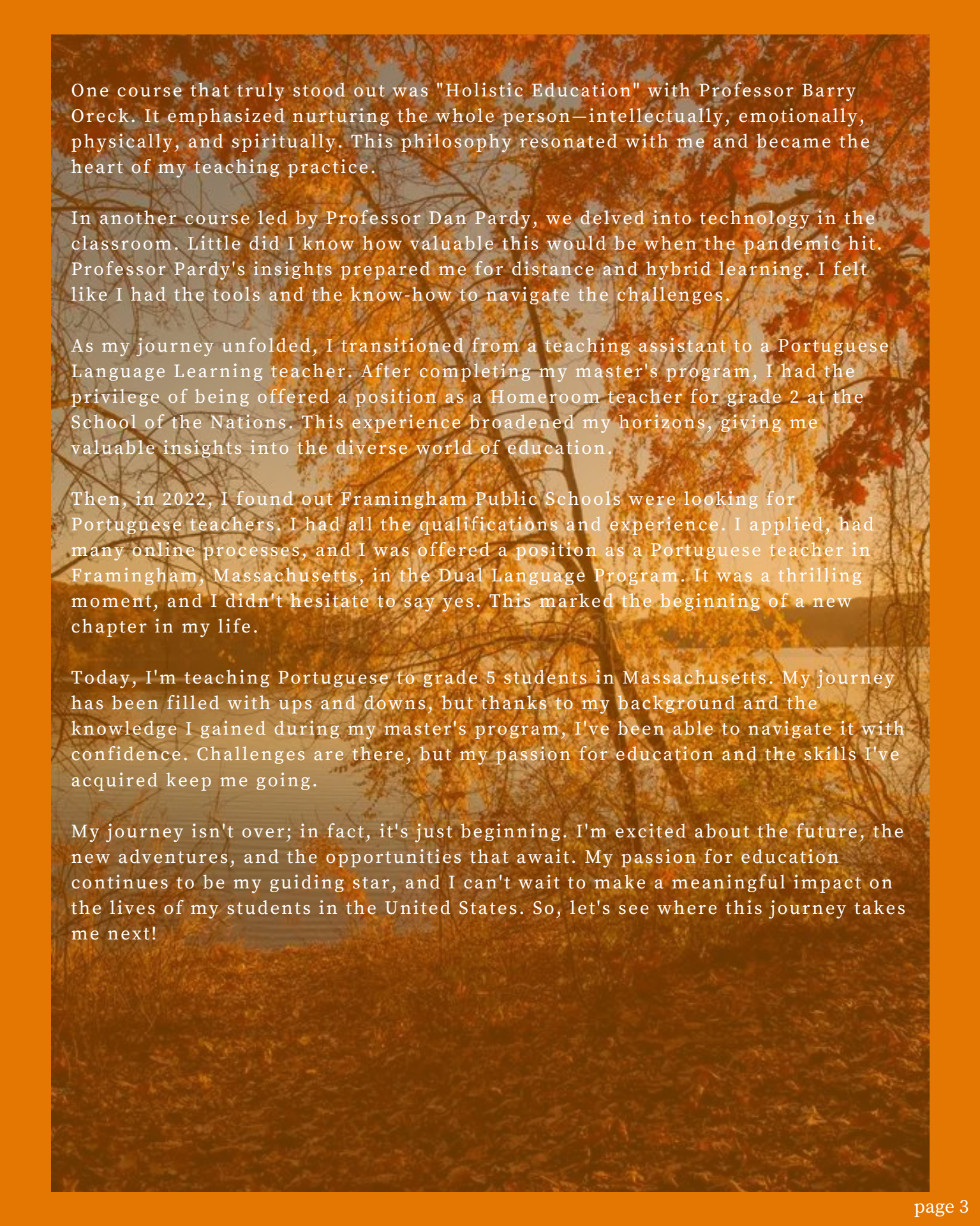
Before I even started my master's program, I was already deeply involved in the world of education. I have Bachelors Degree in Pedagogy, Portuguese, and English Language Arts in Brazil. These were the first building blocks of my journey, igniting my passion for teaching.

The big turning point came when I had the chance to be part of the International Masters Program from SUNY Buffalo State. It was a unique opportunity right in the heart of Brasília. Professors from the United States came to Brazil to teach us, and when the pandemic hit, we transitioned to online classes. This flexibility demonstrated the resilience of our educational journey.

One of the most significant challenges I faced during this program was the language barrier. Portuguese is my mother tongue, and English is my second language. My professors went the extra mile to make sure we all grasped the concepts. Their dedication and support were key to my success.

Throughout the program, I dived into the world of education. I learned about Universal Design for Learning (UDL), effective behavior plans, US laws for special education, and how to use data to create a classroom environment that's equitable and inclusive, ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive.





One course that truly stood out was "Holistic Education" with Professor Barry Oreck. It emphasized nurturing the whole person—intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. This philosophy resonated with me and became the heart of my teaching practice.

In another course led by Professor Dan Pardy, we delved into technology in the classroom. Little did I know how valuable this would be when the pandemic hit. Professor Pardy's insights prepared me for distance and hybrid learning. I felt like I had the tools and the know-how to navigate the challenges.

As my journey unfolded, I transitioned from a teaching assistant to a Portuguese Language Learning teacher. After completing my master's program, I had the privilege of being offered a position as a Homeroom teacher for grade 2 at the School of the Nations. This experience broadened my horizons, giving me valuable insights into the diverse world of education.

Then, in 2022, I found out Framingham Public Schools were looking for Portuguese teachers. I had all the qualifications and experience. I applied, had many online processes, and I was offered a position as a Portuguese teacher in Framingham, Massachusetts, in the Dual Language Program. It was a thrilling moment, and I didn't hesitate to say yes. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life.

Today, I'm teaching Portuguese to grade 5 students in Massachusetts. My journey has been filled with ups and downs, but thanks to my background and the knowledge I gained during my master's program, I've been able to navigate it with confidence. Challenges are there, but my passion for education and the skills I've acquired keep me going.

My journey isn't over; in fact, it's just beginning. I'm excited about the future, the new adventures, and the opportunities that await. My passion for education continues to be my guiding star, and I can't wait to make a meaningful impact on the lives of my students in the United States. So, let's see where this journey takes me next!

Gehan Senthinathan

PROFESSOR

SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Gehan Senthinathan is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Buffalo State University. He completed an Honor's Bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Toronto, followed by a Master's Degree and a PhD in Behavioral Neuroscience at Wilfrid Laurier University. His primary research focus explores how ecological variables influence behavioral patterns and underlying neural mechanisms associated with the excessive consumption of drugs and natural rewards. His research interests and publications intersect with various areas in psychology, including addiction, motivation, age-development, learning, and memory. Since joining Buffalo State, he has published his research in highly competitive peer-reviewed journals including *Animal Cognition*, and *Physiology and Behaviour*, with his most recent publication titled "Acquisition and persistence of intermittent access-induced escalated sucrose intake in male rats" (Senthinathan and Eikelboom, 2023). He has a love for translating science to the classroom, and has taught several undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as graduate level workshops. In addition, he teaches for our International Graduate Program for Educators (IGPE) where he enjoys the experience of connecting with students from across the globe. Recently, he was awarded the 2023 Dr. Barbara Frey Award in Education, which recognizes extraordinary faculty leadership that benefits the students of Buffalo State, above and beyond the leadership exhibited in the classroom. In addition to his research and teaching, he contributes to our Buffalo State community through various service endeavors, including serving as an exhibitor for IGPE at conferences in South East Asia.

GLOBAL BOOK

HOUR

The IGPE office is delighted to work in partnership with the Global Book Hour program to help provide opportunities to enhance literacy skills and foster global perspectives.

Please enjoy the following excerpt from a recent Buffalo News article highlighting the wonderful work done by the Global Book Hour initiative and one of the fantastic ways we have been able to collaborate with them.

"At its last session of the semester April 20, Global Book Hour will feature "Los Lunes de Colores" – "Colorful Mondays" – read in English by its co-author, Leonardo Augustin Montes, in a special video presentation he made for the occasion.

The book could not be more reflective of the program, which also seeks to instill a love of books among children and families while giving teacher candidates opportunities to hone their skill at engaging children in reading.

Brandon Kawa, director of Buffalo State International Graduate Programs for Educators, called the connection with Montes "a happy coincidence" that will inspire future Global Book Hour partnerships.

The university's International Graduate Programs for Educators include a master's degree and microcredentials in teaching at American International Schools around the world. One of its partner schools is the American School of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where, it turns out, Leonardo Augustin Montes went to school.

A librarian at the school told Kawa that Montes had just written a children's book that would be a perfect pilot for a collaborative Global Book Hour lesson with a Honduran author. The book is only available in Spanish, but will be published in English this fall.

On the video he made for Buffalo State, Montes reads the English version, while children at the upcoming Global Book Hour will be able to physically peruse the beautifully illustrated Spanish original and take copies home."



Check This Out!

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