

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**FACULTY PRESENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**  
**“DISABILITY STUDIES COLLABORATIVE”**

**Action Requested:** Receive the presentation.

**Executive Summary:** Dr. Chris Kliever and Dr. Jennifer Garrett will describe the Disability Studies in Literacy, Language, and Education Collaborative. Based on the recognition that reading, writing, and communication are fundamental to children’s full citizenship in school and the wider community, the Collaborative brings together a cross-disciplinary team of UNI researchers focused on exploring, promoting, and supporting the literacy and communication development of children with significant developmental and sensory disabilities through effective, education-based practices.

Currently, school-based, family-involved projects include personnel from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, Department of Special Education in the College of Education, and Department of Computer Science in the College of Natural Sciences. Researchers and students are engaged in multiple efforts working directly with the Iowa Department of Education, school districts, and families across Iowa and locations around the country. The goal of the projects is to enhance literacy and language for children through responsive professional development, family support, policy, and scholarship.

Dr. Kliever is a professor in the Department of Special Education. A UNI faculty member since 1995, he has spent his research career exploring ways to support the full participation in general education preschool and school settings of young children with significant development disabilities. His work emphasizes effective strategies to foster literacy development in children with significant intellectual and communicative disabilities.

Dr. Garrett is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. She received her Master’s degree from Truman State University and her Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to pursuing a doctoral degree, she worked for five years as a speech-language pathologist in the public schools. Her research interests include school-aged literacy and language disorders, technology, counseling, and genetics.