

**NATALIE BROWN**  
**CLASS: 2010**

**MAJOR:** Education and Politics

Natalie Brown is an interdisciplinary major who focuses on education and politics by taking a mix of anthropology, sociology, politics and education classes. Patti Buck's Globalization and Education course fostered her interest in education at a social and political level. This also prompted her to take more education classes and explore related subjects such as social justice and political theory. Natalie has come to the conclusion that education can be a tool for social justice. She believes that changes should be made within the educational system to further support equal access to quality education and hopes to pursue her passion for education after Bates.



Natalie has worked closely with Helen Regan and Patti Buck throughout her years at Bates. Last year, Natalie and Patti coauthored an article about the impact of No Child Left Behind on the Somali English Language Learner population in Lewiston public schools for the *Radical Teacher* magazine. Natalie also has benefited greatly from her field placements and enjoys how both local schools and Bates students can learn from one another. Looking towards the future, Natalie hopes to teach for a few years and use this experience as she becomes involved in educational policy reform.

**ILANA ADLER-BELL**  
CLASS OF 2009  
HOMETOWN: CANTON, CT  
MAJOR: WOMEN AND GENDER  
STUDIES  
MINOR: EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

**Why is studying Education important to you?**

“My understanding for the importance of education has grown immensely through my experiences in each of my field placements at Bates (in mainstream classrooms, English Language Learning classes, and a special education classroom) and my work abroad with 10,000 Girls in Kaolack, Senegal. Studying education is necessary in order to understand how to engage all different types of people in their own learning, as well as in order to understand how to create a more accepting, understanding, and globally conscious society. That is the power of education, which cannot be accomplished as effectively



through any other institution—the power to open minds to others’ realities, to accept and understand diversity and difference.”

**Describe your work with professors in the Education Department.**

“I have worked for most of my Bates career with Education Professor Patti Buck, who has been my teacher, mentor, and friend. As her research assistant, I interned with the United Somali Women of Maine (USWM) in Lewiston for two years, organizing and implementing women’s reproductive health education focus groups, as well as initiating a memoir-gathering project, which has expanded over the past two years. After a semester abroad last winter, I then met Patti in Dadaab, Kenya, to conduct participatory research Memoir Groups. These memoirs were included in an anthology of stories entitled, *They Were Very Beautiful: Such Things Are*, which was used to help secure scholarship money for girls in Dadaab to continue their education post secondary school. This year, Patti is my Thesis Advisor, for which I am writing a feminist ethnography surrounding my experiences in Dadaab. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with the professors here at Bates and to contribute to their work.”

**Describe some of your experiences from your field placements.**

“Last year, I worked in a Special Education self-contained classroom for students with Emotional Disabilities at McMahon; since there were only six students in the class, I grew very close with each of them, and learned so much about how their homes lives impacted their school performances. I have a new understanding and appreciation for the difficulties of working as a Special Education teacher, as well as for the importance of *knowing* your students’ home lives, which so deeply influence their behaviors and emotions. After how much I loved and learned from this placement, I am strongly considering training in Special Education when I graduate.

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**KATIE SMARSE**

CLASS OF 2009

HOMETOWN: NORTH WOODSTOCK, NH

MAJOR: ENGLISH

MINOR: TEACHER EDUCATION AND  
EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

**How did you first become interested in the field of Education?**

“I have always enjoyed teaching. Growing up, I used to help my parents on the weekends coach snowboarding lessons at a local resort for fun, and then it just kept going. I enjoy trying to understand why and how people think the way they do, and



Education allows me to do that. At Bates, I knew I wanted to work within the Education Department after my First Year Seminar with Professor Patti Buck: Exploring Education through Narratives. I was placed at the Adult Learning Center with Somali refugees, and to this day, that is the most influential experience of my Bates career.”

**Describe your work with professors in the Education department.**

“Ten years from now, I hope that I will still be in touch with some of my Education professors. It might be the smaller class size, but I truly value how personalized the professors are in the department. All of my professors (and I’ve had all of them!) have personalized classes to fit individuals’ needs and questions. I am interested in drug and alcohol use in adolescents and how it affects schools. One of the professors knew it was an interest of mine so she helped me create an independent study where I could focus my time on something I found invigorating. All of my work with professors has been on a mutually respected level, and I think that has had the greatest influence on me because my professors have made it a welcoming environment.”

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**TIERNEY TOBIN**  
CLASS OF 2009  
HOMETOWN: STAMFORD, CT  
MAJOR: INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

**How did you first become interested in the field of Education?**

“The process of learning has always fascinated me, and as I've grown up I've seen education's ability to empower individuals. I have come to understand education as being the key to improving society. I have personally grown and changed so much due to my education and I hope to facilitate that experience for others.”



**Have you enjoyed the Education courses that you have taken at Bates?**

“The education courses at Bates are diverse and have allowed me to study the field from a variety of viewpoints. Throughout my time at Bates and the courses that I have taken, I have begun to realize how complex and all-encompassing the topic of education truly is. My classes have given me the ability to examine the many aspects of education. I hope to continue studying different aspects of education to better understand the relationship between multiple disciplines and education. I have experienced firsthand how education can be a tool of empowerment and I hope to continue by not only helping to provide the opportunity for education to empower others, but to continue educating myself as well.”

**Describe your work with professors in the Education Department.**

“In the past four years, I have become close to a number of the Education professors. I view my professors not only as educators, but as understanding and sympathetic advisors. My Education professors have proved that they care about finding out ways that I will learn best. All of the educator professors have organized their classes in a way that speaks to every student’s unique learning style. My education professors respect me and encourage and support me to do my best work.”

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**BECKY WASON**

CLASS OF 2009

HOMETOWN: BARRINGTON, NH

MAJOR: HISTORY

MINOR: EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

**Have you enjoyed working with the professors in the Education Department?**

“One of the things I have appreciated most about the professors in the Education Department is their evident passion for teaching. Their previous experiences in teaching add so much insight and vibrancy into their courses, and I’ve learned a lot simply by watching their teaching styles. Their enthusiasm demonstrates their firm belief in the significance of their field, and has helped me



to more deeply understand and value the enormous role of education and educators in our society.”

**What experiences have been the most rewarding for you in your field placements?**

“Opportunities to work closely with individuals and small groups of students have definitely been the highlight of my field placements. For example, I was able to work with a few fourth-grade boys on a research project that was driven by their own curiosity about Stonehenge. In another placement, I helped lead an after-school club for middle school girls, and was thrilled to watch them grow in their respect for themselves and for each other over the course of the semester.”