ALISON MELNICK DYER (ALISON MELNICK)

Assistant Professor
Department of Religious Studies
Bates College
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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

•	Assistant Professor of Asian Religions, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine.	2015-present
•	Visiting Assistant Professor, St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.	2014-2015
•	Fulbright Grantee, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi, India.	2011-2012

EDUCATION

University of Virginia

Department of Religious Studies, program in History of Religions

2006-2014 M.A, 2008 Ph.D., 2014

- M.A. qualifying exam in Tibetan Buddhist history (*Systems of Buddhist Monastic Education*).
- Dissertation: The Life and Times of Mingyur Peldrön: Female Leadership in 18th Century Tibetan Buddhism.

Committee: Kurtis Schaeffer (Dissertation Chair), David Germano (Religious Studies), Anne Kinney (East Asian Languages and Cultures), Karen Lang (Religious Studies), Andrew Quintman (Outside Reader, Yale University).

University of Michigan

2003

Asian Languages and Cultures (focus on South Asian Language and Literature)

• Senior Thesis: *Gendün Chöphel (dGe 'dun chos 'phel) and the Emergence of Modernity in Tibet*. Advised by: Donald S. Lopez.

PUBLICATIONS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

SCHOLAR FACING

Books:

Melnick Dyer, Alison. *The Tibetan Nun Mingyur Peldrön: A Woman of Power and Privilege*. University of Washington Press (forthcoming, Spring 2022).

Articles and Book Chapters:

Melnick Dyer, Alison. "The Canyon of Despair." Chapter in *Longing to Awaken*, edited by Holly Gayley and Dominique Townsend. University of Virginia Press. (forthcoming).

Melnick Dyer, Alison. "Female Authority and Privileged *Lives*: The Hagiography of Mingyur Peldrön." *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies*. Volume 41, 2018, pp. 209-234.

Melnick, Alison. "Beyond the Recovery of Women: The Evolving Study of Gender in Tibetan Buddhism." In *Religion Compass*, 2018, (e12287).

Melnick, Alison. "Mingyur Peldron." In *Treasury of Lives*. 2015. http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Mingyur-Peldron/9394.

• Invited Book Reviews:

Melnick, Alison. "Buddhism and Ireland, by Laurence Cox," Book Review in The Journal of Buddhist Ethics. 2015.

Works Under Review and in Progress:

Melnick Dyer, Alison. "Reading Women at the Margins of Hagiography." Invited by Pascale Engelmajer for a special issue on "Buddhist Women's Religiosity: Contemporary Feminist Perspectives." In *Religions*.

PUBLIC FACING

• Invited Articles:

Melnick Dyer, Alison. "Eighteenth-Century Advice for Modern Women of Privilege." In *Sakyadhita*. Sakyadhita International, 2021. Invited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo.

Melnick Dyer, Alison. "The Dharma of Bees." In Vajra Dakini Nunnery's *Newsletter*, 2021. Invited by Khenmo Drolma

Other Media:

How to Maintain a Writing Practice. Invited Presentation for the University of Toronto's Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies' "How Do You Do It?" Series: November 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYBxhO0EUtM

"Tibetan Buddhism, Gender, and the Life of Mingyur Peldron." Invited podcast interview with Gregory Soden (host) for the Classical Ideas Podcast. July, 2020. https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/the-classical-ideas-podcast/e/74378670?autoplay=true

Buen Camino Podcast. Invited by Bates Multifaith Chaplaincy. Interviewed by Multifaith Fellows Joan Buse and Matt Suslovic. June, 2019.

PRESENTATIONS, TALKS, AND PANELS

SCHOLARSHIP

Invited Workshop, "Gender and the Politics of Translation: Reading the Life of a Female Tibetan Saint." Workshop on "Translation and the Analytical Study of Religion." The Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline at the University of Regina (SORAAAD). San Diego, November, 2019.

"Admonitions and Advice: Mingyur Peldron's Instructions to Men and Women." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. Denver, Colorado, November 2018.

Invited paper, "Coming of Age in Exile: Mingyur Peldrön in Sikkim." Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies Annual Meeting, Austin, Texas. February 2016.

"Female Authority and the Lives of Women in 18th Century Tibet: Reading Hagiography as History." Atlanta, Georgia. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2015.

"Women's Religious Education: One Historical Precedent." Charlottesville, Virginia. Association for Asian Studies Southeast Conference, January 2015.

"The Literary *Life* of Jetsün Mingyur Peldrön: The 18th Century Creation of a Public Identity." Baltimore, Maryland. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2013

"Blood, Wrath, and Fear in the Life of an 18th Century Buddhist Teacher: Tibetan Life Writing and the Creation of Female Administrative Authority." Charlottesville, Virginia. Buddhist Traditions: New Directions, Graduate Studies Conference in Buddhist Studies, 2012.

CONFERENCE SERVICE (OUTSIDE BATES)

(upcoming) Invited Panel Chair, "Women and Revelation in India, Tibet, and China." Panel co-sponsored by the Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit; Comparative Studies in Religion Unit; Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit; and Women and Religion Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2021.

Invited Panel Chair, "New Approaches in Asceticism" exploratory session. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. San Diego, November, 2019.

Invited Panel Chair: "Hagiography & Healing: Contemporary and Classical Perspectives." Religion and Disability Studies Group, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. 2016.

Invited Panel Chair: "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Tibetan Protector Deities." Buddhism Section, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. 2016.

Panel Organizer: "Writing Tibetan Women." Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Unit. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. Baltimore, Maryland. November 2013.

Conference Organizer: Buddhist Studies Group at the University of Virginia, Graduate Student Conference "Buddhist Meditation: History, Culture, Development, Science." 2013-2014.

Conference Organizer: Annual Buddhist Studies Graduate Conference. "Buddhist Traditions: New Directions." Hosted by the University of Virginia, 2012.

PUBLIC FACING AND STUDENT FACING TALKS (BATES AND BEYOND)

(Upcoming) Speaker: "Yasodhara and the Buddha: Women in the Early Buddhist Community." A Lhabab Duchen Celebration organized by Vajra Dakini Nunnery, in conversation with Vanessa Sasson, October 27th, 2021.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Studies of Gender in the Field of Asian Studies." Nathan Faries' Senior Seminar on the Individual and Society in East Asia (ASIA 320). Bates College, September 2021.

Invited Presenter: Workshop on "Talking Himalayan Borderlands: A Workshop on Disciplinary Approaches and Methods." Hosted by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, Ashoka University, and O.P Jindal Global University, February, 2021.

Invited Panel Participant: "Daughters of the Buddha Have No Fear." Vajra Dakini Nunnery, November, 2020.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Studies of Gender in the Field of Asian Studies." Nathan Faries' Senior Seminar on the Individual and Society in East Asia. Bates College, September 2020.

Invited Panelist: My Favorite W2 Writing Assignment, Bates College, December 2019.

Invited Panelist: Fulbright Alumni Panel. Hosted by the Maine Chapter of the Fulbright Association at Bates College. April 2019.

Panelist: Syllabus Redesign with Kirk Read and the Academic Resource Commons. Bates College, January, 2018.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Buddhism" Judith Hierstein's course "Faith of our Fathers." University of Southern Maine, May 2017.

Panelist: Publicly Engaged Pedagogy at Bates (Harward Center), Bates College, April 2017.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Dōgen's *Mountains and Waters Sutra* (*Sansui-kyō*)". Cynthia Baker's First Year Seminar. Bates Morse Mountain, October 2017.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Self-Immolation and Religion in Modern Tibet." Cynthia Baker's course on Religion, Violence, and Non-Violence. Bates College, March 2017.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Asian Spirituality" summer course, directed by Michiaki Okuyama. Hartford Seminary, June 2016.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Dōgen's *Mountains and Waters Sutra* (*Sansui-kyō*)". Cynthia Baker's First Year Seminar. Bates Morse Mountain, October 2015.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Asian Spirituality" summer course, directed by Michiaki Okuyama. Hartford Seminary. June 2015.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "Women's Biographies in Tibetan Buddhism." Karen Lang's graduate course on Women in Buddhism. University of Virginia, January 2015.

Invited Speaker: "Buddhist Women in the 21st Century: Education and Innovation." University of Mary Washington, March 2013.

Invited Guest Lecturer: "The Life of the Buddha and the Jātaka Tales." Karen Lang's undergraduate course on Buddhism. Talk entitled University of Virginia, 2009.

TEACHING

Courses Taught at Bates College

- Death and the Afterlife REL 110: Winter 2017, Winter 2018, Winter 2020
- Introduction to Asian Religions ASRE 155, Fall 2015, Fall 2016, Fall 2017, Fall 2019, Fall 2020
- Buddhist Traditions ASRE 250, Winter 2016, Winter 2017, Winter 2018, Winter 2020, Winter 2021
- Religions of Tibet ASRE 251, Fall 2015, Winter 2017, Winter 2019, Fall 2019
- Buddhist Texts in Translation ASRE 308: Winter 2017, Fall 2020
- Buddhism and Gender GSRE 311: Fall 2016, Winter 2019, Winter 2021
- Epics of Asia: Myth and Religion ASRE 348, Winter 2016, Fall 2017, Winter 2020
- From Shangri-La to Radical Dharma: Buddhism in North America, ASRE s28, 2019
- The Buddhist Himalaya ASRE s26: Study Abroad in Ladakh, 2018
- Independent Study: Buddhism and Psychotherapy, REL 360, Winter 2021

Courses Taught at St. Lawrence University

- Religious Life of India, Fall 2014
- Mystery and Meaning: Theories and Methods for the Study of Religion, Fall 2014
- Buddhist Religious Traditions, Spring 2015

- Religious Life of Tibet, Spring 2015
- Religion and South Asian Literature, Spring 2015

Courses Taught at The University of Mary Washington

Women in Buddhism, Spring 2013

Courses Taught at Piedmont Virginia Community College

Introduction to Eastern Religious Traditions, Fall 2012

Courses Taught at the University of Virginia

- Tibetan Buddhism, Spring 2010
 Teaching Assistant to Prof. Jann Ronis.
- Introduction to Buddhism, Fall 2009
 Teaching Assistant to Prof. Karen Lang.
- Introduction to Eastern Religious Traditions, Spring 2009
 Teaching Assistant to Prof. John Nemec.
- Tibetan Buddhism, Fall 2008
 Teaching Assistant to Prof. David DiValerio.

ACADEMIC ADVISING AT BATES COLLEGE

Current Religious Studies Major Advisees: 50% of departmental majors, as of September 2021 Current Religious Studies Minor Advisees: 38% of departmental minors, as of September 2021

SENIOR THESIS ADVISING AT BATES COLLEGE

Will Zimmerman, '21 (Religious Studies): "Dharma for All: Mindfulness in the United States of America." Fall 2020.

Sullivan Brock, '20 (Asian Studies): "Refractions of Gender and Authority as Seen Through Izanami, Izanagi, Amaterasu, and Susanoo in Japanese Creation Mythology." Fall 2019.

Lydia Sullivan, '20 (Religious Studies): "Independent Thinkers & Women Unrestrained: Táhirih, Sera Khandro, and Mary Baker Eddy in the Androcentric Public Sphere of the 19th and 20th Centuries." Winter 2020.

Jin Wei, '20 (Religious Studies): "Folklore and Religions Reimagined in Contemporary China." Winter 2020.

Olga Revzina '18 (Religious Studies): "Machik Labdrön and Tsultrim Allione's Commitment to All Sentient Beings: Ancient Wisdom and Modern Buddho-Psychology." Winter 2018.

Emma Hampson '18 (Religious Studies): "The Americanization of Buddhism and the Subsequent Development of Mindfulness Based Stress Therapy: Is There a Role for Religion in Healthcare?" Winter 2018.

Kai Lindsey '18 (Religious Studies): "The Intergenerational Transmission of Buddhism in Maine." Fall and Winter, 2017-2018.

Kate Traquina '17 (Gender and Sexuality Studies): "Sexual and Gendered Violence in Early Tibetan Buddhist Conversion Lore." Winter, 2017.

Audrey Puleio '17 Thesis (Environmental Studies and Religious Studies, combined): "Spiritual-Environmental Responsibility: Emotional Connection to Nature as Seen in *Avatar*." Fall and Winter, 2016-2017

Honors Thesis Committees at Bates College

Olga Revzina '18 (Psychology): "Round and Round Like a Squirrel on a Wheel: Exploring the Role of Negative Affect and Rumination in Mood Changes During Pain."

Zoe Seaman-Grant '17 (Women and Gender Studies, now Gender and Sexuality Studies): "Constructing Womanhood and the Female Cyborg: A Feminist Reading of Ex Machina and Westworld."

Duncan Reehl ' 17 (Music): "One Hand Clapping: Hearing Zen in << Recueil de pierre et de sable>>."

DIRECTED INDEPENDENT STUDIES AT BATES COLLEGE

Khushi Choudhary, '23. Buddhism and Psychotherapy, Winter 2021

Khushi Choudhary, '23. Buddhism and Psychotherapy Independent Summer Research, Summer 2021. Funded by a Hoffman Scholarship (\$4000).

STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AT BATES COLLEGE

- Olga Revzina, '18
- Lydia Sullivan, '20
- Anna Maheu, '21
- Madeline Korbey, '23
- Khushi Choudhary, '23

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT

SERVICE AT BATES COLLEGE

Elected and Appointed Committees

- Phillips Student Fellowship Committee, Fall 2021-present (appointed)
- Curriculum Review Committee, Fall 2020-present (elected)
- Mellon Grant for Equity and Inclusion in the Humanities, 2019 (appointed)
- Asian Studies Program, Fall 2016-present (appointed)
- Otis Committee, Fall 2016-Winter 2019 (invited)

Search Committees

- Assistant Professor of Politics search (Gender and Development). Fall 2019-Winter 2020
- Visiting Assistant Professor of Chinese search, Spring 2019
- Assistant Professor of Chinese search, Winter 2019 (sub-committee to re-write a previous search application).
- Dean of Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs search, May-December 2017 (appointed by President Spencer)
- Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies search, Jan 2018-May 2018
- C3 Fellow in Religious Studies search, January-March 2016

Coordinator for General Education Concentrations (GECs)

Buddhism GEC, May 2017-present

Coordinator

Women and Gender in Asia GEC, Fall 2017-present

Coordinator

South Asian Studies GEC, Fall 2016-present

Coordinator

Other

Parliamentarian Pool (working with Parliamentarian Michael Sargent, and Matt Coté), Fall 2021

Conferences and Guest Speakers at Bates

Shreena Gandhi, *Yoga and White Supremacy*. Invited Learning Associate, with Learning Associate Award. Fall 2020

Ann Gleig, From Being 'Enlightened' to Being 'Woke': Racial Justice Work in American Convert Buddhism. Short Term 2019.

Khenmo Drolma of Vajra Dakini Nunnery, Falmouth, Maine. Invited Learning Associate, with Learning Associate Award, Winter 2019.

Acharya Yeshe of Vajra Dakini Nunnery, Falmouth, Maine. Invited Learning Associate, with Learning Associate Award, Winter 2019.

Matt MacKenzie. Luminous Cognizance: Toward a Buddhist Model of Consciousness. March 2018.

Natasha Mikles. Saving Our Mothers from Hell: Gesar, Mulian, and the 'Good Buddhist.' Fall 2017.

Damon Berry. "Race is Our Religion": Racial Protectionism and Religion in American White Nationalism. Winter, 2017

Khenpo Jigme Kelzang. *Dharma Talk*. Short Term, 2017.

Co-coordinated the Religious Studies Speaker Series Confronting Violence: Racism, Religion, and American Identities. Winter 2017.

Co-coordinated the Religious Studies Speaker Series *Convictions: Race, Religion, and Surveillance Culture.* Winter 2016.

Additional Service to the Field

Scholarship

Peer Reviewer: Articles submitted to the Journal of the American Association of Religion

Peer Reviewer: Articles submitted to the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion

Peer Reviewer: Articles submitted to the journal *Himalaya*

Peer Reviewer: Book proposals submitted to the International Association for the History of Religions

Assistant Editor: Journal of the American Academy of Religion. 2008-2011.

Assistant Editor: Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. 2007-2009.

Graduate Research Assistant: Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, 2013-2014.

Graduate Research Assistant: *Tibetan and Himalayan Library* (online Digital Humanities resource). 2006-2011.

Research Assistant: To Donald S. Lopez, Jr. 2001-2003.

Other

Faculty Advisory Board Member: Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education (ISLE): Bates College Representative. 2017-2018.

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED, AND CERTIFICATIONS

Community Engaged Learning Across/Among Racial Differences, led by Leslie Hill, through the Harward Center, Fall 2021 (once a month).

Workshop: Reexamining Allyship: How Might We Move Beyond Performance & Toward Conflict Transformation, Bates College, May 2021.

Public Talk: Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Advocating for Anti-Racism and Racial Solidarity, with Jennifer Ho. Bates College, April, 2021.

Workshop: Power Privilege and Oppression. Bates College, March, 2021.

Panel: Race and Racisms in Asia/Asian Studies, Association for Asian Studies, March, 2021.

Panel: Asian and South Asian Women in the Academy. Bates College, March, 2021.

Workshop: Racial Disparity, Structural Violence, and COVID-19 in Maine, Bates College, January, 2021.

Public Talk: Undoing Whiteness in American Buddhist Modernism, with Ann Gleig. Harvard Buddhist Community, April 2021.

Public Talk: Multicultural History of Dharma and Diversity: Focus on US and Insight Meditation communities, with Larry Yang. Harvard Buddhist Community, January 2021.

Public Talk: Dr. Angela Y. Davis, Keynote Address for MLK Day, Bates College, January, 2021.

Office of Equity and Inclusion, 14 Day Racial Equity Challenge, Bates College, November, 2020.

Conference Panel: Buddhism and Racism Across Asia, Europe and North America, American Academy of Religion, December, 2020.

Book Group: So You Want to Talk About Race, Fall 2020.

Panel: Land Acknowledgements, Bates College, October 2020.

Workshops: Commons Conversations, Let's Talk About Race, Part 3, Bates College, Fall 2020.

Workshops: Commons Conversations, Let's Talk About Race, Part 2, Bates College, Fall 2020.

Workshops: Commons Conversations, Let's Talk About Race, Part 1, Bates College, Fall 2020.

May Institute: Learning from our Remote Past. CBB Pedagogy Matters. May 26-28, 2020.

Workshop: Engagement in the Online Classroom, American Academy of Religion, April 3, 2020.

Workshop: Designing Assignments for Remote Teaching, Writing at Bates, March 18, 2020.

Workshop: Leveraging Lyceum for Full Online Delivery of Courses, with Michael Hanrahan, March 17, 2020.

Workshop: "The Revolution Will Be Backward Designed - The Social Context of the Inclusively Designed Classroom," with Bryan Dewsbury, January, 2020.

Reading Group: *Heavy*. Bates College, January, 2020.

Reading Group: White Fragility. Bates College, January, 2020.

Workshop: Understanding and Addressing Multilingual Writers' Needs, with Ghada Gewarsh of Colby College, at Bates, August 2019.

Workshop: Engaging Students in Deep Reading, with Bridget Fullerton, Bates College, August 2019.

Workshop: Interpreting Student Evaluations, with Lynn Mandeltort, May 2019.

Learning Community: Student Participation in the Classroom, Summer 2019.

Workshop: Sacred Writes Publicly Engaged Scholarship training (1 week), June, 2019.

Symposium: Development and Use of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education, Bates College, April, 2019.

Webinar: Every Semester Needs a Plan, National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, January, 2019.

Workshop: "Tenure & Time Management: How to Manage Your Time So You Can Publish Prolifically AND Have a Life Beyond the Ivory Tower," October, 2018.

Workshop: Lotsawa Translation, Trans/lation and Trans/formation, Boulder, Colorado, October, 2018.

Workshop: Maine British Studies Reading Group Meeting, August, 2018.

Training: Wilderness First Aid (WFA) Certification through Wilderness Medical Associates, 2018.

Workshop: Learning for EveryBody: Inclusive Teaching and Curricular Practices, with Susan Burch, December, 2017.

Workshop: Supporting English Language Learners as Writers, Bates College, November 2017.

Workshop: Using Primary Sources in Class, with Christina Bell, Bates College, August, 2017.

Workshop: May Conference, "Beyond Compliance: Better Teaching Through Universal Design," Bates College, May 2017.

Teaching Triangles at Bates College, Winter 2017.

Reading Group: Justice and Equity Reading Group, Fall 2016-Winter. 2017.

Writing @ Bates Grading Workshop, November, 2016.

The Joy Fish Lab Learning Community (Asian Studies), Fall 2016.

FCLT Learning Community, Fall 2016.

Publicly Engaged Pedagogy (PEP) Learning Community, Harward Center, Bates College. Fall, 2016.

Active Ally Training and Certification through the Office of Intercultural Education at Bates College, Spring, 2016.

Green Dot Violence Intervention Training at Bates College, Winter, 2016.

Teaching Triangles at Bates College, Winter 2016.

Learning Objectives Workshop, September, 2016.

LGBTQ+ 101 Training at Bates College, October 11, 2015.

LGBTQ+ Student Support Training (SAFE: Saints, Activities for Equity, St. Lawrence University, 2014.

Wilderness First Aid (WFA) training through SOLO, January 2009.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion Association for Asian Studies Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies American Association of University Women US Department of State Alumni Organization University of Virginia Buddhist Studies Group

OTHER SERVICE

Board Member, Vajra Dakini Nunnery, 2018-present

Summer Volunteer, The Center for Wisdom's Women, Lewiston, Maine. Summer, 2018.

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Bates College Faculty Development Fund. \$4000 for publishing costs for *The Tibetan Nun Mingyur Peldrön: A Woman of Power and Privilege.* (2021-2022)

Mellon Periclean Faculty Leadership Program in the Humanities, for developing a Community Engaged Learning course with sustained community partnership. \$4000. Second cohort (2020-2022).

PEP (Publicly Engaged Pedagogy) Project Stipend from the Harward Center, to develop a course with a Community Engaged Learning component. \$300, January 2017

Harward Center Community Engaged Learning Grant, for implementation of Community Engaged Learning components in my Death and the Afterlife course. \$500, January 2017

CIIS (Center for International and Intercultural Studies) Fellowship Award, through the Hanson Endowment for International Studies, \$13,000, 2015

Robert J. Huskey Travel Award for travel to academic conferences, 2013

Fulbright Research Fellowship for 9 mo. research in India, 2011 \$9,000

Ellen Bayard Weedon Scholarship for summer research in China, 2010

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Language Study Grant for Intensive Chinese language study, 2009

Doctoral Degree Fellowship for completion of PhD, 2008-2014

LANGUAGES

Tibetan: Proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing modern colloquial Tibetan (Lhasa dialect). Reading proficiency in Classical Tibetan.

Chinese: Intermediate speaking and reading modern colloquial Mandarin. Intermediate reading proficiency in Classical Chinese.

French: Reading proficiency.

English: Native fluency in reading and writing.