

Leslie Calabrese

Title and Address:

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Education

Highest Earned Degree

Ed.D., Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, Special Education, 2026

Dissertation

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Based Strategies for the General Education (GE) Teacher: A Qualitative Case Study of the ABLE Initiative, May 2026, Dr. Judith R. Harrison

Other Earned Degrees

M.A., New Jersey City University, Special Education, 1997.

B.A., Douglass College of Rutgers University, Journalism/Mass Media & BA Sociology, 1993.

Certifications

Licensed Behavior Analyst-New Jersey (LBA-NJ), State of New Jersey Board of Applied Behavior Analyst Examiner, 2026

Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Behavior Analyst Certification Board, May 2017

Supervisor, New Jersey City University, May 2003

Teacher of the Handicapped, New Jersey City University, May 1996

Elementary School Teacher K-8, New Jersey Alternate Route Program, June 1994

Highly Qualified

English/Language Arts, Praxis Test 2004

Honors, Awards & Fellowship

2025-2026 OASIS Professional Development Program, Rutgers University

2024-2025 GSE Faculty Award for Excellence in Service, Rutgers Graduate School of Education

2021-2022 Rutgers Connection Network (RCN) Mentoring Program, Rutgers University

2020-2021 Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Clinical Fellow

Research Interests

Professional Identification

Special Educator, Teacher Leader, Teacher Educator, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Curriculum Development, Behavior Specialist, Autism Specialist, Professional Development, Inclusivity Advocate, and Culturally Responsive Behavior Therapy

Description of Research and Scholarly or Creative Objectives

My practice is centered around several core beliefs. The first belief is that a greater understanding of behavior in the classroom enables teachers to implement functional interventions to encourage a positive educational trajectory for all students. A second core belief that drives my practice is that the representation of cultures in a classroom starts with the inclusion of who is in the room and, equally, who is not. The final belief that drives my research is that professional development must be relatable, actionable, and measurable.

Employment History

Positions Held

2026-ongoing Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, Department of Education Psychology, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

2018-Instructor of Professional Practice, Department of Education Psychology, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

2018-ongoing Partner Leader and Clinical Supervisor, Graduate School of Education-Community School Partnership Network, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

2018-ongoing Education Consultant, LC Education Consultants

2019-2025-BCBA Outreach Training Coordinator, Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center, Rutgers University

2019-2024 Special Education Consultant, Institute for Student Achievement/A Division of Educational Testing Service (ETS)

2012-2018 Special Education Teacher, New Brunswick Public Schools

2000-2003 Alternative Education Teacher, Asbury Park Public Schools

1994-2000 Multi-Grade Alternative and General Education Teacher, Plainfield Public Schools

Titles or Assignments with GSE Positions Held

2018-ongoing Partner Leader and Clinical Supervisor: Each semester, provide clinical supervision to interns assigned to a CSPN district and districts outside of the GSE designated partnership network. Since the onset of my initial contract, I have supported approximately 300 clinical interns in their clinical experience in all three Phases of internships. Supervision includes lesson plan analysis, guided discussions on pedagogy and strategies, and formal observations, which are inclusive of pre-observation reflections, observations with formal protocol and an evaluation tool, and post-observation conferences. After each observation cycle, official summaries are created for cooperating teachers to share the overall trends in students' learning and provide resources to support students

in areas of concern. Also facilitated targeted instructional coaching focused on planning, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, feedback, behavior management, and student engagement.

Teaching Activities

Courses Taught

Introduction to Special Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Teaching Literacy to Students with Disabilities, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Inclusive Teaching in Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Classroom Organization for the Inclusive Classroom, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
The Gifted Child, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Introduction to Gifted Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Gifted Program Development, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University
Instruction for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

Curricular Development - Courses and Programs Development/Revised

2024-ongoing Literacy for Students with Disabilities Course Redesign
2024-ongoing Special Education Practicum Partnership
2023-ongoing Gifted Education Program Redesign
2021-ongoing Urban Social Justice Teacher Preparation Clinical Program Development and Redesign
2021-ongoing Phase 1 Clinical Experience, Phases 2 and 3 Clinical Practice Course Redesign
2018-ongoing Special Education Program Recruitment and Development

Conference Presentations, Lectures, Demonstrations

Calabrese, L., Macchia, M., Randall-Weeks, M., & Zisk, R. (2026, February 18–24). Supporting pre-service teachers' agency: Developing educators as change agents [Conference presentation]. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Calabrese, L., Macchia, M., Randall-Weeks, M., & Zisk, R. (2025, March 7–12). Equity and social justice in clinical practice—Creating change makers in education [Conference presentation]. Association of Teacher Educators Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Calabrese, L. (2024, November 8). Universal design for learning for the inclusive classroom [Conference presentation]. New Jersey Education Association Conference, Atlantic City, NJ.

Calabrese, L. (2024, April 11). Voices from the measured: The role of testing in an equitable society [Plenary session]. American Educational Research Association/National Council for Measurement in Education Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Calabrese, L. (2020, February 15–19). The many faces of special education: Advocating for training teachers for all settings [Conference presentation]. Association of Teacher Educators Annual Meeting, Atlantic City, NJ.

Memberships

New Jersey Association for Behavior Analysis
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Educators
Association of Teacher Educators
AutismNJ

Educational Grants

2023-ongoing (Grant Amount: \$136,267.50 The Civically Engaged Districts (CED) Project is a collaboration between Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE) and Teachers College (TC) that brings together youth, educators, preservice teachers, graduate students in education, and university faculty and staff for professional development, networking, and student voice experiences that support meaningful civic learning in public schools. Rooted in youth participatory action research (YPAR), the project supports educators and students in investigating issues that matter to their schools and communities while developing civic knowledge, inquiry skills, collaboration, and opportunities for collective action. Leslie Calabrese, Agency: Maher Foundation, Role: Co-PI

Service

Service to Rutgers University

2025-ongoing-POSSE 4 Mentor-Rutgers–New Brunswick became a Posse partner institution in 2021 and works with Posse Boston to annually identify and recruit cohorts of young leaders. The first cohort of Rutgers Posse Scholars joined the university in fall 2022. As the RP4 Mentor I play a vital role in supporting student achievement, leadership development, and community building throughout a scholar's college journey.

Service to the GSE

2025-ongoing-Cultivated a unique partnership with a public Special Education school district to ensure that students in the Ed.M. Special Education program complete up to three clinical internships in a wholly special education setting.
2025-ongoing-Worked alongside colleagues at Dublin City University to forge a partnership for our students in our Ed.M. and certificated Gifted Education program. Assisted in creating a study abroad to Ireland beginning summer 2026.
2023-ongoing-Program Coordinator Ed.M. 4+1 Elem. Ed. and Spec. Ed. program
2023-ongoing-Gifted Education Independent Study Supervisor
2023-ongoing GSE Teacher Education Program Redesign Committee
2022-ongoing-Nancy Higginson Dorr Award Committee Member
2022-ongoing-Commencement Committee Member

2022-ongoing-Student Speaker Award Committee

2022-ongoing-Program Coordinator Gifted Education

2018-ongoing-iTEC Committee Member

2018-ongoing Facilitate in-house Job Fair for graduating candidates and partnership districts

2023-2024-Honors Thesis Supervisor

2023-2024 GSE Faculty Search Committee, NTT Asst. Professor Teaching Professor of Elementary Reading & Literacy Education