

Research Issues in Contemporary Education

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IN MEMORIAM

Rayma Harchar, Ed.D. 1952-2011



Rayma Harchar, 2011 President of LERA, assistant professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, formerly at Southeastern Louisiana University, received her Ed.D. from Oklahoma State University. She completed 35 years in education as a classroom teacher, elementary school principal, school superintendent, and university faculty. She was passionate about education and students' rights, actively involved in principal preparation programs, and was a prolific research presenter and published writer.

We miss our friend.

This inaugural issue of *Research Issues in Contemporary Education* is dedicated to Rayma. May her legacy inspire the researchers who publish in this journal.

FORWARD

It is with great pleasure that we ask you to join us in celebrating the long awaited and anticipated publication of the inaugural issue (Spring 2016) of *Research Issues in Contemporary Education* (*RICE*). Launched in the Sixtieth Anniversary year (2016) of the Louisiana Education Research Association (LERA), *RICE* is now the official publication of the association. In this issue, you will find the published articles from the recipients of the 2014 and 2015 Rayma Harcher LERA Outstanding Research Paper Award and the 2014 and 2015 LERA Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award. We have also published the abstracts of presentations completed at the 2014 and 2015 LERA Annual Meeting.

We would like to express appreciation to those members of the LERA Board of Directors who persevered and contributed so much in the preparation of this inaugural issue of *RICE*. The Board plans to publish two issues (Spring and Fall). The Fall 2016 issue will include manuscripts submitted to the association that extend or are external to presentations at the Annual Meeting. More information on submissions to *RICE* can be found on the LERA Website (<http://leraweb.net/>). We hope that you will share this volume with colleagues, and we encourage you to submit your work for consideration for future issues of *Research Issues in Contemporary Education*.

Kathy Campbell and Randy Parker
Managing Co-Editors

RAYMA HARCHAR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS

Motivating Teachers towards Expertise Development: A Mixed-Methods Study of the Relationships between School Culture, Internal Factors, and State of Flow

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Overview of the Study

Improving education is no mystery. Teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). The research indicates high teacher quality impacts gains in learning across classrooms, even when compared within the same school. Some teachers consistently demonstrate larger student achievement gains than other teachers.

While effective teacher research when combined with school culture research, suggests the interaction between effective teaching and professional learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Dufour, 2004; Guskey & Sparks, 1996; Hord & Rutherford, 1998; Huffman, 2000b; Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, & Moller, 2001; Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007; Moller, 2006; Thompson, Gregg, & Nisha, 2004), the research does not clearly explain the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow have upon motivating teachers in the constant development of expertise. This sequential mixed-methods research was developed to understand the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow have upon motivating a teacher to develop teaching expertise, in order to add to the discussion of educational reform efforts.

The answer to a highly effective and productive educational system is to ensure every child is taught by a highly effective teacher every day and in every class. The research clearly proves teacher quality significantly impacts student achievement (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Good & Grouws, 1979; Good, Grouws, & Ebmeir, 1983; Hattie, 2003; Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2008; Nye, Konstantopoulous, & Hedges, 2004; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2007). Furthermore, the research also can explain a deep understanding of the specific teacher practices, which are conducive to consistently increasing student achievement (Borko & Livingston, 1990; Hattie, 1993; Hattie, 2003; Marzano, 1998; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Shulman, 1987). Finally, the research also demonstrates how to develop and implement effective professional learning, which can directly impact student achievement, to paint a very clear picture of expert teaching (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Dufour, 2004; Guskey & Sparks, 1996; Hord & Rutherford, 1998; Huffman, 2000a; Huffman, 2000b; Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, & Moller, 2001; Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007; Moller, 2006; Thompson, Gregg, & Nisha, 2004).

This study explored the literature concerning the factors such as school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow in order to understand the impact these factors may have upon teachers who consistently develop towards expertise. The purpose was to expand the research base concerning the development of optimum cultures where the pursuit of expertise is the norm.

Structure and Progression of the Framework

This study explored the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow have upon the motivation of teachers to develop expertise. The study was created to understand the motivating factors, which drive teachers to pursue expertise in order to increase student achievement as they navigate the educational landscape successfully.

Expert teachers have the ability to focus upon the goal of student achievement without being distracted by various pitfalls found in educational cultures.

The factors included in the original conceptual framework included school culture factors such as professional culture, shared leadership, and collegial teaching and learning, (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Futernick, 2007; Griffith, 2004; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2000; Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Johnson, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2006; Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002; Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002), internal factors (Costa and Garmston, 1998) including craftsmanship, efficacy, flexibility, interdependence, and consciousness, and the state of flow Csikszentmihalyi (1990). While other factors such as district and state policies are explored in the research, these factors are not included in the framework as the teacher has little choice in these policies.

The following section defines the terms utilized in the original framework.

Expert Teachers

Expert teachers are teachers who add value to their students through reflective and effective teaching practices as defined in the research (Good & Brophy, 2008; Hattie, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).

While current value-added models (LDOE, 2011) attempt to nail down teacher impact through the use of single test score, the researcher proposes expertise is defined by more than a test score obtained in a single week of testing. To define an expert teacher is to examine the skills and actions teachers perform in a classroom, which are deemed by the research to be effective in improving student achievement.

In 1987, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (National Board of Professional Teaching Standard, 2002) was formed in response

to the Task Force of Teaching as a Profession report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, which was funded by the Carnegie Forum on Education. As of 2011 over 91,000 teachers in 25 various contents have achieved National Board certification in the United States. Intrigued by this process, Hattie and Jaeger (2003) began researching how certified teachers internalized and processed the five Core Standards differently than teachers who did not attain certification. Expert teachers can (1) identify essential representations of their subject, (2) guide learning through classroom interactions, (3) monitor learning and provide feedback, (4) attend to affective attributes, and (5) influence student outcomes (Hattie, 2003).

Hattie (2003) states he and his colleague Jaeger examined the entries for patterns and then spent time observing the teachers to find the differences between those who achieved certification and those who did not. Hattie (2003) states “expert teachers can identify essential representations of their subject, can guide learning through classroom interactions, can monitor learning and provide feedback, can attend to affective attributes, and can influence student outcomes. These five major dimensions lead to 16 prototypic attributes of expertise. Herein lie the differences” (p.5). A further examination of these five dimensions of an expert teacher, finds an alignment to other effective teacher research of Good and Brophy, (2008), Marzano (2008) and Darling-Hammond (1995).

The variety of lists available in the literature is substantial, but for the purpose of this research, the researcher chose a set of skills and actions, which are supported in a wide-range of research, but also clearly observable by a researcher in the classroom, through the examination of student work, and by interviewing students and teachers (Good & Brophy, 2008; Hattie, 2003; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). The list is a compilation of specific skills effective teachers exhibit as defined by Good and Brophy (2008). The clarifications and further explanations are supported by the work of

Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003), and Hattie (2003; 2009).

Internal Factors

The internal factors as defined by Costa and Garmston (1998) include efficacy, craftsmanship, flexibility, interdependence, and consciousness. These factors increase and decrease based on external situations and experiences. The individual factors play highly into individual motivation and persistence. The internal factors or the five passions defined by Costa and Garmston (1998) work in tandem to define a person who not only thinks critically, but acts upon the thoughts in order to reach set goals. In order to be reflective thinkers about teaching, the five human passions must be evidenced. These basic human forces create the passions, which drive, influence, motivate, and inspire intellectual capacities or in other words, productive human thought and action (Costa & Garmston, 1994).

Flow

Flow is the mental state of operation where a person is so fully immersed in an activity or experience a feeling of extreme energized focus, complete involvement, and success in the activity occurs (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In other words, flow is a person’s complete motivation to be immersed into the activity. The result is a positive and energized alignment of all of the person’s emotions to the task at hand. The image created from examining the expert teacher research (Hattie, 2003) demonstrates a person who has clear goals for both him or her and the students. The person is highly focused on the teaching and makes adjustments as needed. The complete loss of self into the instruction and facilitation of the students may produce the flow experience and therefore drive the teacher to work harder to achieve the next level of expertise. This internal drive is possibly due in part to classroom experiences of flow.

School Culture

School culture is the specific job characteristics such as working conditions, professional learning, peer relationships, and leadership support, which daily impact a teacher (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Futernick, 2007; Griffith, 2004; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2000; Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Johnson, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2006; Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002; Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002).

Significance of the Study

Research from this study contributes to the body of knowledge concerning expert teachers and the forces working within and upon these individuals and their development in order to inform policy at the local, state, national and international level. As previously stated, the research for the past four decades indicates teacher quality significantly impacts student achievement (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Good & Grows, 1979; Good, Grouws, & Ebmeir, 1983; Hattie, 2003; Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2008; Nye, Konstantopoulous, & Hedges, 2004; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2007; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). The research has also created a well-rounded set of teacher practices, which specifically increase student achievement (Borko & Livingston, 1990; Hattie, 1993; Hattie, 2003; Marzano, 1998; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Shulman, 1987). When the effective teacher research is combined with school culture research, a very clear picture of effective teaching and professional learning develops (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Dufour, 2004; Guskey & Sparks, 1996; Hord & Rutherford, 1998; Huffman, 2000b; Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, & Moller, 2001; Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007; Moller, 2006; Thompson, Gregg, & Nisha, 2004). The element missing in the research is a deep understanding of the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow have upon motivating teachers in the constant development of expertise.

Development of the Teacher Motivational Expertise Questionnaire

A two-part instrument was developed and used to collect data on the teachers' states of mind, teachers' state of flow, and school culture through an adaptation of three models: the Five States of Mind Inventory (Ushijima, 1996), the Short Dispositional Flow Scale (Jackson, Eckland, & Martin, 2010) and the Revised School Culture Elements Questionnaire (Olivier, Bobbett, Ellett, & Ruggett, 1998). The questionnaire included 56 statements with each including a Current Status response and Optimal Status response, along with a demographic section.

Development of the Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was created for one-on-one, general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002), which allowed teachers to respond to a standard set of questions and the interviewer to ask clarifying questions in order to discover the factors impacting the individual teacher's pursuit of expertise.

Development of the Observation Tool

The researcher further explored the motivational factors impacting teachers' pursuit of expertise through the in-person observation of three teachers. The researcher completed a pre-observation conference with the teacher prior to the observation to establish context for the lesson within the unit of study. The researcher then observed the lesson scripting and taking notes of the lesson. The lesson was recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed using Hattie's (2003) 16 attributes of expert teachers to evidence collection procedures as cited in the Expert Teacher Observation Standards protocol. The researcher also conducted a post-observation interview.

Research Questions

While this research focused on both existing theories in literature, as well as on the development of a conceptual framework, a series of research questions (quantitative, mixed methods, and qualitative) was developed. The motivational factors of school culture, internal factors, and flow impacting a teacher's pursuit of expertise using a sequential mixed methods design. The study design was created to include quantitative elements collected through a survey designed to gather information concerning demographics of the participants, as well as the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow presented in the conceptual framework. In addition to the quantitative elements descriptive qualitative data, both observations and interviews, were designed with the purpose of delving deeper into the behaviors and thinking of teachers who pursue expertise. A mixed methods approach was chosen in order to have a deeper understanding of teachers and the factors impacting their motivation.

Methodology

The sequential explanatory mixed-methods study design was created to include quantitative elements collected through the Teacher Motivational Experts Questionnaire and collected information concerning demographic data of the participants, constructs of school culture, internal factors, and state of flow. In addition to the quantitative elements descriptive qualitative data, both observations and interviews were conducted to record data on the behaviors and thinking of teachers who pursue expertise. A sample of 249 educators responded from the Milken National Educator Awards list-serve, which included approximately 680 members and the Disney American Teacher Awards list-serve, which included 47 members. Of the 249 responders, 39 teachers did not complete the questionnaire portion of the survey. The survey was analyzed using a Pearson's r correlation.

The interviewees included ten (10) teachers and the observed included (3) teachers, ranging from kindergarten through high school, who participated in the questionnaire and volunteered through an invitation offered via the listserv. The interviews and observations were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed for themes. The information was then triangulated to answer the research questions.

Research Questions

Four research questions were developed as a guide for the study concerning teacher motivation to pursue expertise and the proposed variables of internal factors, flow, and school culture. The research questions were as follows:

Research Question 1 (Mixed Method)

How do the internal factors, the state of flow, and school culture motivate teachers to develop towards expertise?

The Teacher Expert Motivation Questionnaire results revealed teachers in the sample experienced strong internal factors and flow while teaching. The interviews and observations further supported these findings, but also revealed the relationship between the teacher and the students to be the primary motivating force.

The optimal school culture included a preference for strong collegial teaching and learning, professional commitment, and shared leadership; however the current status of school culture revealed current school cultures were below the optimal expectation. The interviews and observations also revealed teachers were willing to work within their current school culture, but if the culture prevents the teachers from teaching to their optimum, they will seek changes.

Research Question 2 (Quantitative)

What relationships exist among the constructs of school culture, internal factors and flow as measured by Pearson's r correlation?

The Teacher Motivational Elements Questionnaire demonstrated expert teachers have strong internal factors and experience flow in their teaching, while their optimal status for the elements of internal factors and flow were overall stronger than their current status. An overall strong positive correlation was found between teachers' current status of flow and internal factors as well as their optimal flow and internal factors. The current internal factors held no correlation with collegial teaching and learning, but did produce a weak positive correlation professional commitment and shared leadership. Teachers' current flow also demonstrated no correlation with collegial teaching and learning, a weak correlation with professional commitment, and a weak correlation with shared leadership.

The questionnaire also revealed the optimal internal factors have strong correlations with collegial teaching and learning, professional commitment, and shared leadership. Their optimal flow had strong correlations with collegial teaching and learning, professional commitment, and shared leadership.

Research Question 3 (Qualitative)

What are the actions of an expert teacher in the classroom as measured by the Expert Teacher Observation Standards form?

Hattie's (2003) 16 attributes of expert teachers was used as the foundation for the observations and the analysis of the observations, which led to three constructs of three major themes: (1) Pedagogical Knowledge, (2) Content Knowledge, and (3) Interpersonal Knowledge. The themes are discussed in relation to the related research questions, the foundational literature, and the conceptual model.

Hattie (2009) describes pedagogical knowledge as a deep knowledge about the methods of teaching and learning and how teachers maximize their instruction to achieve specific learning goals. Hattie (2003) describes the theme of content knowledge as the ability of the expert teachers to explain the deeper relationships of their subject, spontaneously relate what was happening with students learning to deeper sets of principles by quickly recognizing the sequences of events occurring in the classroom and predict success and errors student may make.

Research Question 4 (Qualitative)

What drives a teacher to pursue expertise as measured by the Expert Interview Protocol?

This study included interviews of ten expert teachers. The analysis of the qualitative data resulted in the development of two major themes: (1) Student Focus and (2) Professional Culture. The Student Focus theme revealed teachers who desire to develop a classroom culture where mistakes are encouraged and students work towards mastery consistently and collaboratively. Hattie (2004) states expert teachers exhibit the ability to impact the affective attributes of students and are involved and care for their students. Professional Culture also emerged as a theme. Expert teachers desire and need strong professional cultures. When their schools do not offer strong professional cultures, the teachers seek their own professional learning experiences and possibly new schools.

Major Findings and Conclusions

Major Finding Number One

Teacher-student kinship is the driving motivational force behind a teacher's development towards expertise.

Conclusion. The construct of Teacher-Student Kinship was not included in the original conceptual framework, but emerged through the triangulation of the data. While the survey demonstrated teachers

truly enjoy teaching students, the interviews and observations revealed an almost-family type of relationship occurred between students and expert teachers with the core being the teacher's overwhelming sense of responsibility to impact not only students' mastery of their content, but also students' self-efficacy and life past their time with this teacher. The deep connection or responsibility these teachers expressed is the main motivational force behind their pursuit to develop and increase their expert teaching abilities.

Major Finding Number Two

Expert teachers exhibit strong pedagogical, content, and interpersonal knowledge, which seamlessly merge together to create a single expert lens through which the expert teacher views all interactions and activities to positively impact student achievement.

Conclusion. This study revealed the teacher's strong internal factors support the development of strong pedagogical, content, and interpersonal skills, which merge seamlessly together to create a lens through which all decisions are based from the classroom to their professional learning choices. For example, a teacher's understanding of a student's content weakness informs the choice of strategy he/she may choose using his/her pedagogical knowledge. The teacher's high self-efficacy combined with flexibility and craftsmanship combine to assist the teacher's decision-making process. In the interviews expert teachers struggle to remember a classroom situation for which they could not find a solution. This high level of pedagogical, content, and interpersonal knowledge combined with high self-efficacy is evident. The teacher's ability to read the face of the confused student or analyze a work sample attests to all three types of knowledge and demonstrates consciousness of the situation. When questioned during interviews, the teachers could not separate decision into pedagogy, content, or interpersonal knowledge, but rather used all three intertwined to make best choices for students. The three types of knowledge

are fluid and interdependent therefore merges into one expert lens through which the teacher views his/her teaching world in order to make choices for students and for their own professional learning.

Major Finding Number Three

Expert teachers constantly and consistently seek deep-impacting professional learning experience.

Conclusion. Teachers have developed and continue to develop their craft through various professional learning experiences. The teachers choose professional learning which impacts student learning, challenges to their already high-skill set, and engages them in deep reflective conversations with peers and themselves. Expert teachers choose professional learning on their perceived weaknesses in order to improve their own craft and thereby improve their students' achievement. Expert teacher enjoy and are motivated by deep-impacting professional learning.

Major Finding Number Four

Expert teachers can function at high capacity regardless of school culture, but prefer optimal school culture of shared leadership, strong differentiated professional learning, and positive collegial relationships.

Conclusion. Expert teachers seek high-functioning professional cultures. When their school meets their expectations, they are more willingly involved in the school culture. When the school culture is sub-par to their expectations, the teachers will leave, create their own professional mini-culture within the school, or create a professional culture with other educators outside of their school.

Discussion and Implication of Major Findings

This sequential mixed methods study was considered important because the study offers new understanding of how the motivational factors impact teacher teachers who pursue expertise.

While previous studies have researched teacher impact on student achievement and the impact of school culture upon teachers, none have sought to find what motivates these expert outliers to pursue expertise. This study investigates the motivation behind a teacher to continuously develop expertise and sets forth a new perspective for the potential recruitment, training, and development of teachers, as well as, a fresh perspective the need for differentiation of professional learning.

Teacher motivation was explored through the correlation between the internal factors, flow, and school culture. Strong correlations were found between the internal factors and flow, the internal factors and the professional culture factors, and flow and the professional factors. The qualitative research clarified further the relationships found between the factors and revealed an underlying, unseen factor motivating teachers to pursue expertise.

While the teachers in the study have highly evolved internal factors such as self-efficacy, craftsmanship, flexibility, interdependence, and consciousness, as evidenced in the questionnaire results, these factors were not the ignition point of their motivation, but rather the conduit. The relationship between the teacher and the student or the teacher-student kinship is the fuel motivating the teacher to increase their internal factors and therefore produces a state of flow in which the teachers and the students are symbiotically working together in harmony. The expert teacher will work within the elements of the school culture as long as the culture positively impacts his/her classroom culture. When the school culture, including leadership, hampers the teacher's work, he/she will leave or find a way around the impediment.

New Teacher Expert Motivation Framework

The original framework consisted of the internal factors, flow, and school culture. The Teacher Motivational Elements Questionnaire supported expert teachers had strong current internal factors

and experience flow in their current teaching, but their optimal status for the elements of internal factors and flow demonstrated a preference for even stronger internal factors and experiences of flow. The overall strong positive correlation found between teachers' current status of flow and internal factors demonstrated the relationship between strong internal factors and experiences of flow.

Using the current status Internal Factors held no correlation with collegial teaching and learning, but did produce a weak positive correlation professional commitment and shared leadership. Current flow also demonstrated no correlation with collegial teaching and learning, a weak correlation with professional commitment, and a weak correlation with shared leadership, thus revealing the school culture factors had little to no relationship to a teacher's motivation. However, the teachers' optimal internal factors had strong correlations with collegial teaching and learning, professional commitment, and shared leadership and their optimal flow had strong correlations with collegial teaching and learning, professional commitment, and shared leadership revealing teachers desire stronger school cultures.

The study sought to find the correlation between internal factors, state of flow, and school culture in order to find what motivates a teacher to pursue expertise. While the research demonstrates teacher quality directly impacts student achievement, research does not explain what motivates teachers to pursue expertise. Through this sequential mixed-methods study expert teachers were found to have strong internal factors and experienced flow when teaching and interacting with students.

Through the analysis of the research a construct emerged not included in the original framework. Teacher-Student Kinship emerged as the responsibility a teacher feels towards a students' academic and personal achievement and the relationship the teacher therefore develops with each student due to this responsibility. This kinship impacts the teacher's internal factors, experiences

of flow, and their willingness to engage in professional learning in his or her school or to find their own professional learning experience and peer support. School culture had little impact on the teacher's expertise development. If the school culture impeded the teacher from development, the teacher either found a way to manage the barrier or found another position in another school. The teacher's single focus is to be successful with students due to the overwhelming sense of responsibility the teacher has for each child's success.

Additional Definitions: New Teacher Expert Motivation Framework

The New Teacher Expert Motivation Framework definitions provide clarity and cohesion to the new model of expert development.

Teacher-student kinship is an almost-family type of relationship between students and expert teachers. The relationship is the core of the teacher's motivation to develop expertise and is grounded in the teacher's overwhelming sense of responsibility to impact not only students' mastery of their content, but more importantly students' self-efficacy and life past their time with the teacher.

Expert lens is the viewpoint of the expert teacher to apply all three types of highly developed skills, pedagogical, content, and interpersonal, into a single focused lens in order to make decisions concerning teaching and learning for each individual student. The ability is based on the teacher's strong internal factors, as well as their strong pedagogical, content, and interpersonal skills. These seamlessly merge together to create a lens through which all teacher decisions are based from the classroom to their professional learning choices.

Professional learning is the professional learning experience expert teachers choose for themselves. Their choices are based on specific needs they see in their teaching and are directly

related to their perceived weaknesses in order to improve their own craft and thereby improve their students' achievement. Expert teachers are motivated by deep-impacting professional learning. Expert teachers seek high-functioning professional learning experiences. If their school meets their expectations, they are more willingly to participate, however, if the school culture is sub-par to their expectations, the teachers will create their own professional mini-culture within or outside of their school.

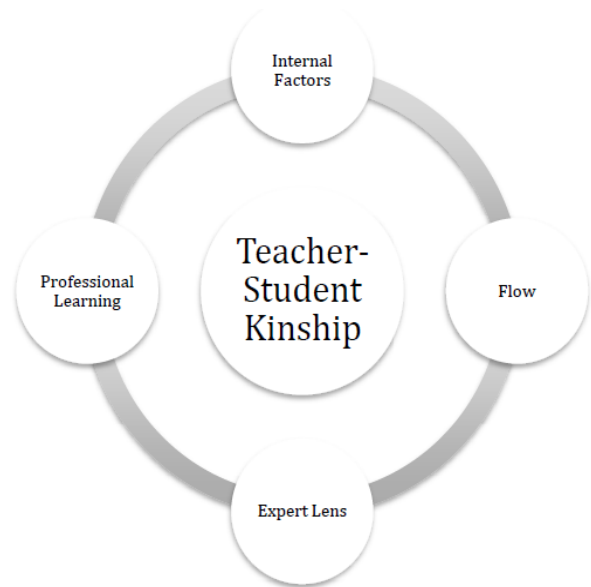


Figure 1. The Motivation Teacher Expertise Framework

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Future Research

While the major findings and conclusions of this study have been summarized throughout the chapter, the following section concerns the study holistically and contributes additional implications related to the theoretical and conceptual concerns, practices, and future research.

Implications Related to Conceptual and Theoretical Concerns

The research demonstrates high teacher quality directly impacts gains in learning across classrooms, even when compared within the same

school. Expert teachers consistently demonstrate larger student achievement gains than other teachers showing teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). These differences range from a year and a half of gain in achievement in an academic year to other studies showing equivalent students gaining half of a year of achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). The research has stated individual teachers account for 30% variance in achievement (Hattie, 2003). Conversely, a low achievement year occurring early in schooling or a low achievement year compounded by other low achievement years will result in little opportunity for student recovery (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

One point of interest this study is related to conceptual and theoretical concerns was the impact expert teachers may have upon a student if the student experiences an expert for multiple, consecutive years and or in combination with other experts in the same year. Additionally, the teacher's high level of motivational factors, particularly self-efficacy, appeared in the observations to transfer to the students. One wonders if motivation is contagious and if so, does the transfer impact student achievement?

Another point of interest was the teachers' viewpoint of the profession. In a study exploring why teachers left the profession Brown (1996) found three major reasons all of which are intrinsic: (1) teachers' need for personal growth went unmet, (2) teachers held a differing philosophy of education, and (3) experienced a lack of respect and recognition for their efforts. Conversely Sarafoglu (1997) discovered several intrinsic reasons why teachers choose to remain in the profession including the love of learning, a love of children, resilience, collegiality, and reflectivity. This discovery was supported with the emergence of the teacher-student kinship factor. This study revealed teachers who would leave a school to find a more palatable school culture, however, as the education community seeks to reform, recruiting and retaining

highly effective teachers is a critical piece of the solution. Expert teachers may reveal information about how the profession as well as school culture needs to adapt in order to attract more experts to the field.

The study describes a deeper understanding of the factors motivating teachers to pursue expertise and thus increasing teacher quality. An understanding of what motivates high-quality teachers to pursue expertise and impact student achievement aids in making the connections between teacher quality research, effective instructional research, and motivational theory. This understanding is foundational in the evolution of the profession to one of respect and high-regard.

Implications for Practicing Educational Leaders

The school culture has been shown to have critical influences on teachers' purpose, practice, willingness, and capacities to perform and to continue to perform to their best (Day & Gu, 2010). However in the study, when expert teachers did not experience optimal school culture, the teachers developed their own professional learning groups outside of their school, formed small groups within their school, or left the unfavorable school culture for a more suitable school. While the study demonstrated expert teachers develop within non-optimal cultures, they also seek professional learning outside of school and desire differentiated learning within their schools to better serve their own needs. Expert teachers are extremely possessive of their craft. Their exhibition of strong internal factors and highly effective pedagogical, content, and interpersonal skills, experts are not accepting of one-size fits all professional learning, scripted lessons, or canned programs. The joy of teaching for an expert comes from solving the problems, working with the students, and being a highly engaged thinker. Leaders may only have one expert in the building, but the expert needs opportunity to grow and to think rather than to be punished for being an outlier as Weld (1998) describes.

Frighteningly enough in the age of accountability the current school cultures are proving too often to be ones where the trust in teachers' professional judgments has decreased "in incremental steps over the past two decades, in inverse proportion to the rise in popularity of standardized testing, objective assessment and the codification and quantification of teachers' knowledge and practice via professional standard" (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009, p. 9). This type of environment runs counter to the professional culture found in high performing countries such as Singapore and Finland (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2010) and to the desires of the expert teachers explored in this study. Changing education for the better means increasing the number of experts. Experts do not flourish in cultures devoid of challenge and the freedom to think.

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Examining the Organizational Health of PK-12 Schools from Teachers' Perspectives

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Introduction

Halpin and Croft (1963) were among the first researchers to conceptualize organizational health in schools. Organizational health was defined as the amount of openness within interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators in primary and secondary schools. Later researchers expanded on the definition to include the nature of the teacher-student, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administrator relationships (Hoy, 1997; Hoy, Tater, & Bliss, 1990). Additionally, all schools have instrumental needs to adapt and achieve goals and expressive needs to socialize students, teachers, and administrators in the school culture (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). The instrumental and expressive needs are facilitated at three levels: technical, managerial, and institutional. At the technical level, the teaching-learning process occurs. The managerial level focuses on the internal administrative duties of the school. The institutional level unites the school with the community. Success at each level adds to the organizational health of a school (Hoy & Miskel, 1991; Hoy & Tater, 1997; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Organizational health in schools consists of five dimensions (Hoy, Podgurski, & Tater, 1991). The first dimension is called *institutional integrity* and is marked by a school that maintains high standards when faced by pressures from parents or the community. The second dimension is called *collegial leadership* and refers to a principal's behavior that is supportive and open. The third dimension is called *resource influence* and is defined as a principal's ability to provide teachers with adequate instructional materials. The fourth dimension is called *teacher affiliation* and focuses on friendliness and trust in teachers' relationships with each other. The last dimension is called

academic emphasis and refers to a school's high expectations for student achievement. The five dimensions work together to provide a holistic evaluation of a school's overall organizational health.

Past research examining schools' organizational health primarily focused on teachers' perceptions of each of the five dimensions in relation to other variables (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Roney, Coleman, & Schlichting, 2007). For example, experienced teachers tended to perceive more collegial leadership, resource influence, and teacher affiliation than new teachers perceived (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Teachers who perceived their school to be healthy also viewed their school's vision as robust with desirable future goals (Korkmaz, 2006; Licata & Harper, 2001). Teachers perceived institutional integrity and academic emphasis as the most important dimensions in a school's vision (Licata & Harper, 2001). Within the teacher-student relationship, Roney et al. (2007) found a positive relationship between schools' organizational health and students' high reading scores. Overall, schools considered high achieving tended to have a better organizational health (Hoy et al., 1990).

Teachers perceived more trust with their principals and held higher expectations for their students' academic achievement when they viewed the school as healthy (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Tater, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995). Teachers from healthy schools also believed that they had a stronger personal teaching efficacy, meaning that they could influence their students' motivation and academic achievement (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). However, their general teaching efficacy was only influenced by institutional integrity and teacher affiliation. Hoy and Woolfolk argued that the relationship between personal teaching efficacy and the organizational health of a school is reciprocal. A healthy school promotes teachers' personal efficacy, and teachers' feelings that they can motivate and teach students improve a school's health.

When administrators' perceptions of their school's organizational health were compared to teachers' perceptions, researchers found that administrators perceived themselves as having more collegial leadership than teachers perceived (Bevans, Bradshaw, Miech, & Leaf, 2007). Additionally, administrators perceived high teacher turnover rates to be the result of effective leadership and the removal of teachers with unsatisfactory performance; whereas, teachers perceived high faculty turnover rates to be the result of poor collegial leadership. Teachers perceived teacher affiliation and academic emphasis to be negatively impacted by high faculty turnover rates. However, administrators did not perceive such a negative impact. Discrepancies among administrators' and teachers' perceptions suggest that a school's organizational health is dependent upon various perspectives.

Teacher Caring

Source credibility refers to a receiver's perceptions that a source is believable (McCroskey, 1992). Within the concept of credibility there are three components: competence, caring, and trustworthiness (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). The focus of the current study is on the caring dimension of source credibility, which is the degree to which a person perceives that a source has the person's best interests at heart.

Teacher caring relates to numerous positive instructional variables. For example, students perceived more cognitive and affective learning when instructors exhibited caring behaviors (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Additionally, perceptions of teacher caring were positively related to perceptions of teachers' immediacy, responsiveness, and assertiveness (Teven, 2001). In an experiment manipulating verbal caring and nonverbal immediacy, Teven and Hanson (2004) found that teachers exhibiting both conditions were perceived as having more competence and trustworthiness. They also found that when teacher caring was low, students had negative perceptions of credibility

regardless of immediate or nonimmediate behaviors. In addition to this experiment, other studies have suggest that negative relationships exist between teachers perceived as not caring and their instructional communication behaviors. For example, teachers perceived as not caring are seen as incompetent (Martin, Chesebro, & Mottet, 1997) and more verbally aggressive (Teven, 2001).

Parental Involvement

Strong parental involvement helps students in a variety of educational outcomes (Epstein, 1996). Parental involvement focuses on parents' or guardians' overall interest in their children's academic achievement, including communication with their children about school, participation in school activities, and communication with teachers about their children (Fan, 2001). Henderson and Mapp (2002) showed that students are more likely to have better school attendance, effectively adapt to a variety of educational settings, take advanced classes, and perform well when their parents are actively involved in their education. Students are also more likely to have competent social skills and more likely to graduate from high school and attend post-secondary school.

Prior research has shown that students and schools benefit from parent involvement. For example, Jeynes (2005) reported that parents' expectations for academic performance and school-related behaviors set students' expectations and school-related performance. Students develop positive attitudes toward schools and teachers when parents are actively involved in their education, which in turn, enhances academic achievement and standardized test results. Henderson and Mapp (2002) stated that underperforming students can especially benefit from the support that engaged parents provide.

Teacher Burnout

Maslach and Jackson (1981) conceptualized perceptions of career burnout as 1) emotional

exhaustion, indicated by low psychological commitment to a career, 2) depersonalization, indicated by negative feelings toward the people served, and 3) low personal accomplishment, indicted by the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively. In the educational context, Starnaman and Miller (1992) tested a causal model of the relationships among teacher burnout and role stressors for teachers. The model indicated that workload and support from a school's principal influenced teachers' perceptions of their role conflict and role ambiguity. The model also indicated that these role stressors influenced perceptions of burnout, job satisfaction, and commitment to the teaching profession.

Teacher burnout is related to a variety of instructional communication variables. For example, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment showed strong, positive relationships with teachers' trait verbal aggressiveness (Avtgis & Rancer, 2008). Another study found that teacher caring was related to less teacher burnout on all three factors of the construct (Teven, 2007). An experiment provided additional support for this finding as student participants received a written scenario demonstrating high or low teacher burnout (Zhang & Sapp, 2009). After reading the scenario students responded to a questionnaire to evaluate teachers' credibility. Teachers in the scenarios with high teacher burnout were rated as less competent, caring, and trustworthy. Not only do feelings of burnout affect teachers and perceptions of them, but they also adversely affect students (Zhang & Sapp, 2008). Results of an experimental design manipulating high and low teacher burnout indicated that students perceived less state motivation and affective learning when a teacher showed signs of burnout.

To date, limited research has examined teachers' perceptions of organizational health in relation to other variables. However, multiple studies suggest that teacher caring and parental involvement are related to positive outcomes for students. Additionally, studies reveal the negative

outcomes associated with teacher burnout. Therefore, the following hypotheses were predicted:

H1: There will be positive correlations between teachers' perceptions of their caring, parental involvement, and their school's organizational health.

H2: There will be a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of their school's organizational health and their experiences of teacher burnout.

Organizational health consists of five factors; however, the relationships between the individual factors and other variables are not often reported in the literature. Researchers tend to sum the five factors to create an overall organizational health index. This study seeks to analyze the relationship between the five factors of organizational health and the other variables used in this study. Therefore, the following research question was asked:

RQ: What is the nature of the relationships between the five factors of organizational health (institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis) and teacher burnout, teacher caring, and parental involvement?

Method

For this study, PK-12 teachers who recently attended a mid-sized Southern university were emailed and asked that they voluntarily and anonymously complete a questionnaire using Zoomerang, an online survey Web site. Teachers were instructed to consider their perceptions about a current class of students and the students' parents (see measures below), however, if they had more than one class of students, they were asked to consider just one class. The participant sample included 148 teachers ($n = 113$ women, $n = 31$ men, $n = 4$ no response) with a mean age of 35.72 ($SD = 7.02$), across grade levels ($n = 44$ elementary school [pre-kindergarten through fifth grade], $n = 41$

middle school [sixth through eighth grade], $n = 57$ high school [ninth through twelfth grade], and $n = 6$ other [mix of previous levels]). The mean years of teaching was 7.00 ($SD = 7.02$), and 55 teachers reported on a class of students that they had all day while 92 reported on a class of students they just had for one period a day.

Organizational Health Inventory

Organizational health was assessed by Hoy et al.'s (1991) 37-item Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). Teachers evaluated statements about their school on a four-point, Likert-type scale with responses ranging from *rarely occurs* to *very frequently occurs*. Higher scores indicated perceptions of more occurrences for institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis. Sample items include "The principal discusses classroom issues with teachers" and "Teachers receive necessary classroom supplies."

Institutional integrity was measured with six items to determine a school's high standards when faced by unreasonable demands ($\alpha = .74$, $M = 16.17$, $SD = 3.85$). Consistent with a previous study, institutional integrity did not correlate with any of the other OHI subscales and was removed from further analyses (Bevans et al., 2007). Collegial leadership was measured with 10 items to determine the nature of principals' relationships with others ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 28.02$, $SD = 8.61$). Resource influence was measured with seven items to determine teachers' perceptions of the instructional support ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 18.80$, $SD = 5.18$). Teacher affiliation was measured with nine items to determine the sense of friendliness among teachers ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 26.77$, $SD = 5.77$). Academic emphasis was measured with five items to determine a school's expectations for academic achievement ($\alpha = .72$, $M = 12.53$, $SD = 2.83$). Organizational health consisted of 31 items from collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 82.86$, $SD = 18.80$).

Teacher Caring

The caring dimension of source credibility was measured with a modified version McCroskey and Teven (1999) scale. Some items were changed by adding the word “student” in place of “me” and “my” to create a self-report of teachers’ perceptions of caring. The dimension was measured with six pairs of bipolar phrases using seven-point scales. Sample items include “Care about students/Don’t care about students” and “Concerned with students/Unconcerned with students.” Higher scores on the scales represented higher perceptions of caring. McCroskey and Teven (1999) reported a .92 reliability coefficient for this measure. For this study, $\alpha = .75$ ($M = 34.67$, $SD = 13.51$).

Parental Involvement

Parent involvement was assessed by Anderson and Minke’s (2007) 7-item Parent Involvement at School instrument. On a 4-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = *never occurs* to 3 = *often occurs*, teachers responded to statements that encompassed activities that parents could do almost every day (e.g., Parents have sent notes or e-mails to talk about their child’s progress). Anderson and Minke reported a .85 reliability coefficient for this measure. For this study, $\alpha = .84$ ($M = 15.65$, $SD = 4.54$).

Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout was measured using Richmond, Wrench, and Gorham’s (2001) 20-item scale. Sample items include “I am tired of my students” and “I feel stressed at work.” Teachers evaluated statements about their perceptions of burnout on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

For this study, the reliability estimate was .95 ($M = 37.12$, $SD = 4.91$).

Results

Three Pearson product-moment correlation analyses were performed to test the first hypothesis that positive correlations existed between teachers’ caring, parental involvement, and their school’s organizational health. This hypothesis was partially supported. Significant, positive relationships were found for each variable’s relationship with organizational health, but not for the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of caring and parental involvement (see Table 1). The first correlation showed that teachers’ perceptions that they were caring were positively related to their perceptions of their schools’ overall organizational health. The second correlation showed that teachers’ perceptions that parents were involved were positively related to their perceptions of their schools’ overall organizational health. The third correlation revealed that teachers’ perceptions of their caring were not significantly related to the level of parental involvement.

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be a negative correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their schools’ organizational health and their experiences of teacher burnout. A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to test this hypothesis. The hypothesis was supported ($r = -.52$, $p < .01$). Results indicated that teachers’ experiences of burnout were negatively related to their perceptions of their schools’ overall organizational health.

The research question asked about nature of the relationships between the five factors of organizational health (institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis) and teacher

Table 1

Pearson Correlations between Teacher Caring, Parental Involvement, and Organizational Health

Variable	1	2	3
1. Teacher Caring	--		
2. Parental Involvement	.15	--	
3. Organizational Health	.39*	.34*	--

Note. * $p < .01$

burnout, teacher caring, and parental involvement. A series of Pearson product-moment correlation analyses were performed to determine these relationships (see Table 2). The results showed the five organizational health factors were negatively related to perceptions of teacher burnout and positively related to both perceptions of teacher caring and parental involvement. Only two non-significant correlations were present. These included the relationship between perceptions of teacher caring and resource influence and the relationship between perceptions of parental involvement and institutional integrity.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationships between a variety of variables important to a school environment. Research suggests that creating a positive school climate can have a positive effect on the PK-12 students’ learning (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). However, school climate is often only evaluated from students’ perspectives. This study examined the organizational health of schools from teachers’ perspectives. This study tested two hypothesis and examined a research question to better understand some variables important to the school environment and a positive school climate, as measured by the Organizational Health Inventory. Specifically, teachers’ perceptions of their level of caring, parental involvement, and teachers’ experiences of burnout were examined in relation to the overall

organizational health index of their schools. The same variables were also analyzed in relation to the five factors of the Organizational Health Inventory, including institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis.

Implications of Research Findings

Results of the first hypothesis indicated that teachers’ perceptions of their caring and parental involvement were both positively related to the overall organizational health of their schools. Implications of this finding suggests that teachers might try to foster positive teacher-student relationships to create a classroom environment conducive to learning. Teachers might also reach out to their students’ parents to find ways to increase parental involvement in the classroom and school.

Results of the second hypothesis indicated a negative relationship between teachers’ experiences of burnout and the overall organizational health of their schools. In other words, as teachers experience more feelings of burnout, their perceptions of their schools’ organizational health decline. A possible implication of this finding might be for administrators and colleagues to build strong working relationships with each other with the goal of combatting feelings of burnout. Administrators and colleagues might be able to provide a strong support network for each other through challenging times. Teachers should also recognize

Table 2

Pearson Correlations between Factors of Organizational Health and Other Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Teacher Burnout	--							
2. Teacher Caring	-.58**	--						
3. Parental Involvement	-.28**	.15	--					
4. Institutional Integrity	-.36**	.22*	-.04	--				
5. Collegial Leadership	-.44**	.30**	.31**	.17	--			
6. Resource Influence	-.24**	.17	.32**	-.03	.73**	--		
7. Teacher Affiliation	-.44**	.32**	.28**	.18	.67**	.64**	--	
8. Academic Emphasis	-.46**	.35**	.36**	.06	.55**	.53**	.60**	--

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ |

their feelings of burnout and seeks out ways to address them. Another implication involves the overall organizational health of a school. Administrators and teachers should work to maintain a positive school climate (Hoy et al., 1990). Anecdotal evidence from teachers suggests that when the school climate is negative, teachers might experience more burnout.

While the finding for the second hypothesis is relational, rather than causal, it suggests that the variables of teacher burnout and organizational health might influence each other. One potential area for future research might be to conduct an experiment to determine if a true causal relationship exists between the variables. Such a study might also provide data to support anecdotal evidence from teachers suggesting that a negative school climate is one possible cause of teachers' experiences of burnout.

In addition to two hypotheses, this study posed a research question to analyze the nature of the relationships between the five factors of organizational health and teacher caring, parental involvement, and teacher burnout. Findings for this research questions showed negative correlations between teacher burnout and all five factors of organizational health, including institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic emphasis. The negative relationships suggest that teacher burnout is a powerful variable when it comes to school climate. As mentioned earlier, teachers should find ways to minimize their feelings of burnout, while administrators and colleagues could take measures to support teachers and improve the perceptions of the five factors of a school's organizational health.

Findings from the research question also revealed that positive relationships exist between many of the factors of organizational health and teacher caring and parental involvement. These findings suggest that teachers should find ways to foster feelings of caring in the classroom and involve parents in classroom or school-related

projects. One example might be to invite parents to provide supplies or information for an instructional lesson as part of the resource influence factor of organizational health. Another example might be to ask parents to help with setting high academic standards for their children as part of the academic emphasis factor of organizational health.

Limitations

Several limitations impacted this study. First, the research design was based on simple, survey research with multiple Pearson product-moment correlation analyses. Claims that one variable causes the other should be avoided. Rather, this study was limited to examining positive and negative relationships between the variables. Future research might be able to address the causal nature of the relationships with manipulation of independent variables through experimental research. One example might be for a researcher to create scenarios for mock teachers with various levels of burnout and caring. While burnout and caring serve as the independent variables, the five factors of organizational health could serve as the dependent variables. Participants asked to rate the scenarios with mock teachers in relation to the factors of organizational health.

A second limitation to this study involved the data collection strategy. Archived email addresses dating back to 2009 were used to invite teachers to complete the questionnaire. Over 300 requests were sent to potential participants by email; however, over 100 invitations were returned as undeliverable. Future researchers might avoid this dilemma by actively searching for current email addresses through school or district Web sites. While this might be a tedious task, it might result in an increased response rate.

A third limitation to this study involved the questionnaire, which was lengthy. The questionnaire consisted of four separate survey instruments to measure teacher caring, parental involvement, teacher burnout, and the five factors

of organizational health. Participant fatigue might have negatively impacted some participants. For example, several participants began the questionnaire, but did not finish. Attempts were made to include data when entire sections were complete. However, some potential participants were removed from the statistical analyses because not enough responses were provided.

Conclusion

Overall, this study resulted in the discovery of some valuable relationships between variables involved in the school environment. The first hypothesis was partially supported with teacher caring and parental involvement being positively related to schools' organizational health. The second hypothesis was supported with teacher burnout being negatively related to schools' organizational health. Additionally, results for the research questions revealed numerous positive and negative relationships between the variables involved in this study and the five factors of organizational health. Additionally, the Organizational Health Inventory appears to be a useful instrument to analyze various aspects of school climate.

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OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Internal Locus of Control: A Quantitative Correlational Study on the Relationship between Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Perceived Internal Locus of Control

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Introduction to the Study

The overarching question for the study is “What is the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and perceived internal locus of control?” For the purpose of this study, concepts discussed align with the conceptualizations of Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Hoy’s teacher sense of efficacy (TSE) construct and Julian Rotter’s locus of control (LOC) construct.

Overarching Goal

Ideally, the goal of the study is to determine if highly efficacious teachers are also likely to possess high-perceived internal locus of controls. Rationale for the one-tailed approach stemmed from a distinct interest in perceptions typically viewed as advantageous to work or school settings (Bandura, 1994; Rotter, 1975; Spector, 1982; Wang, Bowling, & Eschleman, 2010).

Problem

The problem, What is the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and perceived internal locus of control?, stems from a variety of factors ranging from inconsistent conceptualizations of control to a need echoed from within the research community suggesting investigations that solidify the structures of variables. Said studies would help

to minimize erroneous associations among misrepresented constructs (Skinner, 1996).

Purpose

From a more practical perspective, the author sought to help leaders strategically support teachers by recognizing the need for diversified modes of support. For example, if evidence revealed that a positive correlational relationship does exist between high teacher sense of efficacy and internal locus of control, then that could suggest that a teacher with a high TSE and internal LOC might prefer minimum external support. This stems from the notion, the teacher is more likely to believe that success is contingent upon personal actions or decisions. Said information could be beneficial in the strategic generation of support.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework employed for this review conceptualized teacher sense of efficacy as a multi-dimensional entity and acknowledged that the construct’s proposed relationship with internal LOC would be contingent upon its relationship with subsequent TSE variables (ex: classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement). The following image introduced the possibility of a direct relationship between TSE and internal LOC and indirect relationships between each TSE variable and the internal LOC construct.

Literature Review

From medicinal studies exploring the efficacy of patients following heart failure to religiosity studies examining its relationship to psychological well-being (Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008), the extent of efficacy’s influence is vast. With scales articulated in English (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), Hebrew (Rich, et al., 1996), German, Spanish, and Chinese (Schwarzer, et al., 1997), to name a few, evidence suggesting a global interest in the construct remains. Much of that interest, however,

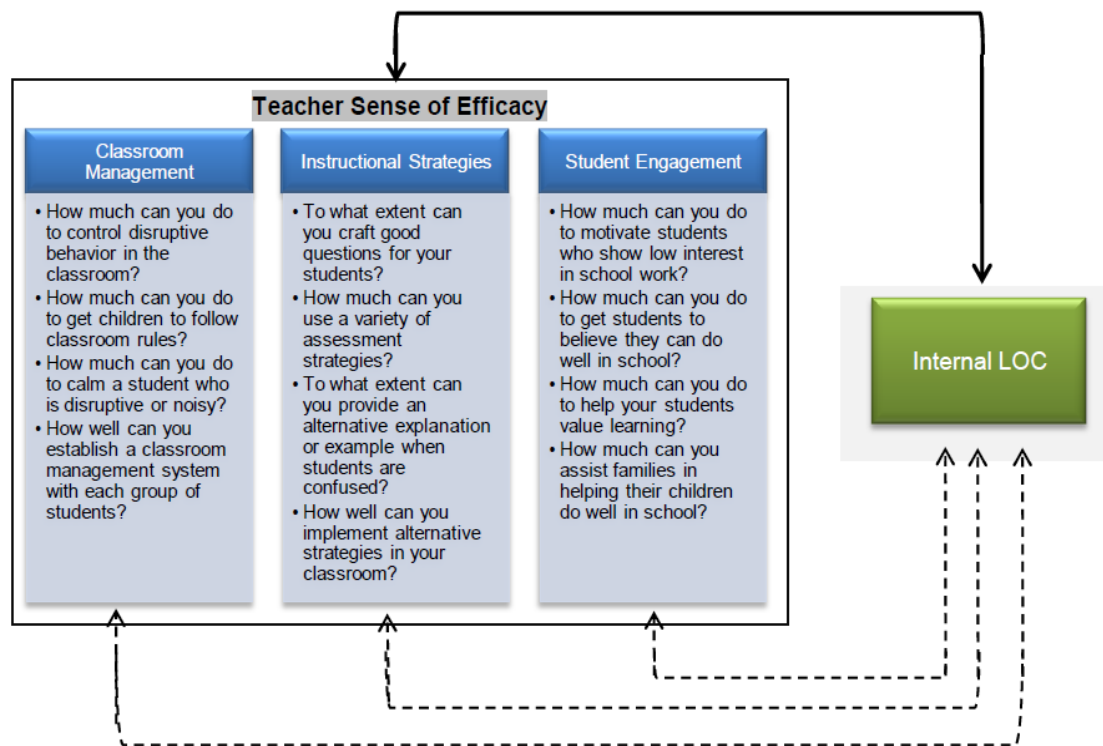


Figure 1. Proposed Operational Framework with Deconstructed TSE Variables

seemed grounded in behaviors associated with the construct's presence as opposed to its absence.

Interestingly, conceptualization concerns have surfaced among researchers exploring control and control related constructs (Skinner, 1996) similar to TSE and LOC. Studies inclusive and non-inclusive of the word "control," revealed themes of interrelated and overlapping entities, names used synonymously for different concepts, and multiple terms used for the same construct (Chanowitz & Langer, 1980; Rodin, 1990; Thompson & Spacapan, 1991; Skinner, 1996).

Researchers specifically exploring locus of control, (Dixon, McKee, & McRae, 1976; Duffy et al., 1977; Levenson, 1981; Reid & Ware, 1973) were not immune to conceptual disparities. Much of their debate, however, emerged in findings relative to the construct's dimensionality. For many, the concept appeared to

be one-dimensional, a belief reinforced by Rotter's use of the forced choice I-E scale to measure LOC.

Evidence Supporting a Relationship

Coincidentally, findings supporting a relationship between efficacy and locus of control have surfaced in empirical and meta-analytic studies on common core constructs, core self-evaluations, and positive self-concepts (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998). Oriented in selection research, one study (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998) sought to examine the predictive nature of broad personality traits known as core self-evaluations or positive self-concept on job performance. With empirical evidence supporting a relationship among grouped traits, researchers concurred:

Positive self-concept consists of four specific traits previously studied in isolation: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and (low) neuroticism or emotional

stability. Data analyzed from 12 samples revealed that these specific traits are strongly correlated and comprise a common factor. (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998, p. 167)

Likewise, a meta-analytic review also provided evidence of a potential relationship.

One assessment consisting of four studies, sought to examine the discriminant and incremental validity of the four traits, neuroticism, self-esteem, locus of control, and generalized self-efficacy. Information gathered determined that the indicated concepts could be elements of a common higher construct (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002, p. 693).

Evidence Contending a Relationship

Evidence contending a relationship appeared grounded more so in the definitions communicated rather than in empirically based research. One example of the latter surfaced in Bandura's effort to distinguish among concepts such as perceived self-efficacy, locus of control, self-esteem, and outcome expectancies.

Perceived self-efficacy should also be distinguished from other constructs such as self-esteem, locus of control, and outcome expectancies. Perceived efficacy is a judgment of capability; self-esteem is a judgment of self-worth. They are entirely different phenomena. (Bandura, 2006b, p. 309)

Unless empirically supported, the generalizability of Bandura's statement is limited. To date, no empirical evidence emerged to negate a correlational relationship between efficacy or teacher sense of efficacy and perceived internal locus of control.

The Need for Future Research

Evidence confirming the need for further study ranged from gaps exposed in psychological research

to debates unmasking LOC conceptualization issues. Judge and colleagues (2002) offered an example of the latter.

There are no more widely studied personality traits in psychology than self-esteem, locus of control, and neuroticism. That there are more than 50,000 studies on these traits attests to their popularity and usefulness among psychologists. Yet, for the most part, researchers have considered these traits in isolation, with little attention to whether they might be alternative indicators or even measures of the same construct. It is our contention that the relationships among measures of these traits, as well as, a closely related trait (generalized self-efficacy) need to be considered. (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002, p. 705)

Efficacy

Recognized as future-oriented assessments, efficacy perceptions may or may not serve as accurate judgments of actual capabilities (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Coincidentally, faulty assessments could result from overestimating or underestimating one's abilities (Bandura, 1997).

Sources of efficacy. Beliefs about capabilities, whether high or low, are contingent upon information gathered and the manner in which that information is processed. Four sources of efficacy recognized are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (See Figure 1) (Bandura, 1977). The indicated sources provide insight into the intricate roots from where efficacy and teacher sense of efficacy beliefs are drawn.

Of the stated sources, mastery experiences, also recognized as performance accomplishments, serve as the strongest way to improve one's capability beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1994). Said experiences represent occurrences in which the individual is personally involved in a situation or event and through that involvement, encounters success or

failure. Vicarious experiences, also known as social modeling, represent occurrences in which the individual collects information through the observation of others. The third source of efficacy beliefs is verbal persuasion. Also recognized as social persuasion, the indicated notion seeks to influence beliefs through discourse and suggestions. The final source of efficacy considered is that of psychological factors, also recognized as psychological state, as well as, emotional arousal (Bandura 1977). Such considers the relationship between one's psychological state and the processing of information gathered.

Teacher Efficacy

The concept, teacher efficacy, rose from a need to improve the reading achievement of students. Of particular concern was the reading achievement among minority students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in 1972 (Armor et al., 1976). In addition to implementing the School Preferred Reading Program, the district opted to consult with the Rand Corporation in 1975 and initiate their engagement in the study, "Analysis of the School Preferred Reading Program in Selected Minority Schools" (Armor et al., 1976). Ideally, the purpose of the study was "...to identify the school and classroom policies and other factors that have been most successful in raising the reading scores of inner-city children" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 21).

Logistically, researchers decided to focus on matters deemed controllable at the teacher and / or school level. "We focused on school inputs - the things that may affect reading growth- that are actually under the control of the individual school, its teachers, and its community" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 21). Four categories of school inputs served as areas of interest. Said categories were teacher attributes, classroom setting, curriculum and instructional methods, and implementation of programs.

One particular concern to this study was that of teacher attributes. Researchers sought to explore the relationship between teacher attributes and students'

reading achievement by examining teacher dispositions and students' background characteristics.

We also measured one aspect of teacher's individual attitudes toward teaching in minority schools: their sense of efficacy in dealing with minority students. Our measure of teachers' feelings of classroom efficacy is based on two questions. One asked whether the teacher felt that "when it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much (because) most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment." The other asked whether the teacher thought, "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students." (Armor et al., 1976, p. 23)

Theoretical Associations

Coincidentally, extensive research does suggest that two theoretical perspectives have served to conceptualize the teacher efficacy construct (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The entity has been associated with Rotter's internal-external LOC in social learning theory, as well as, Bandura's self-efficacy concept within social cognitive theory (Ashton et al., 1984; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Captured by the aforementioned questions, inclinations associated with beliefs regarding capabilities and perceived source of control arise. For example, ideas relative to perceived capabilities appear in the statement "when it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much (because) most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 23). Ideas associated with perceived source of control surface in the notion "if I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 23).

Implications

Findings from the Analysis of the School Preferred Reading Program in Selected Minority Schools study revealed no evidence to support a relationship between background characteristics and students' reading achievement. Information gathered did, however suggest a link between that of teacher dispositions and student achievement.

The more efficacious the teachers felt, the more their students advanced in reading achievement. This measure was strongly and significantly related to increases in reading. Obviously, teachers' sense of efficacy is only one part of the morale and commitment to teaching that we presume is a major influence on learning. Our finding that efficacy affects achievement demonstrates the importance of these predispositional factors for effective teaching. (Armor et al., 1976, p. 24)

The claim that there are "predispositional factors for effective teaching" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 24) validates the overarching purpose for this review, "...to help educational leaders determine if highly efficacious teachers are also likely to possess high-perceived internal locus of controls." Examining the relationship between TSE and LOC can help one to determine if an internal locus of control might also serve as a "predispositional factor for effective teaching" (Armor et al., 1976, p. 24).

For alignment purposes, teacher efficacy emerged as an offspring of Bandura's social cognitive theory. Such excludes further discourse on the construct's theoretical alignment with Rotter's social learning theory. The following discussion will consider the conceptualization of teacher sense of efficacy as articulated by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy as per Tschannen-Moran and Hoy

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy redefined the concept and described TSE as "a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 783). Variables such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement conceptualized the construct, while the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) served as the instrument used to measure the construct.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Classroom Management

Examples of inquiries used by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy to conceptualize the construct are as follows:

How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? In addition, how well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 800)

Coincidentally, research has supported claims of teacher efficacy's relationship with classroom management (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). One example of support stems from a longitudinal study examining "teacher burnout and perceived self-efficacy in classroom management" (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000, p. 239). Said study revealed a need to consider one's self-efficacy prior to establishing teacher-level support. "It was concluded that perceived self-efficacy in classroom management must be taken into consideration when devising interventions both to prevent and to treat burnout among secondary

school teachers” (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000, p. 239).

Another study examined the relationships among, domains of self-efficacy (classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement), job stress, job satisfaction, teachers’ years of experience and characteristics such as gender and teaching level. Findings collectively revealed that, “Teachers’ gender, years of experience, school type, teaching grade, and sources of stress were linked to their classroom management self-efficacy” (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 746).

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Instructional Strategies.

Like classroom management, the instructional strategies definition of the TSE variable also emerged from the scale’s questions. As such, instructional strategies surfaced as the extent to which a teacher believed he /she was capable of adapting instructional questions, approaches, and/or assessments in order to influence student learning. Examples of questions used by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy to conceptualize the construct include:

To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 800)

Themes relative to instructional capabilities have also surfaced in association with teacher efficacy. Extensive evidence exist linking efficacy with matters such as effort applied to planning, organizing, and delivering instruction, teaching behaviors (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007;

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007), adoption of innovations (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992), and referral decisions for special education (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Soodak & Podell, 1993). One researcher contended,

We will never have the perfect curriculum or teaching strategy, but teachers who set high goals, who persist, who try another strategy when one approach is found wanting—in other words, teachers who have a high sense of efficacy and act on it—are more likely to have students who learn. (Shaughnessy, 2004 p. 156)

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Student Engagement

Multifaceted in nature, the term student engagement represents a multitude of factors. Marks, for example, defined engagement as "a psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning” (Marks, 2000, pp. 154-155). Whereas, Newman and colleagues defined it as a “psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote” (Newman, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 12).

Some researchers have even opted to distinguish the construct as ongoing or behavioral engagement.

Ongoing engagement aligns closely with other definitions of engagement and refers to student behavior, emotions, and thought processes during the school day. Behavioral engagement includes time students spent on work, intensity of concentration and effort, tendency to stay on task, and propensity to initiate action when given the opportunity. (Klem & Connell, 2004, p. 262)

Coincidentally, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, sought to capture engagement as the extent to which

a teacher believes that he or she is capable of motivating students and influencing their affective beliefs. Examples of questions used to depict the construct follow:

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school? How much can you do to help your students value learning? How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 800)

Locus of Control

Grounded in the works of Rotter, examples of information captured in the investigation of locus of control include the concept's definition, associated behaviors, theoretical foundation, origin, intended role, dimensionality, and specificity. Conceptual misconceptions also served as a key area considered in the discussion. Ideally, the indicated matters would occur concurrently with discourse on Rotter's Four Propositions, the suggested principles for the study of locus of control. Said propositions were selected due to the assertion that they "... may account for the heuristic value of internal-external control" (Rotter, 1990, p. 489).

Four Propositions

Cognizant of conceptualization challenges, Rotter sought to support a more effective examination of the construct. "It seems clear that for some investigators there are problems associated with understanding the conceptualization of this construct as well as understanding the nature and limitations of methods of measurement" (Rotter 1975, p. 56). As such, the four propositions considered in the review are: (1) a precise definition, (2) the importance of embedding the construct in a broader theory, (3) measurement principles should be derived from psychological theory, and (4) the dissemination of knowledge (Rotter, 1990).

A precise definition. Represented along a continuum of internal and external control (Rotter, 1975, 1990), a precise definition of LOC that would acknowledge the presence of the continuum's two poles appeared essential. Not only did the following definition fit the above criteria, but it also acknowledged the theoretical origin associated with the construct. For the purpose of this review, the referenced terms, internal and external control, surface as synonymous with that of locus of control.

Briefly, internal versus external control refers to the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement or an outcome of their behavior is contingent on their own behavior or personal characteristics versus the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement or outcome is a function of chance, luck, or fate, is under the control of powerful others, or is simply unpredictable. (Rotter, 1966, p. 1)

Internal-external control behaviors. In addition to the degree to which one processes information as internal or external, interest also surfaced in the behaviors linked to the two poles. Though non-exhaustive, most studies reviewed did allude to a relationship between positive behaviors and internal LOC and negative behaviors and external LOC (Breet, Myburgh, & Poggenpoel, 2010; Cavaiola & Strohmets, 2010; Deniz, Tras, & Aydogan, 2009; Kesici, 2008).

Recognizing the subjectivity in the notion of positive versus negative, a decision arose not to qualify the two extremities, but instead to establish a general understanding of behaviors typically representative of internal and external LOC. Another decision made sought to ensure that associations aligned with Rotter's interpretation of the LOC construct. The following description met the indicated criteria.

Internals are those who believe that they are the masters of their fate and, therefore, often are confident, alert, and directive in attempting to control their external environments. Further,

they often perceive a strong link between their actions and consequences. Externals, on the other hand, are those who believe that they do not have direct control of their fate and perceive themselves in a passive role with regard to external environment. They, therefore, tend to attribute personal outcomes to external factors or luck. (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006, p. 1057)

Coincidentally, descriptions associated with the two poles have yielded some misconceptions. Referred to as the “good guy-bad guy dichotomy” (Rotter, 1975, p. 60), Rotter contended that, “In spite of fears, and even warnings to the contrary, some psychologists quickly assume that it is good to be internal and bad to be external” (Rotter, 1975, p. 60). Though this does serve as a concern, the review was not devoted to the qualification of given poles, but rather, to the commonalities associated with foci constructs as a whole.

Embedding the construct in a broader theory. Assuming a more deductive approach, discourse will now transition to consider the LOC definition within the context of social learning theory (SLT). Such caters to Rotter’s second premise, “The Importance of Embedding the Construct in a Broader Theory.” In doing so, one could explore theoretical keystones, identify precursor constructs, clarify LOC’s intended role, and align conceptual particulars.

Social learning theory (SLT), as described by Rotter, incorporates several psychological perspectives into one school of thought. Four categories of variables recognized as behaviors, expectancies, reinforcements, and psychological situations, frame the philosophy (Rotter, 1975).

Social learning theory is a molar theory of personality that attempts to integrate two diverse but significant trends in American psychology—the stimulus-response, or reinforcement, theories on the one hand and the cognitive, or field, theories on the other. It is a theory that attempts to deal with the complexity

of human behavior without yielding the goal of utilizing operationally definable constructs and empirically testable hypotheses. (Rotter 1975, p. 57)

Precedence misconception. One misconception typically associated with LOC is its assumed precedence within the broader theory. Though considered by some to be social learning theory’s “central concept,” Rotter contended that the entity is not (Rotter 1975). Rather, it is a concept grounded in the theory “intended to study behavior in a variety of situations...” (Rotter, 1990, p. 491).

Onset of LOC. If one condition for behavior potential to occur stems from an individual’s expectation that the behavior will lead to a certain outcome, then what about individuals who complete behaviors with positive outcomes, yet disregard those outcomes as disconnected to personal efforts? One example of this matter is as follows:

As supervisor, I was trying to understand and interpret the client’s behavior from a social learning point of view. This client, whom we had persuaded to try out some new behaviors that met with success, persistently explained away the successes as a matter of luck and not likely to happen again. He appeared, in most situations, to feel that what happened to him was entirely beyond his control. This led to our hypothesis that not only did learning take place differently in chance versus skill situations, but it took place differently among individuals in situations that might be considered ambiguous or novel or that had elements of both chance and skill. (Rotter, 1990, p. 490)

Grounded in theoretical and clinical concerns, Locus of control suggests that people will vary in the degree in which they perceive outcomes to be a result of individual “behavior or personal characteristics” (Rotter 1990, p. 489).

Intended role. The idea that LOC is intended to study behavior appeared to affirm the need to define

behavior as articulated within social learning theory. Multifaceted in nature, the variable emerged to reflect a description of behavior potential, as opposed to just behavior. Key components of the definition alluded to beliefs regarding the relationship between behaviors and outcomes, as well as, the value of said outcomes (Rotter, 1975). Described through a formula, the indicated definition is as follows:

The general formula for behavior is that the potential for a behavior to occur in any specific psychological situation is a function of the expectancy that the behavior will lead to a particular reinforcement in that situation and the value of that reinforcement. (Rotter, 1975, p. 57)

Measurement principles derived from psychological theory. Much of the debate associated with LOC stemmed from psychometric matters. Multifaceted in nature, specifics associated with LOC's measurement surfaced as complex yet integral to the investigation's methodological alignment.

The dissemination of knowledge. Another important matter to consider was the notion of specificity versus generality.

In studying locus of control, because we were dealing with a broad construct intended to study behavior in a variety of situations, we wanted to sample many different situations without making the total score more dependent on one kind of situation (such as school achievement) than on another such as political involvement. (Rotter, 1990, p. 491)

Echoing said notion, Rotter explained his rationale for non-specificity.

In social learning theory (Rotter, 1954, 1982a), a basic assumption is that the unit of investigation for the study of personality is the interaction of the individual and his or her

meaningful environment. Behavior in different situations will be different, although there may be a gradient of generalization from one situation to another. (Rotter, 1990, p. 491)

Collectively, the construct surfaced as a non-dimensional entity, designed to measure a broad spectrum of behaviors, yet specifically concerned with one's perceived source of control.

The primary goal of this review was to examine the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and perceived locus of control. Of particular interest was whether an individual with a high teacher sense of efficacy would also likely have a high internal locus of control. Grounded in the premises of Bandura, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, and Rotter, the review sought to conceptualize constructs and synthesize information supporting or contending a relationship.

Summary

Initial concerns regarding the conceptualization of control and control related constructs illustrated a need and interest in correlational research relative to the given areas. Findings supporting or contending a relationship echoed said disparities and helped to solidify the need for the study. Interestingly, teacher sense of efficacy emerged as a multi-dimensional entity inclusive of the variables classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Poised along a continuum of high and low, the high end of the spectrum appeared indicative of the construct's presence while the low end was symbolic of its absence. Contrary to the former, locus of control surfaced as neither one-dimensional nor multi-dimensional. Captured along a continuum of internal-external control, high internal control was synonymous to low external control, while high external control was homogenous to that of low internal control. Despite diverse positions, findings supporting a common core construct continue to prompt a need for future correlational research. Also noteworthy, are the commonalities of associated behaviors and the

theoretical reciprocity noted in earlier teacher efficacy research.

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Examining the Equity of a Teacher Observation Rubric: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Introduction

Teacher evaluation has become an increasingly salient topic in education in recent years and has gained traction in many states and districts largely due to the Race to the Top program implemented by the Obama administration in 2009. The most significant component of this legislation focused on strategies for teacher and principal performance evaluation (Race to the Top Executive Summary, 2009). Many states have adopted programs that assign teachers an evaluation score calculated using classroom observations and measures of student growth. These scores are being used to make high-stakes employment decisions regarding compensation, retention, and tenure in schools nationwide. The sudden advent of these policies has raised questions from stakeholders about the fairness of the system, especially since current literature has not been conclusive on the best methods and models for quantifying teacher effectiveness. Significant research exists on the important role teachers play in student achievement and best practices for instruction. These studies have informed the writing of rubrics for teacher observations, but minimal research has been conducted on the reliability and validity of these instruments in the contexts in which they often are utilized. Furthermore, deficiencies exist in research on administrator's perceptions of these rubrics and their implementation of them.

Similar to other states around the country, the Louisiana legislation implemented a new evaluation protocol in 2010 to enhance instructional quality and "ensure qualified and effective personnel [were] employed in instructional and administrative positions" (Louisiana Act 54, 2010). This statute required that fifty percent of a teacher's evaluation score be based on student growth. This portion of

the score is determined using either value-added models or student achievement goals set at the beginning of the school year and typically are measured using state and national standardized assessments. The other half of the evaluation consists of scores from a minimum of two different observations that utilize a standard rubric for all grades and content areas. The legislation leaves a good deal of flexibility to local education agencies on the exact requirements for their observations, which presents issues with the reliability and validity of these measures across districts. Interestingly, principals view classroom observations as the most valid method of teacher evaluation over student growth measures according to a study by Vanderbilt University (Superville, 2014). The high stakes decisions that are made using the evaluation scores demand that the measures used are fair, reliable, and valid to protect teachers and ensure that high quality educators are being retained.

This mixed methods study addressed biases in one particular observation instrument used in Louisiana and administrators' awareness and perceptions of these biases. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used. In the first, quantitative phase of the study, data from prior observations were collected from two high schools in Louisiana that utilized the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) observation rubric for teacher observations to determine if observers and content area played a significant role in observation outcomes.

The second, qualitative phase was conducted as a follow up to aid in the explanation and understanding of the quantitative results. A series of interviews were conducted with selected administrators in these schools to explore congruencies and discontinuities in observer's perceptions of the rubric and observation protocol with the quantitative findings. Thus, the research questions for this study were:

- Is the observation rubric used by a Louisiana school district biased against teachers in certain content areas?
- How do administrators perceive the equity of the observation instrument and the observation protocol across content areas?

The results of this study will be most beneficial to school administrators—especially those who are in schools and districts utilizing the same rubric analyzed in this study. Identifying the biases that are present in the observation instrument, the degree to which these biases exist, and administrators' awareness of these biases will inform observers so that strategies can be developed to prevent these biases from influencing observation scores. This study will also profit policymakers as they work to develop the best metrics for assessing teacher effectiveness and policy decisions about how these metrics should be used.

Literature Review

Teacher evaluation is an important topic in education because research has shown that teachers have a significant impact on student achievement (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Teacher evaluation is important for the purposes of identifying effective teaching and professional development; it also has been shown to improve teaching quality (Gordon, 2005; Taylor & Tyler, 2012). There is a sizeable amount of literature on teacher evaluation—especially on using student growth data to assess teacher effectiveness. There is also extensive literature on best practices for instruction. These research-based best practices have been incorporated into a variety of rubrics that are used for classroom observations. The literature, however, has not explored the role of observations in determining teacher effectiveness as extensively as it has other aspects of teacher evaluation.

Research has shown that the use of multiple measures is the most effective way to evaluate teacher effectiveness and quality (Sullivan, 2001). The most commonly used metrics are value-added

measures and classroom observations. The rationale behind using these multiple measures is that measurement errors in one method can have a drastic impact on the resulting evaluation results. This impact has been shown to be significant in studies on value-added measures and is proposed to have an impact in qualitative measures as well (Papay, 2011; Goldhaber, Goldschmidt, & Tseng, 2013). Other research has explored the relationship between these multiple measures, and found that increased error in each measure significantly reduces the correlation between the ratings given (Harris, Ingle, & Rutledge, 2014). It is critical that research on measurement error is conducted on both value-added measures and observation protocols to ensure that the measures are accurate and valid so the high-stakes decisions being made based on these scores are fair.

Bell et al. (2012) proposed a series of validity checks for observation protocols used to make high-stakes decisions regarding teachers. The purpose of their work was to provide an example of how a validity argument could be constructed for such a protocol. The researchers claimed that arguments for validity must address the scoring, generalization, extrapolation, and implications of the instrument. They studied one particular rubric implemented by a school district using a team of researchers and administrators who were trained to serve as observers. They assigned multiple observers in a balanced method to conduct multiple observations for each teacher and found that potential bias was minimized by the design of the study. The circumstances of their study were not practical for most schools and districts, and they explained that bias is “likely to be an important validity threat when observation protocols are used outside of research studies” such as theirs (p. 77).

Hill and Grossman (2013) discussed the downfalls of using general, overarching observation instruments for teacher evaluation. Since one of the goals of observations is to provide teachers with specific and meaningful feedback to improve their instruction, the authors claimed that many of the

rubrics used are unable to accomplish this purpose (Hill & Grossman, 2013). The authors advocated for the use of subject-specific rubrics in observations to provide the most meaningful feedback for teachers and a more accurate snapshot of teaching quality. The researchers also noted that current observation protocols in many states do not lend themselves to accurate and reliable scores because minimal observations are conducted by a single observer (Hill & Grossman, 2013). This aligns with the concerns about bias in observation protocol discussed by Bell et al. (2012).

This study will explore areas that have not been examined in the literature. Studies have shown that classroom observations have the potential to be reliable and valid, but these measures have only been studied in contrived situations and not necessarily in actual practice. The protocol for the schools participating in this study required teachers have one announced observation in the fall semester and one unannounced observation in the spring semester that lasted a full class period and was conducted by either a principal or assistant principal. Therefore, the rating given by one person for one observation for one class period determines 25% of a teacher’s overall performance evaluation for the school year. The literature has shown that a small number of observations can have drastic effects on the fairness and validity of classroom observation scores. Thus, this study seeks to understand the impact these possible biases have on observation scores and the perceptions of those who use the observation instrument. Specifically, this study will focus on issues of bias and equity related to the content areas that are observed.

Methods

The research questions for this study were answered using a mixed methods approach. This study employed an explanatory sequential design that began with the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This approach was appropriate for this

study because the research questions were both quantitative and qualitative in nature with the purpose of complementarity since the goal was to elaborate on and make sense of the quantitative findings with qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the first, quantitative stage of this study were collected from two large high schools in Louisiana. Both of these high schools were similar in size, location, and student population. Furthermore, both of these schools were considered to be high performing “A” schools according to their school performance scores from the 2013-2014 school year. This performance designation was assigned by the Louisiana Department of Education based on the school’s student achievement on the American College Test (ACT), scores on the state end-of-course examinations, diplomas earned, quantity of students who take advanced placement and/or international baccalaureate tests and dual enrollment courses, career credentials on certification tests, and graduation rate (School Performance Scores, n.d.). The schools are referred to using the pseudonyms Andrews High School and Davis High School in this study. The principals of each high school consented to participation in the study and shared their data with the researcher. The dataset included information about each teacher’s overall observation scores as well as their ratings on each indicator for both observations. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the teachers, the principals removed teachers’ names from the dataset and added their respective content areas.

The primary independent variables of interest were the teacher’s content area, the type of observation (announced or unannounced), and the school. The dependent variables of interest were the overall observation score as well as the three primary scales on the instrument that were used to calculate the overall score. These scales are designing/planning instruction, the learning environment, and instruction—the last of which

holds the most weight in the calculation of the overall score. Table 1 details the number of observations for each school and content area. The total sample for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of 440 individual observations for 220 teachers.

The quantitative research questions were explored utilizing a causal comparative approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Four separate one-way ANOVAs were conducted for each of the four dependent variables to determine if observation scores differed significantly over levels of the independent variables. Due to the limited sample sizes within subjects and schools, interactions between independent variables were not examined in this study. Significant differences between groups were examined using the Tukey/Kramer method to maintain the experimentwise error rate at the predetermined error rate of $\alpha = .05$ (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003).

The data for the second, qualitative stage of this study were collected from a subset of observers from the first stage of the study. Interviews were conducted with two of the administrators who served as observers. The participants are referred to using the pseudonyms Kelly and Carla. Kelly was the principal at Davis High School and had conducted the majority of observations for that school. Before becoming the principal, she taught English for several years and was an assistant principal for two years. Carla was in her second year as an assistant principal at Andrews High School. She had taught math for eight years at another school in the district prior to becoming an administrator. A mixed purposeful sampling strategy was used to select the interview participants (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2007). Kelly was selected using critical case sampling due to her prominent and established role in the school. Carla was selected using convenience sampling due to accessibility issues.

Table 1

Number of Teachers and Observations for Each Content Area & School

	Davis High School		Andrews High School		Total	
	Teachers	<i>n</i>	Teachers	<i>n</i>	Teachers	<i>n</i>
Math	14	28	19	38	33	66
English	13	26	20	40	33	66
Science	15	30	12	23	27	53
Social Studies	16	32	13	26	29	58
Fine Arts	6	12	9	18	15	30
Foreign Language	7	14	5	10	12	24
Career Tech	18	36	6	12	24	48
PE	7	14	9	18	16	32
Other	15	30	16	33	31	63
Total	111	222	109	218	220	440

n = number of observations

The interviews were semi structured with predetermined questions that were formulated after the quantitative phase of the study was completed (Creswell, 2013). The interview questions sought to gain insight into the two administrators' perceptions of the observation instrument and their conceptualizations of the biases that were found in the quantitative analysis. The predetermined interview questions can be found in Appendix A. The interviews were conducted in the offices of the administrators and lasted 35 to 45 minutes. They were transcribed and coded. The codes were then iteratively analyzed for themes that emerged from the data. To minimize bias in the interpretation of the qualitative data on the part of the researcher, prior experiences as an educator evaluated using the same observation rubric were bracketed out (Creswell, 2013). After the collection and analysis of the qualitative data was complete, the findings from each phase of the study were analyzed in conjunction. Specifically, the findings from the qualitative interviews with the administrators were linked back to the quantitative findings from the

observation scores to provide insight and possible explanations for the results.

Legitimation

The primary legitimation techniques used to ensure the validity of the findings were multiple validities and weakness minimization legitimation (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). The weaknesses of each paradigm were improved by the incorporation of the other and the meta-inferences made from the mixed analysis were greater than the inferences that could be drawn from only one paradigm.

Limitations

The design of the quantitative portion of this study was limited by the small sample of only two high schools. If more schools were included, there would be enough power to run more sophisticated tests that would provide richer findings. For example, interactions could be examined between the independent variables to better understand differences that existed between groups. The small

Table 2

Mean Observation Scores by Teacher Content Area

	Math	English	Science	Social Studies	Fine Arts	Foreign Language	Career Tech ^a	PE	Other ^b
Overall Observation Score	3.20 (.51)	3.32 (.38)	3.24 (.49)	3.24 (.45)	3.60 (.75)	3.48 (.44)	3.08 (.38)	3.29 (.44)	3.11 (.50)
Designing & Planning Instruction	3.15 (.49)	3.23 (.48)	3.08 (.51)	3.21 (.48)	3.39 (.75)	3.40 (.46)	2.98 (.46)	3.13 (.39)	2.97 (.51)
The Learning Environment	3.48 (.65)	3.73 (.61)	3.63 (.65)	3.61 (.60)	4.07 (.76)	3.83 (.60)	3.51 (.51)	3.79 (.70)	3.56 (.62)
Instruction	3.12 (.53)	3.20 (.36)	3.15 (.49)	3.12 (.45)	3.50 (.79)	3.38 (.44)	2.96 (.38)	3.16 (.43)	3.00 (.50)

Note. The minimum score on the instrument was a 1 and the maximum score on the instrument was a 5. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses beneath the mean score.

^a Subjects in this category included business/computer applications, family/consumer sciences, and allied health

^b Subjects in this category included special education, talented and gifted, speech, test prep, and ROTC

sample with little between school diversity also limits the generalizability of the findings to schools and districts that are similar to the schools that were included in this study.

Results

Data Screening

Examination of the distributions for each content area showed the variance for fine arts teachers' scores was greater than all other content areas for the overall evaluation score and instruction scores. Simple transformations of the data did not ameliorate this issue, and exclusion of fine arts teachers from analyses resulted in homogeneous variances (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, analyses with and without all fine arts teachers were run on overall scores and instructional scores to

determine the extent to which this impacted the results.

Bias in the Observation Rubric

The data showed that there were significant differences between content areas for overall observation scores, $F(7, 402) = 4.32, p = .007$, as well as the scores for the three primary constructs of designing/planning instruction, $F(8, 431) = 3.74, p < .001$, the learning environment, $F(8, 431) = 3.33, p = .001$, and instruction, $F(7, 402) = 2.93, p = .005$. Since homogeneity of variances was problematic for the overall score and the instruction construct due to fine arts teachers, the reported test statistics did not include these teachers for those two constructs. When these teachers were included in the test, the results remained significant. Post hoc analysis showed that foreign language teachers had higher overall and instruction scores than career

tech, $p = .012$ and $p = .007$ respectively, and teachers classified in the “other subjects” category, $p = .023$ and $p = .015$ respectively. For the designing/planning instruction subscore, this trend continued with foreign language teachers outscoring career tech, $p = .023$, and “other subjects” teachers, $p = .012$. When fine arts teachers were included in the post hoc analysis, they also outscored these same groups, $p = .015$ and $p = .007$ respectively. Foreign language teachers did not differ from any other teachers for the learning environment construct.

Instead, fine arts teachers differed from math ($p = .001$), social studies ($p = .034$), career tech ($p = .005$), and “other” subject teachers ($p = .009$) on this construct. The overall mean scores for the total observation score and each of the three main categories for each content area are presented in Table 2. A significant difference was not found between the two schools or between the two types of observations on any of the four scores of interest.

Perceptions of the Protocol and Rubric

The analysis of the qualitative analysis of the two interviews resulted in the emergence of three primary themes: the fairness of the rubric, uneven access to high scores, and the potential of the protocol. These three themes were interrelated and lent insight into the deficiencies of the rubric and protocol as it was used in the district and elaborated on the differences found in the quantitative portion of the study. Figure 2 provides a visual summary of

the themes and major ideas that were embedded within each theme.

The fairness of the rubric was a theme that was prevalent throughout both interviews and provided insight into the quantitative findings. Both administrators who participated in the interviews believed the rubric was fair and was a good tool to measure instructional quality.

Carla felt the rubric was fair across all content areas because “it takes the issue of content out of it and it is

just looking at what the kids are doing and not so much how good or bad a teacher is.” The quantitative analysis showed that there was some degree of bias in observation scores when it came to instructional indicators, but it was evident that the principals did not feel this was a fault of the rubric. Only one administrator typically conducts observations in these schools, but both Kelly and Carla said they frequently collaborate with other administrators on field notes and videos taken during observations to ensure they are staying consistent when scoring teachers. Administrators became more comfortable with the rubric, and they felt they were “very close” and “essentially all on the same page.” Furthermore, all observers must take a recertification training each year to ensure the reliability and validity of the scores.

Uneven access to high scores was a second theme that emerged from the data and is the theme that best explains the quantitative findings. While

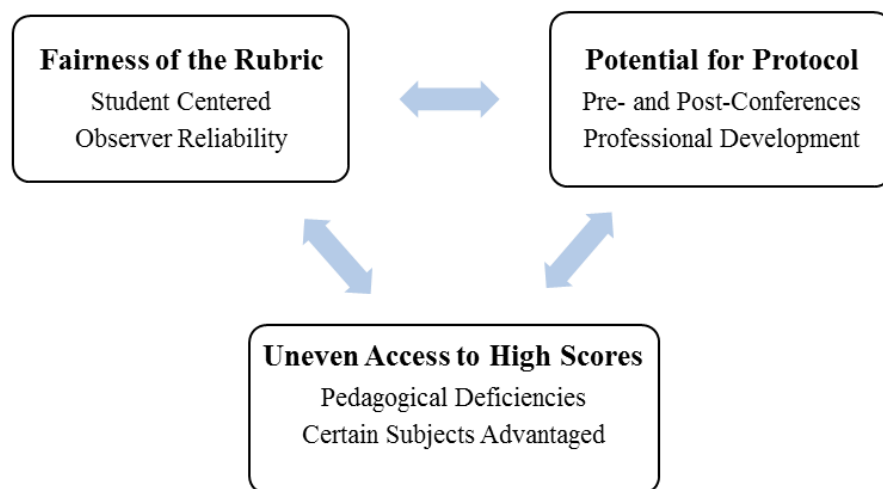


Figure 1. Diagram of Themes

both administrators said the rubric was fair, they both felt it lent itself to higher scores for teachers in certain content areas. Kelly identified these content areas as those “that are predisposed to student involvement and student hands-on activities.” Furthermore, Carla claimed the rubric was more challenging to apply to special education and gifted/talented classes because those teachers do not teach in the same way that other teachers do. Kelly felt that teachers in subjects like math and social studies that are not as centered on student involvement and hands-on learning can be just as successful as teachers in subjects that are, but that they need to be cognizant of this fact as they plan their lessons:

Where I feel like—and I don’t really want to say it’s unfair, I just think it’s more lenient on the hands-on subjects like the arts and foreign languages. Now, if you know that and you approach that every day in your class and say, “here’s the rubric, and I know that as my subject matter expert my subject might not lend itself to this on an ordinary day,” you need to start thinking like that more and more to plant those seeds in each of your lessons. Start doing that, and the rubric is fair across the board.

Exploration into the lower observation scores for career tech and other elective teachers yielded a different explanation. Carla described the teachers in these areas as “not as good,” and Kelly said their scores were low because “they are on the low end of pedagogy and teaching knowledge.” Both administrators additionally attributed the relative easiness of the subject matter and the low curricular support for these subjects as additional contributors to the lower observation scores.

The third theme that emerged was potential for the protocol. Kelly and Carla were both supportive of the rubric, but identified areas that the observation protocol could be improved. Kelly felt that the pre-observation conference for the announced observation should be used as a tool to help teachers improve their lessons by talking about

“tiny structures that won’t take away from their overall lesson” but will result in higher scores. She gave examples of walking teachers through strategies for enhancing rigor and the quality of questioning in a family and consumer sciences lesson and strategies for grouping students in a social studies class to break away from lecture-style teaching. Carla shared how she went beyond only giving the score for each indicator and included specific evidence for each one in the post-observation conference to enable richer conversations with teachers about how to improve their practice. They both noted that not all administrators at their school performed these practices, but both of these cases showed that the administrators saw the potential of the rubric and observation protocol as a professional development tool for teachers. Kelly and Carla believed many teachers unfortunately viewed the observations as a “gotcha” and felt “victimized” due to the stakes attached to them, and therefore had difficulty seeing the benefits the observations could have for students. They made it clear they felt all teachers could have successful observations according to the rubric, but the teachers did not feel the same way as them.

The three themes of fairness, access, and potential are interrelated and provide a deeper understanding of the problem and lay a foundation for improved practice and future research. The participants claimed the rubric was fair because they felt it was applicable to all subjects and steps were taken to ensure that some semblance of reliability was maintained. They also admitted, however, certain subjects are disadvantaged because they require more preparation than others in order to be successful and that pedagogical deficiencies related to content area prevent some teachers from attaining high scores. This therefore threatens the fairness of the rubric. The administrators’ thoughts on the potential of the instrument as a tool to improve practice can alleviate and possibly eliminate any fairness issues with the rubric.

Discussion

This study sought to determine if there were any biases evident in one particular observation rubric used by a school district in Louisiana for teacher evaluation purposes and to understand observers' perceptions of the equitableness of the rubric. The results showed there was a significant difference in observation scores for different subject areas. Foreign languages and fine arts performed significantly higher than all other elective classes with the exception of PE. Interviews showed that observers felt the rubric generally was fair. However, the administrators felt that elective teachers lacked the pedagogical knowledge necessary to have the rigorous, high quality lesson that is expected for high scores on the rubric. Furthermore, it was described that some teachers needed to plan more than others depending on their content area in order to have the same opportunity for a successful observation. Finally, administrators described their goal for the rubric and observation protocol to be a professional development tool to improve teachers' practice.

Implications

The results of this study provide several implications for practice. The first and most viable is that schools and districts who utilize the NIET rubric used by the schools in this study should provide professional development for teachers in content areas that were identified as low scoring. If the rubric is truly fair, then all teachers should have the same access to high scores regardless of content area. Since the administrators hypothesized elective teachers generally do not have the pedagogical knowledge that is necessary to receive high scores, a burden is placed on the schools and districts to provide training for these teachers. Equipping these teachers with the knowledgebase for high-quality and rigorous instruction will make high observation scores more accessible for these teachers and, most importantly, will benefit the students in these classes. Secondly, schools and districts would benefit from refining their observation protocols so

that the process is better utilized as a professional development tool instead of framing it solely as an evaluation technique. The protocol also needs to be consistent across administrators and schools so that teachers receive the same benefit from a pre- and post-observation conference regardless of their observer or site. Adopting strategies such as the one utilized by Kelly in the pre-conference and Carla in the post-conference would aid teachers in improving their lessons, their practice, and their scores. This could help to keep classroom observations grounded as a professional development tool instead of merely a form of evaluation (Gordon, 2005).

Finally, the results of this study make a case for an examination of the rubric at the policy level. While both the administrators in this study felt the rubric was fair, it was evident from both the quantitative and qualitative findings that this was not necessarily the case. It may be possible for any teacher in any content area to receive a high observation score using the rubric, but there was not fair access to the high scores since certain subjects seemed to be predisposed to higher scores than others due to the nature of the rubric. This result further supports the argument made by Bell et al. (2012) for the use of content-specific rubrics. Implementation of multiple rubrics at the secondary level would be difficult due to the multitude of courses and content areas, but it is worth consideration and further research to ensure that teacher observations are truly fair.

Future Research

The generalizability of the findings from this study is narrow in scope due to the small, selective sample. Both high schools included in this study were high performing and were similar in demographic composition. Future research should expand the sample to include schools at all levels of performance for better comparisons. Moreover, inclusion of elementary and middle schools would allow for more rich analyses about the fairness of the NIET rubric at levels that were not examined in

this study. Another opportunity for future research that was not possible in this study is fairness issues at the observer level. This suggestion was also made by Hill and Grossman (2013) and could be elaborated on with research that examines the relationship between teacher content area and observer's background on observation scores.

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ANNUAL MEETING PROCEEDINGS
2014**An Assessment of Faculty Readiness to Prepare Teachers for a Different Tomorrow**

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With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, closing achievement gaps among these various student groups became a focus of federal education accountability, and schools and districts were required to disaggregate student test scores and other performance data by student characteristics to enable better comparisons between groups. This created both to greater awareness of racial disparities and to rising concern about other kinds of achievement gaps. The attention led to more targeted interventions for different groups of students, but had not closed most achievement gaps to an appreciable degree a decade of the law passed.

Researchers have tried to pinpoint why race and class are such strong predictors of students' educational attainment. In the 1990s, the controversial book, *The Bell Curve*, claimed that gaps in student achievement were the result of variation in students' genetic makeup and natural ability—an assertion that has since been widely discredited. Many experts have since asserted that achievement gaps are the result of more subtle environmental factors and “opportunity gaps” in the resources available to poor versus wealthy children. Using information from the General Social Survey (GSS), data indicates that for the entire data set, covering the 40-year period, there are gaps at the high school graduation level and postsecondary

level and we were able to identify educational attainment by race and found that Whites tend to graduate from high school, earn Bachelor's degrees, and attend graduate school at a faster pace than Blacks, however, our data indicates where Blacks tend to go to junior college at a little higher rate than Whites but overall, Whites have a much higher rate for attaining educational achievement. To better understand why this data reflects this, we decided that we would examine what areas of study that both Whites and Blacks thought were of interest in schools for students. Using GSS, we were able to find that when posed with the question of which subject was the most important in school? Whites strongly valued reading and math as essential courses of study as compared to Blacks who did not feel as strongly or viewed it necessarily as a priority in school. In addition to this, we also examined how each ethnic group viewed the value of an education. Surprisingly, the data revealed that both ethnic groups fared basically the same in regards to their views of the importance of education.

Because we understand that an individual's socio-economic status often affects their perception, we examined using GSS the current financial condition of our respondents and found that this was also consistent with what we had previously indicated. Whites were much more satisfied with their financial status and at a much higher rate when compared to their Black counterparts. When posed with the idea of desiring success, it was most desired by Blacks which stands in conflict to the educational attainment level.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of race as it relates to educational attainment has been a topic of interest for decades even before the landmark case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. According to Harris (1992), since the 1700's this gap has been an issue, and although many strides have been made in trying to assist Blacks in becoming more literate, still today many lag behind to their White counterparts. There has always been a disparity in the educational

attainment of Whites and Blacks. In 1962, the year before the March on Washington, about half of all white people over 25 had completed high school but only a quarter of Blacks had (Nichols 2013). Why does the educational attainment of Whites tend to be greater than that of Blacks?

Theoretical Framework

Data collected for this presentation will support why this educational attainment gap continues to exist and provide an overview based on information collected from the GSS how personal perceptions of both ethnic groups affects achievement.

Achievement gaps seem likely to remain a focus in the next authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The requirement that schools, districts and states disaggregate students' test scores and graduation rates by race, gender, language and socio-economic status remains one of the few parts of NCLB with broad bipartisan support for reauthorization. Moreover, the economic-stimulus law passed by Congress in 2009 required states to close achievement gaps and provide more equitable distribution of high-quality teachers for poor and minority students. Policymakers and educators hope to find new ways to close achievement gaps faster in the decade to come.

Results, Conclusions and Educational Importance of the Study

We understand that to successfully close the educational attainment gap between Whites and Blacks, sound data must be at the compass that drives the planning process and for those of us who continue to ignore this gap; it will only continue to divide our great democratic society. It's the elephant in the room that no one wants to discuss. The world watched in awe when a young woman by the name of Rachel Jeanne, star witness for the prosecution in the Trayvon Martin case, was unable to read a letter she had allegedly written to the victim's mother. She was unable to do this because it was written in cursive. In addition to this, she was

a senior in high school and could barely speak in complete sentences. Her obvious limitations, both verbally and socially, are a product of our society and its failure to address a gap that has existed for many generations. We believe that the if sound data is the basis of any plan, this would be beneficial in beginning to work towards bridging this great divide through the careful examination of specific areas of concern while identifying existing needs. With this knowledge we can move on to seek and implement more efficient teaching strategies. We can also develop effective policies and activities to promote and increase family involvement. It is a daunting mission to attempt to correct a problem that has been documented since the 1700s.

According to information compiled by Educational Testing Service (ETS), Researchers have agreed, at least since James Coleman and colleagues issued the famous mid-1960s report *Equality of Educational Opportunity* that conditions in families have very much to do with student achievement.

We must be determined and focused to make a valiant effort in closing this educational attainment gap for if not us, who? If not now, when? We live in a world that is constantly changing, and it requires that all stakeholders involved make changes as well. All students must be able to meet the challenges that accompany those changes. Decades of research have documented the wide achievement disparities between different White and Black students. The significance of this situation should be seen as dire. There has been much debate about why Whites tend to have greater educational attainment than that of blacks but according to the study conducted by ETS states that the challenges to jump-start progress in reducing the Black-White achievement gap are indeed formidable. Single or simple solutions are suspect.

No one finds it acceptable to maintain the status quo. Derek Neal's projection based on observed trends--that reaching equality will take from 50 to 100 years—is a clear warning of a possible future. Such a future is unacceptable. Suggestions for closing the educational achievement gap between

Whites and Blacks will be momentous and will involve support from all facets of society from local school districts to various government agencies. Interventions may include the following: improving the relationship with parents through more family-oriented activities, reducing class size, more after-school tutorial programs, more culture-oriented programs, opportunities for educational field trips, and an increase in technology use. To address the issue of parental involvement, Barton (2004) suggest that schools need to set the climate for strong connections with parents and educators may need to put in extended effort with many low income and single families. In doing so, it encourages them to take an active role and to have a sense of partnership. It is not an easy task but with a strong support system and the proper interventions, this educational achievement gap will cease to exist but it will require commitment from all stakeholders, courage, and faith. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Faith is taking the first step even if you don't see the whole staircase" and we must be willing to take that first step.

Assessing Logistic Regression Model Effectiveness Using Proportional Change Criteria and Proportional Reduction of Error

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Abstract

The importance of classification tables in binary logistic regression analysis has not been fully recognized. This may be to an over reliance on statistical software or unaware of the value that computation of the proportional by chance accuracy criteria (PCC) and proportional reduction in error (PRE) statistic can add to binary logistic regression models. Case illustrations are used in this presentation to demonstrate the usefulness of these computations. An overview of logistic regression is proffered along with a discussion of the function of

case classifications and strategies in application of the PCC and PRE. It offers guidance for others interested in understanding how classification tables can be maximized to assess the predictive effectiveness and utility of binary logistic regression models.

Summary

The use of logistic regression analysis to predict dichotomous outcomes in education is an alternative to linear regression that has gained popularity with the availability of statistical software packages (Baradwaj & Pal, 2011; Teh, Othman & Michael, 2010). Increased use of logistic regression requires that educational researchers become knowledgeable in how to accurately assess and interpret the results (Peng, Lee, & Ingersoll, 2002). While user friendly software may have contributed to the popularity, it does not preclude the use of computational techniques to garner more meaningful information. In addition to understanding the underlying assumptions of logistic regression and principles of statistical interpretation, researchers must also evaluate the accuracy and utility of their models to determine how well they work (Menard, 2002).

Statistical programs like STATA, R, SAS, and SPSS create contingency tables of the observed and predicted values of the dependent variables similar to chi square (Menard, 2002). By comparing the predicted with the observed values (George & Mallery, 2011) the probability of a particular case is classified into one of the outcomes based on the regression equation. Classification tables are created to indicate how well the model predicts the possible values of the dependent variable by indicating the percent of overall classifications, which is a key ingredient in determining the accuracy of the model (Long, 1997). While this may be sufficient in some situations, other researchers may be more interested in determining the utility and predictive efficiency of the model rather than the overall fit. This can be accomplished via the proportional by chance accuracy criteria (PCC) and proportional reduction in error (PRE) statistic.

In this presentation the efficacy and utility that the PCC and PRE bring to binary logistic regression models are discussed. Case illustrations are presented to demonstrate their application. An overview of logistic regression is proffered along with a discussion of classifying cases and how the PCC and PRE are used to determine effectiveness and utility. It illuminates how classification tables can be used to evaluate the usefulness and efficiency of binary logistic regression models.

Teacher Evaluation: Value Added or Subtracted?

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Abstract

A Value-Added Model is a statistical formula designed to calculate the projected growth for a student on a standardized test. Value-Added Models for teacher evaluation are one of the more common elements of educational reform in many states. Due to the Race to the Top initiative, states competing for federal incentive funds must modify teacher evaluation systems to reflect academic growth as measured by standardized tests. Research reveals the many shortcomings VAMs possess when attempting to isolate teacher effect. VAMs also have the potential to demoralize teachers and administrators due to the many shortcomings of the statistical formulas and the issues surrounding high-stakes evaluation measures. This paper reveals the characteristics of VAMs that may have an affect on teacher morale, thereby impacting school climate.

Summary

Research suggests that school climate affects not only student achievement (Cohen, Fege, Pickeral, 2009; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; National School Climate Council, 2007), but also student motivation and emotional health

(University-Community Partnerships, Michigan State University, 2004.) School leaders must be considerate of school climate when implementing policy changes. The most recent policy change affecting several states involves the incorporation of a Value-Added Model as a component of the teacher evaluation process.

VAMs are designed to calculate the mean amount of growth for a teachers students by averaging the differences between each students predicted score on a test and each students actual score. VAMs attempt to separate educational factors from non-educational factors to determine the teachers impact on each student (RAND Education, 2004).

Although statisticians have attempted to isolate teacher effect by including variables outside of the influence of the school and classroom teacher, such as socioeconomic status, previous test scores, discipline records, and attendance records, several researchers agree that the formula is unstable, partly because of the numerous variables (Baker et al., 2010). Furthermore, teachers and educational leaders realize that a formula cannot accurately predict student achievement or measure the true quality of a teacher.

VAMs can negatively impact school climate through the demoralization of teachers and principals. One of the research-based dimensions of school climate is morale (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). Both low morale and negative school climates have been linked to low student achievement (Black, 2001; National School Climate Council, 2002). Researchers have conveyed several negative effects of VAMs when used for teacher evaluation, such as the skewed results due to missing data and small sample sizes, difficulty in isolating teacher effect, and the confusion and doubts of teachers about VAMs, which all may have a negative impact on teachers attitudes toward teaching and testing (Baker et al. 2010; Betebenner et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2011; McCaffrey et al., 2003; Moran, 2012; The Working Group on Teacher

Quality, 2007). These features of VAMs can also cause a lack of motivation, competition among faculty members, and a distrust of leaders and coworkers. Furthermore, teachers may feel discouragement, helplessness, and anger toward leaders (Baker et al., 2010). All of these feelings and attitudes contribute to the demoralization of teachers, thereby affecting school climate.

In spite of the fact that several studies suggest that VAMs have statistical limitations and the reliability of the value-added formulas has been questioned (Baker et al., 2010; The Working Group on Teacher Quality, 2007), policymakers and educational leaders across the nation are implementing VAMs to measure teacher quality. Though many professionals believe that the benefits of VAMs outweigh the negatives, policymakers should examine the research concerning VAMs and remain cautious when tying VAMs to high stakes decisions. Since VAMs can possibly have negative effects on school climate, educational leaders must be prepared to foster positive relationships and high teacher morale. Teachers and students are the highest stakeholders, and unfortunately, much is at stake for both

Instructional Leadership for School Improvement: Chapter 4 of a Guide to Data-Driven Decisions

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Abstract

The verbiage data-driven decision is used very frequently in K-12 schools; higher education, and other work-related entities. With the shift to accountability primarily to student performances, a significant number of assessment and test data are available with heightened attention on these data. The analyses of these data and the implications of the data are critical to many aspects of schools and

classroom practices. In Chapter 4, the role of the leader as the instructional leader and the use of the data are described.

Summary

There are multiple ways of approaching instructional leadership, and instructional leadership has been defined and described many ways. However, the critical work of an instructional leader is in the classroom promoting instructional programs and professional development through maintaining a culture of high expectations for teaching and learning. Good teaching does not occur in a vacuum. There is a critical role for school leaders to play in nurturing effective teaching. The interrelationship of classroom observations (formal and informal) conducted by school leaders and professional development for teachers initiated by school leaders should provide parameters for school leaders to demonstrate instructional leadership.

As school leaders conduct classroom observations, the results of the observations will inform principals of the kinds of skills/competencies that teachers possess or lack. Classroom observations are forms of data that should influence the kind of professional development that a teacher engages in as well as other sectors of classrooms. Mentoring and grouping are tools that school leaders can use as a result of observations to build professional learning communities. Professional learning communities can be an effective form of professional development. Blankstien (2010) emphasizes in *Failure is Not An Option* that an imperative challenge for school leaders in obtaining and sustaining success is establishing professional learning communities; the establishment of professional learning communities is vital to school improvement. A critical attribute is for school leadership is school improvement.

Several years ago, the Southern Educational Regional Board suggested that leaders impact as much as twenty percent of the achievement in

schools. Recently, Siconne (2012) noted that leaders impact as much as twenty-five percent of the achievement in schools. Blankstien (2010) advocates that there are specific manners in which the school leaders impact student achievement. Building staff capacity, motivating and committing to the work environment, and impacting work conditions are all critical.

Leithwood and Riehl (2005) suggest that “leadership makes a difference in student achievement.” The premise of Leithwood and Riehl are supported by these principles:

- Successful school leadership makes important contributions to the improvement of student learning;
- The primary sources of successful leadership in schools are principals and teachers;
- In addition to principals and teachers, leadership is an ought to be distributed to others in the school and school community;
- A core set of basis leadership practices is valuable in all contexts;
- In addition to engaging in a core set of leadership practices, successful leaders must act in ways that acknowledge the accountability-oriented policy context in which almost all work; and
- Many successful leaders in schools serving highly diverse student populations enact practices to promote school quality, equity, and social justice. (pp. 12 – 27)

Developing and Scoring an Attitude Scale

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Abstract

Human characteristics are often categorized into three dimensions: 1) cognitive, 2) psychomotor, or affective (Anderson and Bourke, 2000). The first reflects the ways people think, the second the way they behave, and the third the way they feel. The third category - the way people feel - is the focus of this symposium.

Several issues in the measurement of affective characteristics will be presented in the context of a discussion of the development of an attitude scale. These will include the nature of attitudes, the purpose of measuring attitudes, writing items to measure attitudes using a Likert response scale, and the scoring and interpretation of scores from such a scale.

Summary

Human characteristics are often categorized into one of three dimensions: 1) cognitive, 2) psychomotor, or affective (Anderson and Bourke, 2000). The first reflects the ways people think, the second the way they behave, and the third the way they feel. The third category - the way people feel - is the focus of this symposium.

One of the common affective characteristics measured in education is attitude. Attitudes are defined as learned predispositions to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Anderson and Bourke, 2000). In order to measure attitudes, one must define the object toward which attitudes are being considered, the underlying continuum onto which a respondent is positioned based on the intensity of their feelings toward the object, and the ways by which items and responses can be written to accurately position a respondent. One of the best methods to accomplish these tasks is to develop what commonly is known as a Likert scale.

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the important issues in measuring attitudes in the context of the development of an attitude scale. More specifically, each participant will be responsible for explaining one or more of the following issues: an explanation of the conceptual basis from which the measurement of attitudes can be explained, the writing of good items for use with a Likert response scale, a discussion of the characteristics of a Likert response scale, the development of an attitudinal scale using four or five point Likert responses, the scoring of this a scale, and the interpretation of scores on such a scale. Specific examples of each issue and recommendations for addressing any problems associated with them will be offered.

Teachers as Teacher Educators and the Nature of Resistance

*Mary Ann Wallace
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Abstract

This qualitative critical multi-case study examines the nature of resistance as it emerges within the work of two urban secondary teachers acting as teacher educators, each teaching a

secondary teacher preparation course within their own Professional Development School context. It is within legitimacy that I locate the lived theoretical space of microresistance and present multiple representations of enacted microresistance as they occur within legitimacy, a pedagogy of withinness, alliance building and compliance negotiation. The enactment of microresistance indicates that work is being done to seed and provide entry points to promote social justice in ways that widen cracks within a system and culture of high-stakes accountability; thus, promoting hope and possibility.

Summary

This qualitative critical multi-case study examines the nature of resistance as it emerges within the work of two urban secondary teachers acting as teacher educators, each teaching a secondary teacher preparation course within their own respective school context. Both research sites are discursively and functionally similar in terms of their status as a Professional Development School (PDS) and their work as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The historical, social and political underpinnings of PDSs and PLCs are examined as they are now ubiquitous organizational structures that function largely as mechanisms of support and accountability for education reform, promoting a largely functionary role for teachers. After revisiting resistance as it is typically understood, that is, framed within overt acts of protest and dissent, I draw analysis from Misra (2009) who argues that all social movements occur from within organizational structures. Building on Misra (2009), I build a construct for understanding legitimacy, a necessary attribute of effective organizational membership, as an important location for teacher resistance. It is within legitimacy that I locate the lived theoretical space of microresistance and present multiple representations of enacted microresistance as they occur within legitimacy, a pedagogy of withinness, alliance building and compliance negotiation. The enactment of microresistance indicates that work is

being done to seed and provide entry points to promote social justice in ways that widen cracks within the system; thus, promoting hope and possibility. This critical multi-case study suggests that secondary teaching and learning spaces are critically complemented by secondary teacher preparation. Challenging the functionary role of teacher leadership and the nature of school/university partnerships, this study presses for alliances between public schools and the university teacher preparation programs that serve them. Preparing teachers to read the value and politics of educational spaces they are prepared in—as opposed to preparing them to return to the schools and schooling practices of their childhood—creates a new vision and purpose for what teachers need to know and be able to do. Implications and recommendations for improved professional development, mentoring models and extended research are presented, as well as axiological recommendations for researching teacher resistance.

Principles of Leading Change: An Inductive Analysis from Post-Katrina New Orleans

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Abstract

While many theories of educational change certainly exist in print (Carr-Chellman, 2006; Cuban & Usdan, 2002; Ellsworth, 2000; Elmore & Burney, 1997; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Reigeluth, Carr-Chellman, Beabout & Watson, 2006; Squire & Reigeluth, 2000), it is less clear whether or not these theories are aligned with practitioners beliefs and actions regarding change. Seeking to document the principles of educational change held by practicing school administrators, this phenomenological examination of 12 school principals describes six guiding principles use by

school leaders in their discussions of educational change.

Summary

Purpose

This exploratory study of urban school principals' implicit theories of educational change describes the diversity of change theories held by ten individuals in the context of one urban district's experience with rapid, unplanned structural change. Particularly in the case of the rapidly decentralized school system in post-Katrina New Orleans, the theories of change that principals bring to their schools are likely to influence principals' expectations of teachers and students, the forms of support principals provide, and the types of communication principals engage in with stakeholders (Spillane, 2002).

Given the significant tradition of local control, and the well-documented neglect of public schools in high-poverty urban communities (Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1967, 2005; McLaren, 2003) the need to examine the theories of change held by local educational leaders becomes clear. The descriptive work presented here will facilitate future change research exploring the relationships between implicit change theories held by practicing school leaders. With a greater understanding of the implicit theories of change held by such individuals, reformers, researchers, policymakers, and leadership preparation programs stand in a better position to actively help urban schools succeed in change.

Rationale

A number of scholars have noted the importance of educators' implicit-theories in shaping their practice and their approach to change. Olsen and Kirtman (2002) identify childhood experiences in school, prior career experiences, and family life as individual characteristics that influence teachers' responses to school wide reform. While they do not specifically address the topic of implicit theories of

change in their study, making the case that these prior experiences would impact one's internal theory of change is relatively straightforward.

From a policy-implementation perspective, Spillane (2002) identifies three categories of approaches to change emerging from interviews with 40 district officials engaged in standards-based reform: behaviorist, situated, and cognitive. Based on interviews and accompanying classroom observations, Spillane concludes that the predominance of a behaviorist perspective amongst district officials (85% of their sample) may inhibit teacher implementation of proposed reforms.

Both Fink (2003) and Hammerness (2001) identify the centrality of individuals' personal beliefs about education in their support or abandonment of proposed reforms. While externally created policies, programs, and reward structures certainly influence the change process (Elmore & Burney, 1997; French & Raven, 1959), these more recent studies insist that we also pay attention to the individuals charged with implementing reforms and the paths they envision towards improvement. The implicit theories studied here are a direct product of the work and lives of these urban principals as they make sense of their professional experience in very personal ways.

The six implicit principles of change exhibited by the ten principals in this study are listed below. Elaboration is limited due to the lack of space here. The six principals include: teacher collaboration, connecting the school to the community, generating public support, meeting students' needs, setting goals and organizing people to accomplish them, and improving instructional practice. to successful school change. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any of the above

Facilitation and Change: A Teacher Education Model

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Abstract

Facilitation is defined as the process of making something easier, as in completing a task or meeting a goal. In the field of education, moving individuals toward ownership of a subject or concept, by allowing them to share thoughts and work together, is essential to maximizing and encouraging ownership, growth, responsibility, and value within a group (Kocolowski, 2010). This presentation will examine the role of the leader as a facilitator, as well as examine the strategies that may be used to maintain movement and encourage growth within the members of the group. Used properly, facilitation can be one of the most effective strategies used by leaders.

Summary

This presentation regarding the use of facilitation as a leadership tool will examine the efforts of three school leaders who employ facilitation as a primary method for several of their teacher development programs. The facilitators will share information on how best to move toward a facilitation model while working to develop staff with varying skills, experiences, and perspectives. Feedback from teachers who have been involved in the Facilitation Leadership Process will be shared, along with information on what is required to initiate the process and have it continue with effectiveness and to achieve established goals.

Current trends allow individuals numerous opportunities for continuous engagement, while employing the many technological devices such as iPads, iPhones, and computers. Expanding, readily-available technological developments require leaders to rethink their training approaches to better engage others to both recognize and "buy-into" or

“own” relevant information that is presented for daily success in their educational positions. Facilitation as a leadership style can be a positive, effective method of encouraging engagement, increasing motivation, and creating group cohesiveness where individuals work together to accomplish common goals (Eller, 1957/2004). This study will examine the process of facilitation and offer suggested strategies that may be used for both initiation and appropriate direction of the group for meaningful outcomes. Strategies for managing difficult topics or opinions during the facilitation process will also be presented.

Assessing the needs and stressing the importance of each group member essential in the beginning of the facilitation process. Including technology and access to copies of materials also increases interest. Early on, the facilitation process must include a description of the role of the leader as facilitator and the role of each person as a worthy contributor of the group. This beginning phase is instrumental to setting the ground work for the group’s dynamic ability to function smoothly.

Topics discussed during a presentation should be arranged in order of interest and importance to the audience. A brief survey of the audience can help determine those topics; then, the facilitator must employ strategies that encourage ongoing engagement and participation. Strategies include small group discussion based on interest or need, partner-share groups where two individuals are involved in discussion, and the use of questioning to continue and deepen discussion. Throughout the process, the facilitator must keep the discussion going by allowing for anyone to ask any question or express any concern related to the topic without feeling the need to have the final or only answer, by modifying the amount of time spent discussing certain key areas of interest as needed, and by always allowing time for all parties to reflect on what has been accomplished. Additionally, having the discussion summarized in a verbal and/or written format for the members of the group allows

the facilitator to verify that the group activities served their intended purpose(s).

Principal as Change Agent Characteristics

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Abstract

The principal as change agent [PCA] is a structured approach to principal leadership that fosters involvement from participants within the school to make sustainable change. Acting from personal vision for the school, the principal inspires others in the school to a shared vision and is able to communicate it effectively. The principal shares leadership to involve others to help carry out the shared vision. The principal manages the change process by making wise decisions about what to change and monitoring the change efforts. Concurrently, the principal develops a supportive culture for teachers by providing encouragement and resources for them. Efforts by the PCA lead to a positive learning environment for students and help a school community make and accept change.

Summary

Statement of the Problem

Schools are under strict accountability standards and must assess current practices and make adjustments in order to increase student achievement. Schools need leaders capable of helping the school to improve its practices to meet these accountability standards. Assumptions that schools need to improve and that the principal has an important role in bringing about improvement were used to focus the review.

Theoretical Framework

With an understanding that the principal plays an important role in bringing about change in schools, the purpose of this literature review was to find the characteristics of the principal as change agent (PCA).

Research Question

The research question directing this review: 1) what are the primary characteristics of the PCA as identified in the literature?

Methodology

Using the ProQuest and EBSCOhost data bases and the keywords “principal as change agent”- a search of literature was conducted. The results of the search were organized into major headings which include vision, shared leadership, management of change initiatives, and development of a positive culture.

Results

The characteristics of change agent provide a framework from which the principal can direct his or her actions to receive support and cooperation from faculty and the surrounding community to make changes that will bring about improvement. A principal’s personal vision, or moral purpose (Fullan, 2002), provides strength, confidence, and direction for the principal. The principal must develop a shared vision to which all participants will commit to carry out. The shared vision becomes the basis from which all decisions are made. The principal communicates the vision to everyone in the school with his or her words and actions. Effectively communicating the vision is an important skill of the PCA. When the PCA shares leadership responsibilities with faculty and community leaders, he or she gives others ownership of the vision and empowers them to carry it out. The PCA gathers information from parents and teachers before considering changes and

makes them part of the decision making process. PCA considers what to change based on the shared vision and how the change will impact the school. Providing encouragement, oversight, and resources are ways the PCA monitors change initiatives. The PCA creates a structure to develop a positive culture that might include celebrations and getting to know staff members. The positive culture instills confidence in teachers that allows them to attempt new approaches. Working cooperatively with the faculty and community, the PCA has the opportunity to help his or her school provide a positive supportive learning environment for students.

PCA literature provides a basis for the growing body of research about principal leadership.

Using Technology in Gifted and Talented Education Classrooms: The Teachers’ Perspective

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Abstract

New technologies emerge frequently. Administrators and teachers have to decide which technologies are worthwhile investments of both limited funds and instructional time. Standards from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the International Society for Technology in Education encourage educators to teach skills that will help students adapt to changing working environments. These skills resemble the National Association for Gifted Children’s program and teacher preparation standards. A qualitative multi-case phenomenological study of six Alabama teachers of the gifted examined how they use and shape technology experiences with students, promote student learning of 21st century skills, and the extent to which they differentiate technology

lessons with respect to autonomy, complexity, instruction in technology, and ability level.

Summary

What do teachers have students do with technology? This question is frequently answered using a questionnaire. However, this method does not show the entire picture. Reporting use of certain software or learning activities does not help researchers, administrators, or decision-makers about educational technology understand what technology is most beneficial in educational settings. Additionally, students know how to use technology, but not necessarily for purposes beyond entertainment and socialization. Education can give purpose and direction to ways that students learn to use technology for productivity, but the question remains as to the most beneficial practices.

In an attempt to begin to describe the phenomenon of educational technology use, six classrooms in Alabama were selected. Due to the intersection of 21st century skills with standards of gifted education and the relative freedom elementary teachers of the gifted in Alabama have to provide enrichment experiences for students, the classrooms used for the study were all elementary classrooms designated for gifted education. The teacher participants were selected due to their high use of technology with students in their classrooms, even in settings where technology resources were somewhat limited. Participants were interviewed, lesson plans collected and classroom observations were made. Data sources were analyzed through thematic coding to attempt to describe in what ways the teachers of the gifted shaped students' technology experiences, and whether technology lessons were differentiated with respect to autonomy, complexity, instruction in technology, and ability level.

The findings related to how teachers of the gifted shape educational technology experiences were that characteristics of the teachers themselves, the types of pedagogy used in the classrooms, the

availability of equipment, and the student populations influenced educational technology use in the classroom for gifted students. Issues related to the student population appeared to be the biggest factor in shaping educational technology experiences. These factors include issues such as moving the students from novice to technology experts, general educational goals the teachers had for the students, and the influence of student characteristics such as home life, behaviors typical of students who are gifted, and providing authentic learning experiences. Then to a lesser extent, the available equipment, choices related to pedagogy, and the characteristics of the teacher shaped educational technology use.

The answer as to whether differentiation within technology lessons occurred was that there is a relatively low level of differentiation. Most of the differentiation appeared as happenstance. That is, differentiation occurred in natural ways such as students self-selecting topics, students engaging to a greater or lesser extent than classmates to complete projects, and the teacher providing on-demand mini-lessons for students who were not as tech savvy as classmates. There was little evidence that the teachers were purposefully planning differentiation into lessons. In general, the attitude was that the students would naturally differentiate themselves.

Further research is needed to broaden the understanding of educational technology use. Specifically, different student populations should be included and research is needed that is from the student perspective.

Learning through Stories: Examining Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Field Experiences

Leilya Pitre
Louisiana State University

Abstract

This session engages participants in a discussion of pre-service teachers' perceptions of early field experiences before student teaching. The presenter shares the findings of the dissertation study, completed in narrative research tradition, exploring the participants' stories as means to understand lived experiences. The data instruments include participants' think pieces, field experience reflections, autobiographical essays, and individual and focus group interviews along with the researcher's observation notes. The five pre-service teachers' detailed narratives shed light on the issues of early field experiences value, pre-service teachers' understanding of teaching and its challenges, and whether their perceptions shift from the beginning to the end of field experiences. The findings indicate possible implications for teacher preparation programs and outline possible avenues for further research.

Summary

The primary goal of field experiences that pre-service teachers undergo as a part of their teacher training is to extend and connect concepts, skills, and dispositions acquired in a university classroom portion of their program of study. However, teacher educators constantly struggle to connect knowledge gained by pre-service teachers in their college coursework to their experiences in the field (Sulentic Dowell & Bach, 2012; Kingsley, 2007). Many teacher candidates confess that they know the content of teaching, methods, and strategies, but have difficulties to use this knowledge in a specific classroom situation (Moore, 2003). Schools of education are still determining what the "best practices" are in utilizing field experiences to

maximize pre-service teachers' learning (Sulentic Dowell, 2011). This problem created a necessity to explore field experiences prior to student teaching in a narrative research dissertation study examining the English pre-service teachers' perceptions of field experience events that affected their professional thinking and understanding of teaching.

Storytelling recounts events, provides solutions to crucial problems, and creates order (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008); hence, it is natural for pre-service English teachers to tell stories of their experiences as they enter the profession. Pre-service teachers' stories are powerful constructors of meaning; that is why the data instruments included various kinds of stories created by participants: think pieces, field experience reflections, autobiographical essays, and individual and focus group interviews along with the researcher's observation notes. The five pre-service teachers' detailed narratives shed light on the issues of early field experiences value, pre-service teachers' understanding of teaching and its challenges, and whether these perceptions shift from the beginning to the end of field experiences. The findings of the study reveal how pre-service teachers form understanding of teaching as a profession and a process in all its complexity. They also indicate the need to revamp the teacher preparation program and organization of early field experiences at the university under investigation.

The study, its findings, and design will help researchers to advance narrative inquiry as a way of understanding life experiences, including experiences concerned with professional growth. It may serve as a model for further research or a pilot study for a larger-scale project involving pre-service teachers from several flagship universities across the country. The study adds to the body of research related to teacher preparation and leads to identifying more effective ways to prepare pre-service teachers for transition into the classrooms.

Methods of Teacher Development: A Closer Look

*Eric Penalber and April Morgan
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Abstract

New teachers, 'new' being defined as first-time teachers and/or new to a particular field of education, learn and acquire best practice skills when given an opportunity to share experiences with others who encounter the same or similar experiences. With the recent introduction of the Compass Evaluation instrument accompanied by Value Added Measurement, teachers are encouraged to examine current practices and strive for improved performance. This proposed presentation will focus on teacher development and ways to develop a program designed to meet the specific and ever changing needs of the classroom teacher. The presentation will provide an overview of a school district's efforts at improving the performance of both teachers and students through increased focus on professional development.

Summary

Recent changes in both curriculum and teacher assessment practices across the nation have brought about changes in how teachers are thinking in regards to reflecting on both their performance and the performance of their students. These changes have required school leaders to inventory professional development opportunities and, when necessary, place increased emphasis on providing professional development opportunities that allow collaboration with fellow teachers and leaders as facilitators of personal growth. This study will focus on the results of a professional development initiative in a rural school district in Louisiana that was designed to assist new teachers with better understanding effective instructional delivery that is aimed at improving student outcomes.

Establishing a teacher development program designed to meet the specific needs of new teachers is often a challenge. School leaders are charged with determining the needs of new teachers and how to best provide resources for meeting those needs. At the same time, new teachers often struggle with identifying and communicating their needs as they relate to their new roles. As a result of poor communication, leaders, at times, miss opportunities to provide trainings that are targeted and appropriate to the continued success of new teachers. In her book, *Bright Ideas, a Pocket Mentor for New Teachers* (1997), Dr. Mary C. Clement explains how beginning teachers often isolate themselves from colleagues and administrators, and how communicating with other faculty and staff is key to the success of a beginning teacher.

This study will examine the development of a program for new teachers that was designed to meet their specific needs. The goal of the program was to empower teachers by providing them with the tools, training, and support needed to effectively implement curriculum, individual education plans, classroom management, and organization skills by allowing the new teachers opportunities to communicate and collaborate with seasoned (mentor) teachers who had been determined to be effective as evidenced by supervisor observations and student outcomes. A recent study by the National Association of Educators (NEA) 2010 found that teachers who are satisfied with the level of support they receive set higher expectations for their students and are less likely to leave the profession.

Program development from a two year perspective will be discussed as well as the organization of monthly meetings, importance of continued communication with school leaders (principals), techniques of finding expert or mentor teachers, survey development, struggles and successes along the way, and methods of measuring outcomes. Participants will learn a specific 12 step method of establishing an effective development program for teachers.

Peer Support for Increasing Effectiveness of Paraprofessionals in the Special Education Setting

*Jacquelyn Abington
Livingston Parish Public Schools*

Abstract

Paraprofessionals are an integral part of district staff serving students in special education; however, they come into their roles as paraprofessionals with varied education, personal experiences, practical job skills, expectations, and employment purposes. Typically, there is a disparity between what the paraprofessionals bring to their jobs and what is asked of them in fulfilling their duties. Districts must determine how to bridge this disparity to maximize employee effectiveness of this large group of special education staff. This presentation will discuss one district's recent approaches to addressing this disparity, including development of a volunteer paraprofessional planning committee, annual paraprofessional inservice developed and directed by this committee, and committee proposals for monthly school-level meetings, monthly parishwide inservice opportunities, and paraprofessional mentoring program.

Summary

Paraprofessionals are a large and integral portion of district staff serving students in special education inclusion, resource room, self-contained, and/or combination settings. At hire, paraprofessionals come to their positions with a wide variety of educational backgrounds, personal experiences, knowledge of student exceptionalities and learning styles, practical and specific job skills, expectations for duties they will perform, and reasons for seeking employment.

When hired by a district, paraprofessionals receive their primary orientation to their job placement through the special education teacher(s) to whom they are assigned. They may also be

provided training by district nursing staff to administer medications and perform other medically-related duties. Those paraprofessionals serving students with emotional and/or behavioral problems may also receive specific behavior management training that meets district policy.

As noted in the reference tool, Utah Paraeducator Handbook (2009), "Over the years, paraeducators' roles have changed dramatically. Once they merely created bulletin boards, took roll, supervised recess, or made copies. Today, paraeducators may provide instructional and clerical support for classroom teachers...support and help children as they learn...provide students with one-on-one attention...record grades, set up equipment, and help prepare materials for instruction." In the district referred to in this proposal, paraprofessionals serve students in preschool to grade 12, ages 3 to 22, with widely-varying educational/academic, cognitive, physical, motor, behavioral, emotional, communicative, sensory, and other needs. Paraprofessionals do not routinely receive specific training on exceptionalities, learning styles, or related areas to assist them in serving the varied populations in their assigned classrooms, other than what their school staff or personal study may provide.

In previous annual district paraprofessional inservices typical topics were job descriptions, general behavior and classroom management tips, confidentiality, assistive technology, and wheelchair bus/classroom safety training and positioning. Agenda was developed by district central office staff from their perception of what paraprofessionals required for annual updates. However, past inservice evaluation results showed a disparity in what paraprofessionals felt necessary to perform their jobs effectively and what was typically provided them as training. Their requests for followup included more specific topics like autism, Asperger's syndrome, learning disabilities, behavior tips for secondary students.

To address the disparity, the district created a volunteer paraprofessional committee to plan and conduct the 2013 annual inservice; district central office staff served in broad facilitation roles. Attendee responses were considerably improved, although the topics presented were not significantly changed. This encouraged the continuation of the paraprofessional committee, which in subsequent meetings, has planned for the annual 2014 inservice with target topics in break-out sessions, monthly school-level paraprofessional support meetings, monthly parish-wide study groups on key topics, and a peer mentoring program. Although the district agrees with Frank, Jeff, and Potts in their "I Don't Have All the Ingredients!" presentation (2009, Closing the Gap), that group meetings, individual meetings, trainings, and addressing paraprofessional learning style, experience, and preference are key elements for paraprofessional effectiveness, there must be the additional element of peer involvement to provide the most valuable on-target support and understanding sought by paraprofessionals to perform effectively in their daily settings.

Issues and Challenges in School Organization and Administration

*Randy Parker, Zaheerah El-Amin, Debbie Gegg,
Samuel Williams, Connie Wilson, and
Laura Bostick
Louisiana Tech University*

Abstract

In this set of literature review/position papers addressing current issues in the Organization and Administration of Public Schools, each author presents an introduction and background/historical perspective of the issue/topic followed by literature to address the following questions as they relate to the organization and administration of schools: (a) What are the opportunities, advantages and positive effects of this issue/topic for school leaders?; and, (b) What are the challenges and limitations of this

issue/topic for school leaders? Each author concludes with a discussion of the how this issue/topic impacts the school community and provides recommendations to school leaders as they implement or address this issue/topic in their schools or school system.

Summary

This symposium is a set of literature review/position papers addressing current issues in the Organization and Administration of Public Schools developed by doctoral students in a Seminar on School Organization and Administration. In each paper, the author presents an introduction and background/historical perspective of the issue/topic followed by literature to address the following questions as they relate to the organization and administration of schools: (a) What are the opportunities, advantages and positive effects of this issue/topic for school leaders?; and, (b) What are the challenges and limitations of this issue/topic for school leaders? Each author concludes with a discussion of the how this issue/topic impacts the school community and provides recommendations to school leaders as they implement or address this issue/topic in their schools or school system.

Boys Hope Girls Hope: Parent Partnership Program

*Kathleen Campbell
Southeastern Louisiana University*

*Lisa Taylor
Boys Hope Girls Hope*

Abstract

Boys Hope Girls Hope opened its doors in 1977 to academically capable and motivated children-in-need in order to help them meet their full potential by providing family-like homes, opportunities, and

education through college. Since 1991, 100% of Boys Hope Girls Hope Scholars have gone to college. For the high school graduating classes of 2002 through 2010, 86% have earned college degrees. In order for this program to be effective, Boys Hope Girls Hope utilizes many interventions, collaborations, and resources which include the building of relationships with middle and high schools, college prep programs, AmeriCorps, counselors, mentors, active boards, parents, university service learning programs, and staff. This paper will highlight this program and its use of data to drive it.

Summary

Statement of the Problem

According to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, school leaders must promote the success of all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture conducive to student learning (standard 2) and by collaborating with families and community members (standard 4). Although there are many schools that provide academically supportive environments and after school programs that reinforce academics, some academically capable students still seem to fall between the cracks because they lack the support at home. Some families, despite their willingness, lack the resources or the know-how to provide the academic structure and network of support that their children need to succeed. Those are the children for whom Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) was founded.

Boys Hope Girls Hope is a national and international non-profit children's services agency dedicated to helping academically capable children-in-need realize their full potential through education. It provides long-term care and support through both residential and non-residential programs.

Position

The purpose of the paper is to introduce an international program, completely funded by private donations, that exists to help academically capable children-in-need succeed. Boys Hope Girls Hope opened its doors in 1977 to academically capable and motivated children-in-need in order to help them meet their full potential by providing family-like homes, opportunities, and education through college. Since 1991, 100% of BHGH Scholars have gone to college. For the high school graduating classes of 2002 through 2010, 86% have earned college degrees. In order for this program to be effective, BHGH utilizes many interventions, collaborations, and resources which include the building of relationships with middle and high schools, college prep programs, AmeriCorps, counselors, mentors, active boards, parents, university service learning programs, and staff.

Methodology

The present position paper will describe the Boys Hope Girls Hope Mission and Values and its long-term program. The paper will highlight the BHGH program and its use of data to drive it. Publicly documented case studies and stories of BHGH successes will be presented along with national and international statistics. Comparative data with other programs will be presented.

Educational Significance

The educational significance of the Boys Hope Girls Hope program is that allows academically capable students to prevail in spite of their state of poverty or homelessness or other debilitating situation that would preclude such success. Because the graduates of the program are expected to give back to their community in some meaningful way, the success stories are replete with examples of their helping others or of contributing to the field of medicine or science or social research.

Maturation, Learning and the Need to Influence Others

*Frank Igou and Mary Livingston
Louisiana Tech University*

Abstract

In this study, university students will be asked to complete a set demographic questions including questions about age, gender, and class standing (e.g. “freshman”), and items relating to their political and religious orientation. Students will then be presented with a series of situational questions, including sales and unplanned pregnancy situations, and asked how they would respond in that situation. Finally, students will be asked a series of questions relating to attitudes and beliefs designed to measure different aspects, and intensity of the need to persuade others. It is anticipated that demographic variables will be related to changes in the need to influence others, and changes consistent with notions about learning and maturation. Implications of findings will be discussed.

Inequities Surrounding the Louisiana TOPS Program and the Systematic Thrust of Minorities into the Federal Student Loan Program

*Twyla Williams-Damond and Mitzi P. Trahan
University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Summary

Although the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) in Louisiana is a benevolent fund and is considered to be one of the most successful and popular government programs, it does not exist without flaws. One such flaw is that it is the fifth most expensive financial aid program in the nation (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2010). The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2010) unveils Louisiana’s opposition to putting more

emphasis on funding need-based financial aid programs. Louisiana has chosen to concentrate its postsecondary financial aid resources toward funding merit-based financial aid programs. TOPS founding benefactor’s original intent was to boost college enrollment among minority and lower-middle income Louisiana students; more than half of current TOPS recipients belong to the Caucasian, upper-wealthy income families. This evidence indicates that Louisiana’s TOPS program disproportionately benefits students from middle and upper income families rather than supplementing those students with the highest financial need (Thurber, 2008).

Although the existing Federal Student Loan program offers a temporary fix, it eventually harms many minorities who are in most need for tax dollars to fund their education. Not only are mostly minorities and lower-income students at the end of this vast student loan debt, but they also inherit the never-ending cycle of paying the debt off (National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), 2008). With the current interest rates and payback policies in place, one could easily consider the behavior of the government as unfair and even prejudicial.

As leaders within the education genre, there are many recommendations and adjustments that we can suggest for the realignment of the flow of financial aid dollars towards the direction benefitting the demographic that TOPS was originally intended.

Revamping the statewide tuition assistance program would keep many of these minority and low-income students out of the Federal Student Loan program pool altogether.

Outstanding student loan debt owed by existing borrowers continues to swell. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) estimates that outstanding debt is approaching \$1.2 trillion as of May 2013. We also estimate that student loans guaranteed or held by the federal government have now crossed the \$1 trillion mark (Chopra, 2013, p.

1). According to the 2011 Louisiana Budget Project, approximately 42,000 students used TOPS to finance their higher education (Mathis, 2011). Unlike most other states, Louisiana allocates only 17% of state-funded financial aid based on need (Mathis, 2011). The Southern Regional Education Board's website reports 17% as less than half the amount that other southern states spend and less than a third of the national average (Southern Regional Education Board, 2010). On the other hand, 81% of Louisiana's financial aid allocation is merit-based.

This paper presents an analysis and comparison of the both federal and Louisiana options for financing higher education. Louisiana TOPS was originally created to serve the needs of minority and/or low-income students and provide an opportunity for college entrance. TOPS is intended to not only provide access to higher education but also includes criteria to ensure successful completion of an undergraduate degree.

GNO Student Population Shifts

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Abstract

There is minimal information available on private-school student population shifts in the Greater New Orleans (GNO) region both before and after Hurricane Katrina. This is because private K-12 institutions do not need to make this information readily available to the general public. To determine what shifts are occurring, we submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the State of Louisiana, Department of Education. In examining public and private school data from both the 2000-01 and 2010-11 Academic Years alongside United States' Census data from the same Census years, we noted a -1.12% change in private-school student

population alongside a 12.74% increase in overall population.

Summary

Problem

The K-12 market in GNO is, since Superstorm Katrina, increasingly saturated with tuition-free alternatives (e.g. charter schools) to the private-school market (Cowen Institute, 2012b). In analyzing various strategic plans written for private Orleans Parish schools, one learns that such institutions' leaders believe they continuously lose market share as their clientele seek other education options; there is a perception that these schools' students leave for both other private schools and tuition-free alternatives. Data on student populations is only readily available for public schools. Private schools' leaders have declined to make such information public. There is thus no way to validate the concerns of private school leaders.

Literature

Market discipline-styled reforms in education are causing nationwide change in the educational landscape (Lubienski, 2007). Freemarkets in education have thus led consumers from home-schooling, traditional, and private options to magnet, charter, and Internet-based school options (Sweetland, 2002). This trend is potentially seen in Orleans Parish student enrollment data.

In examining literature concerning Orleans Parish student population data, for example, one notes that charter schools boast an increasing market share of the Orleans Parish student body. The Cowen Institute (2012b), in using data from the 2011-12 school year, states that charter schools boasted a majority of the student body, steadily increasing since Katrina. It would thus appear that, within Orleans Parish, such options are depleting the private schools' market pool. One could thus theorize that the 30% market share of Orleans Parish students enjoyed by private, K-12 institutions

is potentially declining annually (Cowen Institute, 2012a). Available literature, however, is deficient; the Cowen Institute (2012b) report does not sufficiently describe shifting Orleans Parish school enrollment, as it only discusses public school enrollment. Without data on enrollment records, the validity of this theory of decreasing Orleans' private-school enrollment cannot be discerned.

Methods

Private schools' enrollment records for both the 2000-01 and 2010-11 Academic Years were obtained via the Freedom of Information Act. These records were then analyzed alongside public-school enrollment and Census figures for the same years in question. It was discovered, for example, that private-school population only decreased by -1.12% (LDOE 2001; LDOE, 2013), whereas the overall GNO population increased by 12.74% (GNOCDC, 2013).

Implications

Trends gleaned from these data will assist both private and public institutions in planning for reconstruction, budgeting, and recruitment. These data further provide opportunities for further study in GNO-based school choice trends.

First-Generation College Students in the University of Louisiana System: A Qualitative Study

Dale Ellen O'Neill and Cherie' Kay Larocca
University of New Orleans

Abstract

From 1987 to 1996, the rate of college attendance for first-generation college students was a mere 4.8% (Bradbury & Mather, 2009). In 2009, this number grew to between one quarter and one half of college enrollment (Bradbury & Mather,

2009). While a growth has occurred, degree attainment has not. This lack of persistence of first-generation students is a major retention issue that educational leaders are called to address. This presentation will provide findings from a qualitative study of first-generation students in the University of Louisiana system. Pascarella's Model for Assessing Change (1985) served as the study's foundation and findings are depicted according to student background, organizational characteristics, student effort, and socialization. Lastly, this presentation will provide strategies for fostering persistence.

Summary

From 1987 to 1996, the rate of college attendance for children of parents who did not complete a postsecondary degree was a mere 4.8%. Recently, however, the rate of postsecondary enrollment of these "first-generation" college students has increased dramatically. In 2009, first-generation college students represented somewhere between one quarter and one half of college enrollments (Bradbury & Mather, 2009). However, while enrollment has increased for these students, degree attainment has not. In 2006, the College Completion study found that the risk of departure during the first-year of college for first-generation college students was 71% higher than their counterparts (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2006). Research has displayed that this is due to the additional challenges that these students confront compared to their counterparts. Specifically, first-generation students encounter more obstacles concerning family support, degree expectations, and college preparation (Bradbury & Mather, 2009). Due to these challenges, first-generation college students have a low rate of persistence.

In order to address this major retention issue, a qualitative study of first-generation college students in the University of Louisiana System was implemented. Such research is imperative to higher education professionals in Louisiana due to the fact

that only 21.4% of individuals in the state have a bachelor's degree, the fifth lowest in the nation (U.S. Census, 2009). Through a semi-structured, open-ended interview approach with University of Louisiana System students, this study details the experiences of first-generation college students. In order to obtain their perceptions and attitudes, the research design included interviews with first-generation college students, who had successfully completed at least one year at a four-year public university within the University of Louisiana System. To reveal findings from the qualitative approach, the researchers used a thematic analysis, which was inductive and used small units of data to develop larger categories and patterns to lead to interpretations and findings.

Pascarella's Model for Assessing Change (1985) served as the foundation of this study and thematic findings were depicted according to student background, organizational characteristics, student effort, and socialization. In this presentation, the researchers will detail such findings, specifically, the importance of building relationships with faculty and staff, need for residential scholarships, necessity of targeted services, and the importance of familial involvement.

Due to their backgrounds, first-generation college students face additional challenges to successfully adjusting in both the academic and social culture of college life. While institutions cannot change the educational background of their students' parents, they can create programs that combat the challenges that face first-generation college students. Most importantly, through the findings of this study, the presenters will provide to attendees examples of best practices that can assist in bringing an end to the cyclical nature of educational inequalities and injustices within post-secondary institutions.

An Assessment of Factors Addressing Why the Educational Attainment of Whites Still Tends to be Greater Than That of Blacks

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Abstract

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, closing achievement gaps among these various student groups became a focus of federal education accountability, and schools and districts were required to disaggregate student test scores and other performance data by student characteristics to enable better comparisons between groups. This created both to greater awareness of racial disparities and to rising concern about other kinds of achievement gaps. The attention led to more targeted interventions for different groups of students, but had not closed most achievement gaps to an appreciable degree a decade of the law passed.

Researchers have tried to pinpoint why race and class are such strong predictors of students' educational attainment. In the 1990s, the controversial book, *The Bell Curve*, claimed that gaps in student achievement were the result of variation in students' genetic makeup and natural ability—an assertion that has since been widely discredited. Many experts have since asserted that achievement gaps are the result of more subtle environmental factors and “opportunity gaps” in the resources available to poor versus wealthy children. Using information from the General Social Survey (GSS), data indicates that for the entire data set, covering the 40-year period, there are gaps at the high school graduation level and postsecondary level and we were able to identify educational attainment by race and found that Whites tend to graduate from high school, earn Bachelor's degrees, and attend graduate school at a faster pace than Blacks, however, our data indicates where Blacks tend to go to junior college at a little higher rate than Whites but overall, Whites have a much higher

rate for attaining educational achievement. To better understand why this data reflects this, we decided that we would examine what areas of study that both Whites and Blacks thought were of interest in schools for students. Using GSS, we were able to find that when posed with the question of which subject was the most important in school? Whites strongly valued reading and math as essential courses of study as compared to Blacks who did not feel as strongly or viewed it necessarily as a priority in school. In addition to this, we also examined how each ethnic group viewed the value of an education. Surprisingly, the data revealed that both ethnic groups fared basically the same in regards to their views of the importance of education.

Because we understand that an individual's socio-economic status often affects their perception, we examined using GSS the current financial condition of our respondents and found that this was also consistent with what we had previously indicated. Whites were much more satisfied with their financial status and at a much higher rate when compared to their Black counterparts. When posed with the idea of desiring success, it was most desired by Blacks which stands in conflict to the educational attainment level.

Summary

Statement of the Problem

The issue of race as it relates to educational attainment has been a topic of interest for decades even before the landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education. According to Harris (1992), since the 1700's this gap has been an issue, and although many strides have been made in trying to assist Blacks in becoming more literate, still today many lag behind to their White counterparts. There has always been a disparity in the educational attainment of Whites and Blacks. In 1962, the year before the March on Washington, about half of all white people over 25 had completed high school but only a quarter of Blacks had (Nichols 2013). Why

does the educational attainment of Whites tend to be greater than that of Blacks?

Theoretical Framework

Data collected for this presentation will support why this educational attainment gap continues to exist and provide an overview based on information collected from the GSS how personal perceptions of both ethnic groups affects achievement. Achievement gaps seem likely to remain a focus in the next authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The requirement that schools, districts and states disaggregate students' test scores and graduation rates by race, gender, language and socio-economic status remains one of the few parts of NCLB with broad bipartisan support for reauthorization. Moreover, the economic-stimulus law passed by Congress in 2009 required states to close achievement gaps and provide more equitable distribution of high-quality teachers for poor and minority students. Policymakers and educators hope to find new ways to close achievement gaps faster in the decade to come.

Results, Conclusions and Educational Importance of the Study

We understand that to successfully close the educational attainment gap between Whites and Blacks, sound data must be at the compass that drives the planning process and for those of us who continue to ignore this gap; it will only continue to divide our great democratic society. It's the elephant in the room that no one wants to discuss. The world watched in awe when a young woman by the name of Rachel Jeanne, star witness for the prosecution in the Trayvon Martin case, was unable to read a letter she had allegedly written to the victim's mother. She was unable to do this because it was written in cursive. In addition to this, she was a senior in high school and could barely speak in complete sentences. Her obvious limitations, both verbally and socially, are a product of our society and its failure to address a gap that has existed for

many generations. We believe that the if sound data is the basis of any plan, this would be beneficial in beginning to work towards bridging this great divide through the careful examination of specific areas of concern while identifying existing needs. With this knowledge we can move on to seek and implement more efficient teaching strategies. We can also develop effective policies and activities to promote and increase family involvement. It is a daunting mission to attempt to correct a problem that has been documented since the 1700s. According to information compiled by Educational Testing Service (ETS), Researchers have agreed, at least since James Coleman and colleagues issued the famous mid-1960s report Equality of Educational Opportunity that conditions in families have very much to do with student achievement.

We must be determined and focused to make a valiant effort in closing this educational attainment gap for if not us, who? If not now, when? We live in a world that is constantly changing, and it requires that all stakeholders involved make changes as well. All students must be able to meet the challenges that accompany those changes. Decades of research have documented the wide achievement disparities between different White and Black students. The significance of this situation should be seen as dire. There has been much debate about why Whites tend to have greater educational attainment than that of blacks but according to the study conducted by ETS states that the challenges to jump-start progress in reducing the Black-White achievement gap are indeed formidable. Single or simple solutions are suspect.

No one finds it acceptable to maintain the status quo. Derek Neal's projection based on observed trends--that reaching equality will take from 50 to 100 years—is a clear warning of a possible future. Such a future is unacceptable. Suggestions for closing the educational achievement gap between Whites and Blacks will be momentous and will involve support from all facets of society from local school districts to various government agencies. Interventions may include the following: improving

the relationship with parents through more family-oriented activities, reducing class size, more after-school tutorial programs, more culture-oriented programs, opportunities for educational field trips, and an increase in technology use. To address the issue of parental involvement, Barton (2004) suggest that schools need to set the climate for strong connections with parents and educators may need to put in extended effort with many low income and single families. In doing so, it encourages them to take an active role and to have a sense of partnership. It is not an easy task but with a strong support system and the proper interventions, this educational achievement gap will cease to exist but it will require commitment from all stakeholders, courage, and faith. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Faith is taking the first step even if you don't see the whole staircase" and we must be willing to take that first step.

Differences between ELA Achievement After Consolidation

*Allison El Koubi
Louisiana State University*

Abstract

In 2010, two middle schools in a rural Louisiana school district consolidated into one school. Community members questioned the impact consolidation would have on academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to explore whether the consolidation had a different impact on academic achievement of students from the two original schools. Initial analysis focused on the 8th grade students who had scored Basic on their 7th grade English Language Arts (ELA) state accountability test the previous year. Students' 8th grade LEAP scaled scores were compared to determine if there was a significant difference between the students from the original schools. The results showed that students from the school in which community members were more opposed to

the consolidation had higher achievement on the ELA state accountability test.

Summary

In 2010, Jackson Middle School (JMS) and Clinton Middle School (CMS) were consolidated to form East Feliciana Middle School. Most stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and community members) in the Clinton community were opposed to consolidation. The Jackson community was more ambivalent about the consolidation. Students from both schools were relocated to a new site in Clinton: the former Clinton High School building. Although there was not a receiving school, per se, there was a receiving “community.”

This study explored whether the consolidation had a different impact on academic achievement of students from the two original schools. Specifically, did the students from CMS score higher on state accountability tests than the students from JMS? My hypothesis is in line with the study conducted by Nitta, Holley & Wrobel in 2010, that students associated with the receiving school or receiving “community,” in this case the students from CMS, had a less negative experience in terms of academic achievement than those from the closed school (JMS) and whose school was in a new community, which was the town of Clinton.

The students selected for the study were all the 8th grade students who had scored Basic on their 7th grade ELA state accountability test [iLEAP] the previous year (2009-2010). There were 20 students from CMS who scored basic on their 7th grade iLEAP ELA test and 26 students from JMS.

Those students who came from CMS had higher ELA scores on the 8th grade state accountability test [LEAP] than those students from JMS. Cohen’s d measure of effect size was computed at 1.42, a high effect size. Interestingly, the students from the school and community (Clinton) that were most opposed to consolidation were the ones who

performed better after consolidation. Implications and future research related to this study will be discussed.

Leadership in the Early Childhood Years: Parents’ Perceptions of Supportive and Non- Supportive Influences on Leadership Development

Debra Hailey

Southeastern Louisiana University

Michelle Fazio Brunson

Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Abstract

Research into young children’s leadership skills is sparse and focused on leadership in classroom contexts. Understanding of leadership development in young children can be expanded by studying parents’ perceptions of children’s leadership development as it is enacted in contexts outside of the school. The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide an examination of beliefs, practices, and contextual relationships of families with young children who had been identified as leaders. This research provides (a) a synthesis of early childhood leadership research in classroom settings and (b) an understanding of the parenting practices and beliefs that parents perceive as helping young children develop leadership skills. Implications for ways that teachers can give guidance and aid to budding leaders are provided.

Summary

Research into young children’s leadership skills is sparse and focused on leadership in classroom contexts. Understanding of leadership development in young children can be expanded by studying parents’ perceptions of children’s leadership development as it is enacted in contexts outside of the school. The purpose of this qualitative study

was to provide an examination of beliefs, practices, and contextual relationships of families with young children who were identified within their schools as having strong leadership skills. Student leaders were identified using the Leadership subscale of the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students-- Third Edition (SRBCSS-III; Renzulli et al., 2010). Four mothers and three fathers of identified first graders who met income level, gender, and ethnic selection criteria participated. Interviews were conducted with structured and unstructured open-ended questions and parent journals were collected from participants. This research provides (a) a synthesis of early childhood leadership research in classroom settings and (b) an understanding of the parenting practices and beliefs that parents perceive as helping young children develop leadership skills. A synthesis of early childhood leadership resulted in 10 categories of young leadership typically seen in the classroom. The resulting categories were: shows awareness of differences in people, has influence on others, regulates emotions, is socially active, expresses creativity, is highly organized, displays physical competence, displays self-confidence, exhibits linguistic competence, and listens to peers. This study added new categories of young leadership enactment outside of the classroom setting. The new categories were: determination, morality, love of learning, and non-biased attitude. Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (1979; 1999), contextual influences on young children's leadership development were investigated. Findings indicate that parents perceived the child's personality and the child's environment as having a joint effect on leadership development. Parents discussed their perceptions of supportive and non-supportive influences on young leadership development. Implications of parents' perceptions for classroom teachers' support of young children's leadership development are provided. Graphics for many of the findings will be depicted on poster.

Academic Service Learning in Action: A Case Study of the Vermilionville Education Enrichment Project

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University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

*Jolie Johnson
Vermilionville Living History and Folklife Park*

*Ryan Martin
Lafayette Parish Public Schools*

Abstract

An 18th/19th century Louisiana village provides an engaging backdrop for an academic service learning project focused on Acadian, Creole, and Native American history via collaboration between a living history museum, area schools, and the local university. This case study explores the dynamics of this partnership and focuses on lessons learned by university preservice teachers as well as the various project partners.

Summary

Elementary and secondary preservice teachers provide an educational immersion event into Acadian, Creole, and Native American culture and history for hundreds of low SES third and eighth grade students each year at a local living history folk life park. The project has been developed over the last two years as a partnership between the folk life park, the university, and the local school system. Impetus for the collaboration was to fulfill the folk life park's mission to increase their service to a much wider audience of the area's young people and to enrich the park's collection of research-based educational materials that they could offer teachers and students as part of their educational outreach. The latter was provided by university education students and faculty in the form of lesson plans and instructional materials which were donated to the park after the event to be uploaded to the park's website and placed in virtual teaching trunks to be

utilized on-site by future educators. University students dressed in period costume to deliver experiential lessons in geography, culture, economics, and history for children as part of this thriving partnership.

This case study will:

- 1) engage conference attendees in a method of teaching higher order thinking abilities/ reading and writing skills within an historical setting in order to immerse elementary- and middle school-aged children in social studies content that is divorced from the textbook.
- 2) highlight the history of French Acadian exiles coming to Louisiana in the late 1700s and their subsequent coming into relationship with indigenous tribes and peoples from Africa and the Caribbean islands which contributed to the human diversity of the region.
- 3) share an effective means for collaborating among community partners that could be replicated by museum, university, and school system personnel.

Parental Involvement: The Key to a School's Success

*Ronald Dore, Nancy Autin, and Bertha Myers
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Abstract

When parents are involved at their children's school, the children are more successful. Children are most likely to succeed academically, improve student behavior and attendance. However, it takes commitment on the part of teachers and school administrators to improve parent involvement and to support efforts to increase it. Parental Involvement is critical to a successful school year.

Summary

Parents cannot feel unwelcome or uncomfortable in their children's schools. Yet, teachers cannot fall under attack by parents who are highly involved. Parental involvement is more important to student success than family income or education. Several strategies may be employed to ensure parents are involved. Some suggestions include: contacting parents at the beginning of the school year; being straightforward with parents; providing concise information about the school and classroom; sharing concerns and opinions about the school; accommodating parents' work schedules; reaching out to community for resources to strengthen school; asking for parents to volunteer wherever needed. creating a Parent Resource Center to correct parental concerns. Several ideas shall be presented to provide a successful school year.

An Exploration of District Support for the PLC Process: Part II

*Dianne Olivier
University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share findings of a research study designed to explore district-level support of professional learning communities within elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The overarching research question is How do school district personnel (central office staff) support schools in the professional learning community process? The participants of this study include school level administrators, teacher leaders, and central office staff from two districts: one in Louisiana and one in Texas. Data were collected through both individual interviews and focus groups with school principals, teacher leaders, and central office staff. This session is a follow-up and extension from a presentation at the LERA

Conference 2013 in which the conceptual framework and initial findings were shared.

Summary

The education community recognizes the value of professional learning communities (PLCs) in improving student learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Hord, 1997, 2004; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Louis, 2008; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Newman & Wehlage, 1995; Olivier & Hipp, 2006; Rosenholtz, 1998; Sackney, Mitchell, & Walker, 2005; Smoker, 2006). With continued emphasis on ongoing school improvement and increased accountability in schools, the PLC process is viewed as a very viable option for school restructuring. PLCs have been offered as the “best hope for school reform” (Hipp & Huffman, 2010, p. 1).

As the professional learning community process has become embedded within schools, the level of district support directly impacts whether or not schools have the ability to flourish and sustain highly effective collaborative practices. “In recent years, districts have become increasingly accountable for the learning outcomes of students in the schools within the districts” (Cowan, Joyner, & Beckwith, 2012, p. 9). Researchers note that sustainability of school reform is dependent on district support (Appelbaum, 2002) and “districts matter fundamentally to what goes on in schools and classrooms” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003, p. 5).

As a member of a PLC research team, our investigations of the professional learning community process have been primarily focused at the school level. Yet as we seek to understand the essence of sustaining a high performing PLC, our interest has broadened to the support provided by and from the district level. Cowan, Joyner, and Beckwith (2012) explain that schools operate within a larger system and cite numerous studies that indicate the need to build districts’ capacity to help schools improve. Skilled leadership is needed at

both the district and school levels “to help create a context for change, develop necessary knowledge and competencies, and establish structures and practices to support and maintain improvement” (p. viii). Each of these endeavors builds upon one another and requires a community of professional learners

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to share findings of a research study designed to explore district-level support of professional learning communities within elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The overarching research question is: How do school district personnel (central office staff) support schools in the professional learning community process? In this study, the PLC concept is defined as “professional educators working collectively and purposefully to create and sustain a culture of learning for all students and adults” (Hipp & Huffman, 2010).

The conceptual model was developed in the 1990’s after extensive review of the literature surrounding PLCs combined with field-based research, including interviews and school observations, from which common practices emerged. The initial framework developed by Hord (1997) and modified by Huffman and Hipp (2003) incorporates five major dimensions illustrating the culture and practices desired in professional learning communities: shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, shared personal practice, and supportive conditions (structures and relationships).

Motivating Teachers Towards Expertise Development: A Mixed Methods Study of the Relationships between School Culture, Internal Factors, and State of Flow

*Amanda Mayeaux and Dianne Olivier
University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present findings from a mixed-methods research study exploring the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow has upon motivating a teacher to develop teaching expertise. This research was designed to find answers concerning why and how individual teachers can nurture their existing internal factors to increase their motivation to seek expertise development and to explore how school culture, internal factors, and state of flow may encourage or limit the development of expertise in order to add to the discussion of educational reform efforts. Major findings from this research study will be shared with a focus on teacher-student kinship and motivational factors impacting expert teachers.

Summary

A glaring issue in education is not the fact high-performing teachers exist, but how to maintain and increase the number of high performing teachers. Improving education is no mystery. Teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). The research indicates high teacher quality impacts gains in learning across classrooms, even when compared within the same school. Some teachers consistently demonstrate larger student achievement gains than other teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to present findings from a sequential mixed-methods research study to discover the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow has upon motivating a teacher to develop teaching expertise. This research was

designed to find answers concerning why and how individual teachers can nurture their existing internal factors to increase their motivation to seek expertise development and to explore how school culture, internal factors, and state of flow may encourage or limit the development of expertise in order to add to the discussion of educational reform efforts. The study offers an examination of the internal and external motivational factors driving teachers to pursue expertise. The initial conceptual framework was developed to guide the research process and involved the relationships between the internal factors of self efficacy, craftsmanship, consciousness, interdependence, and flexibility, the state of flow of a teacher when teaching, and the elements of school culture including collegial teaching and learning, shared leadership, and professional commitment. Through the gathering and analysis of the data the conceptual framework evolved to include the internal factors, flow, and two new constructs of teacher-student kinship and an expert lens. The strong school culture elements were found to be desirable by expert teachers, but not mandatory.

The study included the survey of teachers who pursue expertise using the Teacher Expert Motivation Questionnaire. Additionally ten teachers were interviewed to further explain relationships discovered through the questionnaire along with the observation of three teachers using the Expert Teacher Observation Standards. The questionnaire and standards will be shared.

The major findings of this study included: (1) Teacher-student kinship, an almost family-like relationship, is the driving motivational force behind a teacher's development towards expertise; (2) Expert teachers can seamlessly merge their strong pedagogical, content, and interpersonal knowledge into a single expert lens through which they view all interactions and activities to positively impact student achievement; (3) Expert teachers constantly and consistently seek deep-impacting professional learning experience; and (4) Expert teachers can function at high capacity regardless of

school culture, but prefer optimal school culture of shared leadership, strong differentiated professional learning, and positive collegial relationships.

These major findings offer several implications for theory, practice, and future research. In the current national environment of educational reform the simple answer focuses on the element with the highest impact within school control, which is glaringly teacher quality. Improving teacher quality is a long-term solution, but requires a change of mindset towards the profession of teaching as well as a change in standards for the profession.

Staffing of Public K-12 Schools in Louisiana

*Andrew Kling and Dianne Olivier
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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share a review of current policies and practices that govern the staffing of public K-12 schools in the state of Louisiana. This review is addressed through discussion of applicable theory, federal and state policy, and administrative selection practices. Combining these issues with recent changes to educational law across the nation brings to question how state and local governments are interpreting these laws and the effect on current practice. Thus, research questions leading this literature exploration include: What are the current federal and state policies regarding teacher hiring in the state of Louisiana? and What is the state of Louisiana doing to address the federal standards regarding the recruitment and hiring of effective teachers?

Summary

There is agreement that the success of our public school system rests on the skills of every teacher currently employed in the United States (Budig, 2006; Gordon et al., 2006). Other standard

measures in education – accountability, testing, curriculum, professional development – are secondary, although supporting teachers as they educate their students. Furthermore, having a qualified workforce in place is paramount to educational reform, because such reform is futile without the right teacher in place (Gordon et al., 2006).

Across the nation, there are examples of both successes and failures in staffing schools. This is largely due to the supply and demand of teachers, which varies by state, district, and geography (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). Fortunately, teacher supply and demand can be controlled, to a certain extent, by policy (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999; Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006).

The purpose of this review is to explore current policies and practices that govern the staffing of public K-12 schools in the state of Louisiana. This will be addressed through the discussion of applicable theory, federal and state policy, and administrative selection practices.

The purpose of education in America is to prepare children to obtain skills necessary for social life in their community so they may be productive members in our society (Counts, 1978). A prerequisite for their success is a world-class education. A generation ago, American children were the best educated in the world, and since that time, 10 countries have surpassed this system (US DOE, 2010). In 2010, the US Department of Education set a goal for 2020 to make the American education system one of the best in the world again.

The success of this challenge rests on more than three million teachers currently in elementary and secondary classrooms (Gordon, Kane, Staiger, & Brookings Institution, 2006). The greatest factor in the success of a student is the teacher in it. To achieve such goals, every classroom must have a highly effective teacher and every school a highly effective principal. This only happens if

administrators who hire new teachers are selecting highly effective individuals.

Many policy changes have come as a result of NCLB (2002). Policies are created at the national level, trickle down through the states, and end up in the local districts. Although national and state avenues are provided to assist districts with compliance related to some policies, such as the clearinghouses for posting jobs, little is found in assuring principals and administrators implement other policies effectively. Understanding the true intent of a policy can prevent unintended consequences from reducing or preventing its effectiveness. Further focus on the principal finds less detail concerning effective practice for that position as compared to the criteria set forth for teachers.

Enhancing current selection criteria could come in the form of increasing information rich hiring practices. Providing more opportunities for applicants to become more informed about the organization to which they are applying increases the chances of hiring someone who is a good fit for the school.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Internal Locus of Control: A Quantitative Correlational Study on the Relationship between Teacher Sense of Efficacy and Perceived Internal Locus of Control

*Carla Trahan and Dianne Olivier
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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share findings from a review designed to examine the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy (TSE) and perceived internal locus of control (LOC). Of interest is the extent to which individuals with high TSE will also have a high-perceived internal LOC. Grounded in the psychological domain (Judge,

Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002), constructs emerged independently, offspring of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1994) and Julian Rotter's social learning theory (Rotter, 1975), respectively. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's teacher sense of efficacy construct represents one example of efficacy's evolution serving as the efficacy variable of interest. This paper discusses topics ranging from conceptualization challenges to research supporting or contending a relationship.

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to share findings from a review designed to examine the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and perceived locus of control. Of particular interest was whether an individual with a high teacher sense of efficacy would also likely have a high internal locus of control. Grounded in the premises of Bandura, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's conceptualization of teacher sense of efficacy, and Rotter's locus of control construct, the review sought to conceptualize constructs and synthesize information supporting or contending a relationship.

The overarching question for the study was What is the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy and perceived internal locus of control? The question stems from a variety of factors ranging from inconsistent conceptualizations of control and control-related constructs to an interest in dispositions conducive to school and workplace settings. Discussion within the paper will include information related to the notions of efficacy, teacher efficacy, teacher sense of efficacy, and internal locus of control.

The overarching goal of the study was to determine if highly efficacious teachers are also likely to possess high-perceived internal locus of controls. Since efficacy and locus of control are generally discussed as continuums of high-low (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and internal-external (Rotter, 1975), respectively, the initial framework used sought to show how high teacher sense of

efficacy might correlate to high perceived internal locus of control. Though not the targeted focus, it appeared as if additional information could emerge about the correlational relationship between low TSE and low internal LOC.

The conceptual framework will be illustrated within the paper and discussion will independently address the theoretical premises of constructs including Bandura's social cognitive theory, efficacy, teacher efficacy, and teacher sense of efficacy. Additionally, the framework addressing the investigation relative to internal locus of control through a review of Rotter's social learning theory, locus of control, and internal locus of control.

Theoretically, foci constructs appear different. As an offspring of Bandura's social cognitive theory, TSE fell within a framework which believed that "...people are neither driven by inner forces nor automatically shaped and controlled by external stimuli" (Bandura, 1986, p. 18). Rather, a triadic reciprocal determinism served to describe the multifaceted system regulating human functioning factors. Locus of control, on the other hand, maintained that systems could be internally or externally oriented (Rotter, 1966).

The review finds that the constructs differed conceptually as well. In regards to dimensionality, the teacher sense of efficacy construct emerged as a multi-dimensional entity inclusive of the variables classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Poised along a continuum of high and low, the high end of the spectrum appeared indicative of the construct's presence while the low end was symbolic of its absence. Locus of control surfaced as neither unidimensional or multi-dimensional. Captured along a continuum of internal-external control, high internal control was synonymous to low external control, while high external control was homogenous to that of low internal control.

Induction and Context: Exploring the Impact of Workplace Conditions on Early Career Teachers

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Abstract

This symposium will present three papers that examine the intersection of teacher induction and workplace conditions. The first paper will present a case study of a beginning English teacher over two years, exploring her anticipated personal and professional needs as a beginning teacher, where she expected to find support, and how expectations shifted over time. The second paper will present a case study of a beginning science teacher as she negotiated her identities-in-practice, including how the principal established the workplace conditions for this beginning teacher. The third paper will present a comparative case study of the principal's role in establishing and maintaining workplace conditions in traditional and charter schools.

Summary

Since issues of staffing US K-12 schools are more directly related to teacher retention than teacher recruitment (Cochran-Smith, 2004), factors impacting teacher retention are thrust to the fore. As Ingersoll (2012) maintains, "Beginners are now the largest group within one of the largest occupations in the nation, and these beginners have steadily become more prone to quickly leaving teaching." (p. 49). Induction supports and experiences coupled with the contexts in which teachers work can and do have an impact on teacher effectiveness and whether beginning teachers choose to remain in the profession. Those who stay in teaching hold a favorable view of their school, have opportunities for professional growth and development, and feel supported and appreciated by administration (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). It is schools' "organization to support [beginning teachers] as they [find] their

professional footing” that prompts beginning teachers to stay, underscoring the importance of school administration, and the workplace conditions they establish and maintain, in inducting and retaining beginning teachers. In fact, “a teacher’s chance for success with her students is bound up with the features of a particular school” (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004, p. 117).

The three papers presented in this symposium underscore the importance of workplace context and explore the intersection of induction and workplace conditions. The first two papers examine the experiences of beginning teachers during their induction phase. A case study of a beginning English teacher over two years uncovers her anticipated personal and professional needs as a beginning teacher and where she expected to find support for those needs. Shifts and changes in her anticipated needs and support expectations are also discussed. Next, a case study of a beginning science teacher as she engaged in the induction phase of her teaching career and negotiated her identities-in-practice illustrates the ways in which a positive and supportive workplace can foster the growth and development of beginning teachers, including the principals’ role in establishing the workplace conditions for beginning teachers. The final paper, a comparative case study of four schools, two traditional and two charter schools, will examine the principals’ role in establishing and maintaining induction supports and workplace conditions that can affect teacher retention.

The Children’s Internet Protection Act and E-Rate Policies in Louisiana: A Comparison of Policy Interpretations in Region III and Their Impact on Learning Opportunities of Secondary Students

*Madge Gautreaux and Dianne Olivier
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Abstract

In 2000, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted requiring all K-12 schools and publicly funded libraries to use Internet filters to protect children from pornography and other obscene or potentially harmful online content as a stipulation for receiving E-Rate funding. Varying interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines may impact the learning opportunities of secondary students. The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to examine the interpretations of federal policy (CIPA), state policy (La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:100.7), and district policy on E-Rate funding as related to Internet filtering and secondary student learning opportunities in Region III school districts in Louisiana. The conceptual framework and major findings of the study will be shared in the paper.

Summary

The Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000, signed into law by President Clinton, requires all K-12 schools and publicly funded libraries to use Internet filters in order to protect children from pornography and other obscene or potentially harmful online content as a stipulation for receiving E-Rate funding (Children’s Internet Protection Act, Pub. L. No. 106-554, 114 Stat. (2000). E-Rate funding, while providing a sliding-scale discount on certain telecommunications services and internal connections, does not provide for additional funding to purchase Internet filters. The importance of providing protection to students while exploring the Internet is paramount in schools; however, some school districts allow a wide range of access while

others provide more limited access. This variance in filtering is due to differing interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines by school district personnel. These varying policy interpretations may impact the learning opportunities of secondary students who are preparing for college and careers.

The purpose of this study was to explore the interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines by educational policymakers and the impact of these interpretations on learning opportunities of secondary students in Louisiana's Region III school districts. Further, the study: (1) examined interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines at the state level; (2) examined interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines by district technology personnel; (3) explored perceptions of district technology personnel on Internet filtering as it relates to student learning opportunities; and (4) explored perceptions of secondary teachers on Internet filtering as it relates to student learning opportunities.

The mixed methods approach used to conduct the research utilized a quantitative survey to support the qualitative focus groups and interviews. In order to explore the state interpretations of federal policy, the researcher examined Louisiana's PreK-12 Educational Technology Standards along with performance indicators set forth by the state. The American Association of School Librarians School Libraries Count! survey on Internet filtering was administered to six technology coordinators from Region III school districts, and results of the survey were used to determine the two school districts with the greatest variance in policy interpretation. Interviews with these two district technology coordinators allowed the researcher to more deeply explore variance in policy interpretations. In addition, two separate focus groups were conducted with district technology coordinators and secondary teachers in Region III in order to examine personnel perceptions on the impact of Internet filtering on learning opportunities of secondary students. Results from both focus groups were analyzed in the qualitative component of this study.

Study results will be presented including the following six major findings: (1) Louisiana has high expectations for students' use and integration of technology into learning; (2) interpretations of CIPA and E-Rate guidelines vary greatly across districts in Region III; (3) students are having difficulty reaching national and state educational technology standards; (4) Internet filtering is necessary in secondary schools; (5) teachers should have a more lenient level of Internet filtering; and (6) Internet filtering has an impact on secondary student learning opportunities.

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Scientists: 30 Years after DAST

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions and associated characteristics of scientists held by education majors at a south Louisiana university. The Draw-a-Scientist Test and Draw-a-Scientist Test Checklist were used to analyze the drawings. Inter-rater reliability was established. A cross-case thematic analysis of attributes was performed. Demographic and questionnaire data regarding science courses were converted into percentages. Comments regarding reasons for images were reported. Results were that participants' drawings depicted some stereotypical qualities, several were absent. Attributes were mixed regarding appearance and personality but were very positive regarding cognitive abilities. In general, attributes were affirmative (77%). Some questionnaire data supported research with regards to images. Electronic and print media remained as influencers.

Summary

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and associated characteristics of scientists held by education majors at a south Louisiana university. The researcher was also interested in the type of instruction, number of science courses, age and gender of the participants as contributing data.

Theoretical Framework

Meade and Metraux first documented the popular image of scientists in 1957. The image was that of an elderly man wearing a white coat and glasses, performing dangerous experiments in the lab. Since then salient studies by Beardslee and O'Dowd (1961), Chambers, designer of the Draw-a-Scientist Test (1966 to 1977), McDuffie (2001), Narayan, Park and Peker (2009) and Narayan et al. & Suh (2013) were published. In general, the researchers found that the stereotypical images of scientists both nationally and internationally remain. These images form by second grade and become more entrenched as students advance in their science education. Some influencers are: methods of science instruction, mass media, role models, the amount of science classes, and authentic out-of-class activities.

Methodology

Participants were 91 education majors at a university in south Louisiana. The Draw-a-Scientist Test and Draw-a-Scientist Test Checklist were used. Two raters and the researcher examined the drawings to establish inter-rater reliability. Percentages of occurrence were calculated for each DAST-C indicator. Drawings of atypical images identified were particularly analyzed. A cross-case thematic analysis of attributes was performed. Questionnaire data regarding science courses was converted into percentages. Comments regarding reasons for the images were reported

Results

Inter-rater reliability was established by calculating the values for Cohen's kappa which were in the moderate to substantial agreement range excluding Item 7. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicated a strong or high positive correlation between raters. Participants' drawings depicted some stereotypical qualities however several items on the DAST-C were absent. Eleven drawings were deemed atypical. More methods students (63%) drew females than the assessment/planning students (40%). One black scientist was depicted. Attributes were mixed regarding appearance and personality but very positive regarding cognitive abilities. In general, attributes were affirmative (77%). The common age (89%) was 20-29 and 75% completed four or more college science courses. Almost 100% of the participants were taught by lecture coupled with laboratory with 27% listing methods like internet use, simulators, projects and field experiences. Some questionnaire data supported research with regards to images. Electronic and print media remained as influencers. The researcher asserts that most students continue to depict scientists alone in the lab wearing white coats and glasses but perceptions of personality and cognitive abilities are more realistic and humanistic.

Educational Significance

Educators should continue to provide laboratory activities but more authentic, out-of-classroom experiences are recommended. Education majors' images should be more informed because of their influence on the images of future students. To address the lack of cultural diversity in the drawings, the investigator suggests that science history be included to stress the multi-cultural aspect of scientific discoveries. Also indicators on the DAST-C could be modified.

Jane Doe-3 v. McLean County Unit District No. 5: School District that “Pass the Trash” by Passing on Sexually Abusive Teachers to Another School District Can be held Liable to the Abusive Teachers’ Future Victims

*Clay Webb and Richard Fossey
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Abstract

Doe v. McLean County Unit District No 5 is an important case because a state's highest court ruled that school officials who intentionally misrepresent the circumstances under which a child-molesting teacher was terminated may be sued by students who are later molested by the abusive teacher in the abuser's new place of employment. This case is of particular interest to school administrators and future school administrators as they have a duty to protect students and a concern to protect themselves from being sued and possibly having criminal charges filed against them.

Summary

This paper summarizes the findings at the district, appellate, and state supreme courts and through this process identifies the duty administrators have to future students in future districts. With this finding of responsibility the authors offer some guidance to school administrators that may protect some children as well as themselves.

Doe v. McLean County Unit District No 5 addresses sexual abuse of students in two school districts by the same teacher. It is apparent that the administrators in the first district had some knowledge of misconduct and failed to report their concerns to the proper authorities in the state's child protection services. Instead, they removed this teacher from class and completed the school year without further administrative action. This teacher was hired by another school district within the state and the pattern of sexual abuse began again.

Victims of sexual abuse in the second school district settled with their district and also filed suit against the teacher's previous district.

For school administrators, the practical implications of the McLean County case should be obvious. School officials who suspect a teacher is sexually molesting students should always report their suspicions to appropriate state authorities. Furthermore, school officials should never misrepresent the conditions of a teacher's departure from a district especially when they know this teacher is dangerous to children. This misrepresentation may come in the form of a falsified positive letter of recommendation or simply not completing the school records to accurately report the conditions of the departure of the teacher from the district. While the first method is overt and quickly denounced the other proved to be dangerous as well, and as we see in this case, the courts support a burden of responsibility and hold liable on administrators who help exit a child-molester and passed him on to another district.

Sustainability Efforts and Communication of Sustainability Efforts in the University of Louisiana System

*Lauren Broussard, Suzanne Harris, Megan Caldwell, Kelli Gremillion, and Paris King
Southeastern Louisiana University*

Abstract

This study focused on the sustainability efforts on each of the universities within the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and how effectively these efforts are communicated. 23 of the 45 possible participants, identified from various levels within each university, responded to a survey conducted online on by phone. Results from the study indicated that each university was participating in sustainability efforts, either through programming, research, curriculum, and/or operations, and that

administrator's attitude at each university regarding sustainability was positive. Improvements can and should be made in the effort to implement, teach, communicate about, and validate the importance of sustainable practices. A clear set of recommended goals compiled by the ULS would be useful to guide each university's efforts.

Summary

Statement of the Problem

University leaders are learning the importance their involvement in the "green" movement and are seeking ways to minimize the impact of the university on the environment through environmental education, research, activism, and the development of sustainability practices and policies. Although standards have been established and positive efforts have been made worldwide, university involvement is sporadic from system to system, from school to school, and within each system and school. Meanwhile, established goals and accomplishments are not effectively communicated within the university or in the local community. It is critical for universities to focus their efforts to help society develop solutions to the current and future problems with the environment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is organizational theory. Within this theory is the need for each individual and organization to see itself as a vital part of a bigger system (Senge, 2008). As institutions work together and as individuals and groups within each institution work together, each has the opportunity to create positive changes (Senge, 2008).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the sustainability efforts at each of the universities in the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and to determine how effectively

these efforts are being communicated across the university and to the various members of the organization. The research questions guiding this study were: 1) what are the sustainability efforts of the universities within the University of Louisiana System, and 2) does consistent communication exist across each university in regards to sustainability?

Methodology

Surveys were conducted by phone or email with five representatives of each of the nine universities within the ULS. The university representatives were chosen using a purposeful sampling method and included the 1) president (overall vision), 2) provost (curriculum), 3) physical plant manager, 4) communication manager (outreach to the community and within the university), and 5) the student body president. Demographic information was collected about each participant as well as what each participant knew about the sustainability practices occurring on the campus and within his or her specific area. Additionally perceptions data was collected regarding participant's attitude toward the sustainability practices at the university.

Results and Conclusions

The responses indicated that each university was participating in some form of sustainability, either through programming, research, curriculum, and/or operations. Overall, the attitude of administrators at each university toward sustainability was positive. The results of this study show that improvements can and should be made in the effort to implement, teach, communicate about, and validate the importance of sustainable practices. A clear set of recommended goals compiled by the ULS would be useful in helping to guide the universities. Educational significance of the study
The university's leadership role in the community, if used effectively, can help the community develop solutions for the environmental issues it faces. By establishing policies, developing curriculum, and improving communication efforts, the university

has the opportunity to develop a culture that values sustainability on each campus.

2015

**Symposium:
Leading Change - A Look at a Variety of
Approaches**

*Nan Adams (Moderator)
Southeastern Louisiana University*

**Change Leadership Facilitators Guide is
Collaborative Process to Support Diverse
Learners within the General Education
Classroom**

*Donna Heckel-Reno
Southeastern Louisiana University*

What Beginning Teachers Need to Succeed

*Stefani Sorbet
Southeastern Louisiana University*

Doctoral students enrolled in a Culture, Climate and Change Leadership seminar used the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) to develop Change Facilitator Guides for a variety of educational change efforts. This presentation will explain the context and content of the course and include presentations of the final Change Facilitator's Guides by several students that participated in the seminar.

**Context Matters: A Comparative Analysis of
African American Faculty Experiences Across
Institutional Types**

*Danielle Alsandor and Amaris del Carmen Guzman
Louisiana State University*

This conference session shares the findings from a phenomenological research study on the lived experiences of African American/Black faculty across three different institutional types and how those experiences combined with social, psychological, and philosophical perceptions vary. Research shows African American/Black faculty face greater challenges in the academy, but the majority of that research tends to focus on the experiences at PWIs. Therefore, this study is based on experiences at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) as well as Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Literature demonstrates race matters, the presenters further that argument by stating, different educational contexts with different institutional histories impact the lived experiences of African American/Black faculty; thus context matters.

**Why Here and Why now? Emerging Charter
School Unions in Post-Katrina New Orleans**

*Brian Beabout and Ivan Gill
University of New Orleans*

Given the declining influence of teachers unions since the 1980s, and their extreme marginalization in rapidly reforming urban districts, the creation of two single-school teachers unions in Orleans Parish in the last two years has come as something of a surprise. This presentation presents a multi-case study of the creation of these charter school unions in New Orleans in an effort to answer the question: "What are the motivations and structures/process that support the creation of charter schools in teachers unions?" Interview data with teachers,

administrators, and board members will be supplemented with document analysis as the two cases are presented.

Do Welding Simulators Improve Proficiency in Entry-Level Welding Students?

Gerald Bickerstaff

Northwestern State University of Louisiana

This study evaluated the proficiency rate of entry-level welders that have utilized virtual reality (VR) in welding. The experimental methods used during similar types of studies concluded VR simulation increases the proficiency in psychomotor skills of the subjects. This study relates to proficiency skills through a series of set proficiency checks. The goal for the study was to identify a cost efficiency and faster training of welders. This study is also to assist in developing a new teaching model to the industry demands. This study was conducted in a regular training lab, and the utilized the Vrtex 360 and the Vrtex Mobile.

Louisiana University Principal Preparation: A Comparison of Program Features

*Kathleen Campbell, Mindy Crain-Dorough, and
Evan Mense*

Southeastern Louisiana University

In the present landscape in Louisiana, all university principal preparation programs are in competition with each other and with a plethora of private providers and online programs. The present study summarizes the story of one Louisiana university M.Ed. principal preparation program in finding its successful niche among its competitors and compares the salient features of all the Louisiana university principal preparation programs.

Stories of Principals' Roles as a Result of High Stakes Teacher Evaluations in Louisiana

Jenna Chiasson

University of New Orleans

In 2010, the Louisiana legislature passed Act 54, a law that requires public school teachers to undergo a performance-based accountability evaluation. Act 1, passed in 2012, ties Louisiana public school teacher's pay and tenure to their score on COMPASS. A qualitative study using narrative research design was conducted to explore how principals described their roles as high-stakes evaluators through the implementation of COMPASS. Using the theoretical frameworks of Contingency theory and Instructional Leadership theory, two roles emerged from their narratives: Instructional Coach and High Stakes Evaluator. The information gleaned from this study can help to inform future policy about possible issues with COMPASS in implementation as well as impact future practice for evaluators from the stories of the participants.

The Twenty Question Model and Photograph-Based Assessment Items: Implications for Life Science Teaching and Learning

Susannah Craig
Southern University

The influence of photograph-based life science multiple-choice items was compared with that of text-only items for Louisiana students. In matched pairs of test items on the 2007 LEAP field test, statistics were used to characterize performance on the items for all 8th grade students taking two test forms.

Two 8th grade classes in two schools were studied. One class was exposed to the 20-Question Model (Wandersee, 2000) and the other not. Quantitative analysis showed item differences and a

correlation between achievement level and score on the photograph-based items, even for low-level students. Qualitative information showed positive student perception when photographs accompanied instruction and assessments. Life science conceptions and misconceptions were revealed in interviews and concept maps construction.

Examining the Equity of a Teacher Observation Rubric: A Mixed Methods Approach

Adam Elder
Louisiana State University

Teacher evaluation scores are being used to make high-stakes decisions for teachers, so it is imperative they are fair and valid. This explanatory mixed methods study sought to determine if a particular observation rubric used by some schools in Louisiana is biased against teachers in certain content areas and how administrators perceived the equity of the rubric and protocol. Data from two similar high schools was analyzed to compare means and interviews were conducted with administrators from each of these high schools. It was found that there were significant differences in the observation scores assigned to teachers in different content areas. Interview results helped explain the differences and laid a foundation for practical implications.

A National Study of the Impact of Family Structure on the Educational Attainment of African American Males: A Logistic Regression Analysis of General Social Survey Data

Keicia Hawkins
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

To what degree is family structure correlated with the educational attainment of African American males? African American males have

consistently low educational attainment levels and are removed from the educational environment more than any other group of students enrolled in public schools. This study examined the impact of family structure on the educational attainment levels of African American males, controlling for parental levels of education, social class, and income. African American males often become disenfranchised with the educational process; thus experiencing lower levels of educational attainment. Researchers argue that family structure has a strong relationship with educational attainment and suggest that beyond socioeconomic status, parental levels of educational attainment foster similar attainment in the individual children.

The Bee and the Belle

Anjenette Holmes
Louisiana State University

In order to gain insight into the professional lives of childcare workers, this case study investigated the incidence of job related stress of childcare workers in a childcare facility located in a middle-class neighborhood. Information was gathered using interviews with two employees of the facility. Teacher one was a white female over age fifty who had been working in childcare for over twenty-two years. Teacher two was a black female under age thirty who had been working in childcare for just over four months. Results identified certain themes present in the workplace setting that may contribute to or reduce job related stress. The themes identified were balance, expectations, pressure, support, helplessness, uncertainty, child behavior, trust, anger, teamwork, and confusion.

A Guide to Data-Driven Leadership in Modern Schools

*Leslie Jones
Nicholls State University*

The presentation is a publication in press entitled *A Guide to Data-Driven Leadership in Modern Schools*. The author of the publication provides school leaders with the tools needed to develop an effective data-driven decision making plan for his/her school. The practical examples, templates and other practitioner oriented aspects of the book make this a valuable resource for school leaders. It is also an invaluable resource for school leadership preparation programs.

There are five Chapters. The practicalities of data use are presented relative to the topic for each chapter. For instance, in Chapter 5 the practicalities of using data relative to public relations are discussed. A brief overview of each chapter is presented in the summary.

Impact of Principal Conversations on School Climate

*Allison El Koubi and Jon O. Downs
Louisiana State University*

School climate is a complex and difficult concept to define. It is a “multidimensional construct” comprised of the physical, social, and academic elements of a school. Principals can have a significant impact on school climate, in both positive and negative ways. This case study explores the how a principal in a high-performing middle school impacts school climate through conversations with her teachers. The study uses a mixed-method approach. The school climate itself will be analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative data, though a school climate survey, an observation school climate checklist, and the researchers’ observation notes. Perceptions of

school climate and the principal’s impact on it during conversations will be gathered through interviews with three teachers at the school.

Parent Perceptions of Community Service

*Jarrett Lander
Southern University*

*Nykela Horne-Jackson
University of Central Arkansas*

*Marvin Trotter and Marvin Alexander
Louisiana State University*

The East Baton Rouge Parish School System supports high student achievement and continues to foster positive school learning environments in which all stakeholders feel welcomed and valued. The East Baton Rouge Parish School District comprises a population of 374, 000 people; blacks making up 46.63% of this population. This study explored both internal and external stakeholders’ perceptions of customer service in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

Support or Punish? Teacher Perceptions of Student Problem Behavior

*Renée Lastrapes and Deanna Rice
Louisiana State University*

This study seeks to determine teachers’ perceptions of causal attributes for student misbehavior. When teachers see a student misbehaving in class, do they respond punitively or do they try to determine the causal attributes of the behavior? What do teachers know about characteristics that would qualify a student for special education services in the area of emotional and behavior disorders (EBD)? In interviews with six middle school teachers, results indicate that

teachers are unclear on the definition of EBD. If a student comes into their class with a prior diagnosis of EBD, they are far more likely to respond to that student with assistance and understanding than if a child who shows similar behaviors is not already identified.

**Teachers and Speech-language Pathologists:
Essential Components of School-Wide Data to
Help Determine Speech-Language Support**

Ashley Meaux
Southeastern Louisiana University

The success of student outcomes is a shared goal by all educational professionals. Teachers and speech-language pathologists share an understanding of foundational skills necessary to facilitate reading and literacy development. This shared knowledge creates a common forum for teachers and speech-language pathologists to collaborate on assessments, identification, and interventions for students at-risk for reading delays. This session will explore a pilot study that utilized school-wide data to identify students at-risk for current and future reading delays. This session will also explore the success of classroom-based collaborative efforts between teachers and speech-language pathologists to increase reading success for all students.

**Cooperating Teachers as Models of Best
Practice: Student Teachers' Perceptions**

Connie Melder and Dustin Hebert
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

The selection of expert, effective cooperating teachers who can foster successful student teacher experiences and serve as primary role models for teacher candidates is central to the success of student teaching. However, a lack of consensus

exists among education professionals on a standardized definition of effective cooperating teachers. The purpose of this dissertation study was to determine if student teachers' perceptions of cooperating teachers' modeled actions of professional standards differed across four certification grade bands: (a) early childhood certification (grades P-3), (b) elementary certification (grades 1-5), (c) secondary content (grades 6-12) certification in English, mathematics, science, and social studies, and (d) K-12 certification in art, special education, music education, and health and physical education.

**Stress and the Psychological Well-Being of
Organizational Leaders: A Qualitative Inquiry
into the Coping Strategies Utilized by School
Administrators**

Roddy Melancon
Ascension Parish Schools

Jeffrey L. White and Frank del Favero
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions and opinions of school administrators pertaining to workplace stress, and coping strategies selected to combat stress. The study's major findings included: (a) Administrators reported experiences, and or issues pertaining to time management cause the most work related stress, (b) School administrators reported emotional strategies as the most utilized technique to combat stress, and (c) The demographic factor with the most influence on stress and the coping strategy utilized is years of experience. Current trends related to stress implies a need for additional professional development, and education on how to cope with stress in a healthy manner in order for administrators to maintain longevity in the school administrator role.

Reading Comprehension of Students in a Saudi Arabian English Based University

Lauren Menard
Vermilion Parish Schools

Kimberly McAlister
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Reading comprehension was investigated between female undergraduates at an English-based university in Saudi Arabia (n=41) and a university in Louisiana (n=17) for the purposes of (a) comparing variance in reading comprehension and (b) comparing reading comprehension proficiency. Comprehension was measured with an 8th grade curriculum-based assessment administered in English. Greater variance in reading comprehension was expected at the English-based University in the non-English speaking country because of greater inconsistency in K-12 English instruction. Sample variance analyses of data from Prince Mohammad bin fahd University and Northwestern State University confirmed this hypothesis. Additional research is necessary to make any generalization regarding these results.

Full STEEM Ahead: A Study on Students' Possible Science Self and Choice of College Major

Leila Mills
University of North Texas/LIGO, Livingston, LA

Selection of college major in science, technology, engineering, education, or mathematics (STEEM) field was examined among a N=22 students from a university in Louisiana. A mixed methods study among docent tour guides at a science research and education facility is presented. The lens of "possible science self" for desired, expected, and feared future persona is applied. Findings indicated that for this group of participants in the docent program: 1) teachers and family had a

strong influence on choice of college major, 2) participants had high perceptions of desire and expectation pre and post program participation while feared self, thought to play a role in self-regulation for attainment of future persona, was higher after the work-study semester.

Examining the Organizational Health of PK-12 Schools from Teachers' Perspectives

Michelle Morris
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Creating a positive school climate can have a positive effect on the PK-12 students' learning, but often the school climate is only evaluated from students' perspectives. This study examined the organizational health from teachers' perspectives. Using the Organizational Health Inventory, teachers assessed the health of their schools in terms of institutional integrity, collegial leadership, resource influence, teacher affiliation, and academic influence. The results showed that these variables were negatively related to perceptions of teacher burnout and positively related to both perceptions of teacher caring and parental involvement. Results of this survey and implications for PK-12 schools will be discussed in this presentation.

A Teacher Education Program's Approach for Finding the "Value" in Value-Added Results

Michelle Morris
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

The purpose of this presentation is to share Northwestern State University's teacher education program's approach to analyzing Value-Added data received from Louisiana's Department of Education. While Value-Added Models (VAMs) have received a mix of positive and negative evaluations at the national level, Louisiana's

Department of Education provides valuable documents to help its education preparation providers drill down into the data in attempts make program improvements in teacher preparation programs. This presentation will focus on the processes involved in analyzing the VAM data, the findings of our analysis, and the strategies to improve our teacher preparation programs.

Designing an Effective, Evidence-Based Teacher Development Program

*Eric Penalber, Jeanne Ebey, and Bonnie Boulton
Livingston Parish Public Schools*

*Ellen Ratcliff
Southeastern Louisiana University*

Special education teachers who are new to the field of education require continuous support at both the district level and from other special education teachers in order to become effective at meeting student needs. Best efforts of professional development include efforts to bridge the gap between what was learned at the university level and actual practice within the classroom. This presentation will examine the efforts of a school system to bridge the gap between what is defined as effective practice at the university level and what is considered effective practice within the special education classroom.

Preservice Teachers in the Diverse Classrooms: Are They Ready for Challenging Reality?

*Leilya Pitre
Louisiana State University*

The demands on teachers and their professional training are constantly growing. Teachers are required not only “to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students but also to be

increasingly effective in enabling a diverse group of students to learn ever more complex material” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 1). This paper examines 17 preservice English secondary teachers’ perceptions about their field experiences in a narrative inquiry study. The three-dimensional approach to data analysis (Clanidine & Connelly, 2000) and a thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) were used to analyze and interpret data gathered via individual and focus group interviews, questionnaire, and written think pieces. The findings established factors for effective preparation of the quality teachers and allowed for policy and practice implications to invigorate teacher preparation programs and improve field experiences.

Writing to Thrive: A Parishwide Program for Improving the Writing Outcomes for Students with the Most Significant Disabilities.

*Vicky Roy
Interactive Communication, LLC*

Livingston Parish Public Schools was awarded a Believe and Include Grant in the 2013-14 school year to develop a parishwide program for improving writing outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD). The primary goal of the project was to improve the academic performance of students with SCD by ensuring daily access to appropriate writing instruction and “pencils” that meet their individual cognitive, communication, sensory and motor profiles. The project used varied venues and teacher engagements to train staff in developmental writing expectations, alternate pencils, and the “writing every day” mindset. The presentation will highlight the tiered framework used to support teachers and build capacity across the parish. Project videos will demonstrate progress observed over the grant period.

In the Midst of a Shift: Postsecondary Engineering Education and Project-Based Learning

Maria Wallace and Angela Webb
Louisiana State University

Postsecondary engineering education, specifically the undergraduate level, has been charged by engineering accreditation programs and engineering professionals to integrate project-based and problem-based learning, both of which are frequently referred to as “PBL”. However, existing scholarly literature only provides limited views of the nature in which PBL is implemented at the undergraduate level. This qualitative case study examines how two undergraduate engineering faculty and university instructional program integrate, support, and make sense of enacting PBL into undergraduate engineering classrooms. Faculty narratives suggest PBL is not project-based or problem-based learning dichotomously, but rather a co-existence along a continuum resulting in a meaningful learning experiences for faculty and students. Results support the current paradigm shift in engineering education towards PBL initiatives.

What's In It For Me? Applications of Teacher Education Beyond the Classroom

Mimi Wallace and Shatoria Paul
McNeese State University

This paper explores how pre-service teachers utilize what they are learning as part of their teacher preparation program to benefit their lives outside of the classroom. The notion of social, academic and intellectual capital often serves to support and enhance pre-service teachers beyond measures typically ascribed to teacher education broadly, and teacher effectiveness specifically. Implications for research, teacher education, professional development and teacher induction are discussed.

Same in Name Only: Beginning Science Teachers' Experiences in Professional Learning Communities

Angela Webb
Louisiana State University

Professional learning communities (PLCs) provide a context that allows beginning science teachers to familiarize themselves with various aspects of their job during induction. “[PLC] suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoted way (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Tool & Louis, 2002)” (Stoll et al., 2006, p. 223). This multi-case study explores science PLCs at four beginning science teachers' schools by addressing the following questions: (1) What was the nature of the PLCs in which first-year science teachers engaged? (2) What were the identities of first-year science teachers during PLCs? Findings revealed four distinct enactments of PLC across four schools/contexts, with implications for beginning science teachers' identities and teaching practices.

School Performance Scores and the ACT: What Accountability Really Measures

Wendell Wellman, Nelda Wellman, and
Gerra Perkins
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Derick Little
Louisiana Department of Education

School performance scores developed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) attempt to capture the effectiveness of schools. Similarly, the First Time Freshman Report published by the LDOE attempts to connect performance in higher education back to the high schools from which freshman matriculate. This study determined the LDOE is measuring school

performance and effectiveness in a way that appropriately reflects the product of those schools – how well students are prepared for, and perform in, college.

The study conducted a Pearson r correlation test using data from 2010 school performance scores and corresponding 2010 ACT scores for 294 schools and found a significant, positive correlation between the school performance scores and ACT scores.

Identifying Lighthouses: An Exploratory Case Study Evaluation Method to Find Value and Worth of a Newly Implemented Course

*Lester Archer
Louisiana State University*

This research presents the evaluation of a graduate level course for in-service teachers. The course was conducted for the first time and is situated in the curriculum of The Louisiana Math and Science Teacher Institute (LA-MSTI), an NSF-funded Math-Science Partnership Institute at LSU. A participant-oriented evaluation, objectives-oriented evaluation, and the Kilpatrick four level evaluation process were integrated. The findings suggest a positive relationship between peer-to-peer feedback and supervisor feedback, and that the course afforded participants opportunities to raise their level of awareness as it relates to skill building towards becoming emerging leaders in STEM education. Attitudes towards the course objectives were found to be statistically significant, on pre- and post-test measures.

The History of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and its Reauthorizations

*Shonda Brooks
University of Louisiana Lafayette at Lafayette*

This study is an extensive examination of federal legislative educational reform policies governing America's public school systems. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and its subsequent re-authorizations have altered the educational landscape of American schools since its inception in 1965.

Enrollment vs. Suspension: Implications for Black Students in Charter Schools

*Alex Camardelle
Louisiana State University*

Since understanding punitive punishment in charter schools is likely to require more than observing in-classroom interventions, this presentation seeks a better understanding of how much of the discipline issue can be linked to a charter school's student racial demographics. Specifically, this preliminary analysis explores whether or not higher black student enrollment rates in charter schools relate to higher out-of-school suspension rates. Emphasis is given to black students because the evidence shows that they are consistently excluded from the classroom at a higher rate than their peers in P-12 education (Toldson, 2013; Darensbourg & Perez, & Blake, 2010; Fenning & Rose, 2007). The results indicate support for the hypothesis that there is a relationship between black enrollment in charter schools and suspension rates. Implications for current practice and recommendations for future research are given.

Differentiating Instruction: Content, Process, Product, and Environment

*Tarrah Davis
University of Louisiana Lafayette*

Many educators know about differentiation of instruction but few are putting it into practice (Latz, Speirs Neumeister, Adams, & Pierce, 2009). Differentiated classroom practices can be sub-divided into four components which include: Content, Process, Product, and Environment. According to Tomlinson (2000), teachers can differentiate any and all of these four components based on student interests, readiness, or learning profile. However, it is important to acknowledge that while these differentiation strategies can be individually implemented, the ideal situation is when teachers recognize the synergistic relationship between these practices and have the skills to holistically incorporate all four components in the classroom.

Dispositions of Highly Effective Teachers

*Ronald Doré, Nancy Autin, and Bertha Myers
University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

With the rise of common core standards being used in Louisiana's classrooms, teachers' dispositions have become more highly critical within recent years. Highly effective teachers have commonalities that separate them from the ineffective teachers. Based on research from the New Teacher Center located in various states from California to New Jersey, highly effective teachers ask challenging, open-ended questions, use students' ideas in the classroom, employ Bloom's Taxonomy at its highest levels, and maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning. If all of our teachers are to become successful in our classrooms, they must change their mindset of "changes come and go so I refuse to get on board with changing my teaching tactics." Rather, today's

teachers must utilize students' ideas, collaborate with other teachers, locally, statewide and internationally, work with and embrace parents, and accept change that will benefit both student and teacher.

Using Family Literacy Activities to Enhance At-Risk Children's Literacy Skills

*Michelle Fazio-Brunson and Mary Beth Van Sickle
Northwestern State University of Louisiana*

*Patricia Alexander
Natchitoches Parish Schools*

*Debra Jo Hailey
Southeastern Louisiana University*

Research has long documented the benefits of family literacy activities on young children's development (Singh, Sylvia, & Ridzi, 2015). This is especially significant in a time when early childhood curriculum is being compacted such that preschoolers are expected to master skills that were historically taught in kindergarten and first grade. Thus, the purpose of this session is to (a) identify effective strategies for encouraging parents to attend after-school literacy activities, (b) identify effective family literacy activities, and (c) determine the impact of the activities on the at-risk preschool children's knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to literacy in relation to Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards.

Predictors of Elementary Students' Motivation to Continue in Music When They Enter Middle School

Michael Ruybalid
Southeastern Louisiana University

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the following variables best predicts a student's intention to continue with music in middle school: (a) motivation towards school music, (b) parental involvement, (c) participants' attitudes towards the general music curriculum, (d) participants' attitudes towards the general music teacher, (e) student gender, and (f) peer influence. Participants (N = 87) were fifth grade students from four elementary schools located in central Oklahoma. Logistic regression analyses revealed that the predictor variables as a set reliably distinguished between who will and who will not participate in middle school music ($p < .001$). Further results demonstrated that the variable of parental involvement made a significant contribution to prediction ($p < .05$).

result of conflicting purposes for schooling and social expectations for how teachers are evaluated. The levels of mistrust generated by school-reform that is teacher-focused has further marginalized teachers in our society and left a lingering question in the minds of teachers' themselves: "Who is the teacher?"

The Impact of Accountability on Teacher Identity

Mary Beth Van Sickle and Michelle Fazio-Brunson
Northwestern State University

Debra Jo Hailey
Southeastern Louisiana University

School reform mandates that link teacher evaluations with student achievement have resulted in negative consequences for teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of school reform on teachers' personal and professional identities using a post-modern, feminist perspective. The multi-phase qualitative study used case study design to tell two teachers' stories. This session focuses on Phase II of the study. Findings suggest that the participants suffered an identity crisis as a