Research Issues in Contemporary Education

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FROM THE EDITOR

I am honored to step into the role of editor for *Research Issues in Contemporary Education* (RICE). Expanding on the vision of LERA and its publication, my goals are related to supporting the journal's ability to highlight exemplary research and scholarship within our state, region, and country. RICE welcomes a plethora of manuscripts including, but not limited to: research, literature reviews, theoretical or conceptual papers, and position statements that shed light on current issues within the field of education and educational research.

I believe RICE provides an ideal platform to showcase graduate student work. I strongly encourage graduate students and their mentors to submit manuscripts for publication. Moving forward, I plan to create a graduate forum section of the journal with articles submitted and reviewed by graduate students. For the Spring 2018 edition, I will solicit applications for a graduate student editor to work closely with me to prepare a graduate student section of the journal for publication.

This issue of *Research Issues in Contemporary Education* includes The Raymar Harcher Outstanding Research Paper Award and the Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Award from the 2016 conference in Lafayette, Louisiana. Also included in this volume of RICE are the 2016 conference abstracts.

Due to a recent increase in submissions, I am seeking to increase the number of faculty and graduate students on our editorial team. We need your help! You can sign up to join the RICE Editorial Team on the LERA website or email me directly.

I welcome any suggestions from the LERA membership. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are willing to provide guidance, advice, or to assist the RICE Editorial Team with its goals.

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RAYMA HARCHAR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS

Thirty + years of French Immersion: The Rhizomatic Effects of Academic, Linguistic, and Cultural Attainment in Louisiana

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ABSTRACT: With over 30 French immersion programs, some of which have been in existence for two or three decades, Louisiana has the most French immersion schools in the United States. What happens to the alumni of these programs? This study examines perceptions of French immersion alumni that have matriculated through the immersion programs in Louisiana in the past 30 years. Using a social media survey and a Deleuzian framework, this study examines the three goals of immersion as it relates to alumni: academic success, linguistic success, and cultural understanding. Frequency distributions were used to analyze discrete point survey responses and naturalistic inquiry was used to analyze open-ended responses. Overall, the responses were overwhelmingly positive and similar to responses found in other immersion alumni studies.

Keywords: French immersion, dual language education, alumni studies, bilingual education, Louisiana French, Deleuzian theory

Introduction

The history of immersion in Louisiana begins with bilingual education, which occurred in French and English in the 1970s and 80s. French immersion in Louisiana has been around since 1981

when East Baton Rouge Parish started a program (Tornquist, 2000). The oldest continually running program still in existence is in Calcasieu Parish, which started in the early-80s and is over 30 years old (St. Hilaire, 2005). St. Martin Parish and Assumption Parish were the next to begin immersion in the late 80s. In the early 90s Lafayette Parish School System, the biggest immersion program in the state, started their immersion program. Since that first school, over 35 French immersion programs have started in Louisiana and 31 are still in existence. The most recent school, Rougon Elementary, began their program in the 2016-2017 school year.

With over 30 French immersion programs, some of which have been in existence for two or three decades, Louisiana has the most French immersion schools in the United States. What happens to the alumni of these programs? This study examines perceptions of adult French immersion alumni that have matriculated through the immersion programs in Louisiana in the past 30 years.

Theoretical Framework

Through the use of a Deleuzian framework, this study approached the French immersion experience in terms of the rhizomatic effects it had on participants' lives. A rhizome is a plant with root systems that branch out in many directions, bound only by its habitat. In this manner, we examined if the French immersion experience for participants created, like a botanical rhizome, "collective assemblages of enunciation that…establish connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative" to participants academic, linguistic, and social experiences (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.7). If this were the case, than participants' life trajectories would have been altered by the French immersion experience well beyond their formative years as French language speakers.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) utilize the metaphor of the nomad to describe an agency that strives towards improvement, self-actualization, or a desire to expand their world beyond the presently imposed limitations. Nomadic societies consist of small groups of individuals that wander through the environment, with the expressed goal of improving their lives. "The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another….but the question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence?" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.380). Therefore, we seek to understand what, within the context of French immersion education, are principles of their experience in French immersion and what are longitudinal consequences.

Although the nomad returns to its origins, in this context French immersion, as "nomadic waves or flows of deterritorialization go from the central layer to the periphery, then from the new center to the new periphery, falling back to the old center and launching forth to the new" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 53). In this manner, would the French immersion experience exist as a source of lifelong inspiration for learning new languages and appreciating cultural experiences?

Literature Review

There are a limited number of studies on language immersion alumni. One of the earliest studies was conducted in the late 90s by the Manitoban government on immersion alumni from their French immersion program (Educational Support Services Branch: Manitoba Education [ESSB-ME], 2002). The survey study focused on language, post-secondary education and employment, and it examined the alumni views of the value of immersion. Overall, the study found that the alumni believed it was important to keep their language skills, but many alumni felt those skills had diminished. The majority said that when they did use language skills it was with friends. Of the graduates of the immersion program, 77% went on to post-secondary studies, with 72% of alumni attending college or university right out of high school. In terms of employment, 80% of the graduates are employed, and over 45% said that French was desirable or required for their jobs. According to the alumni, immersion helped them to:

communicate with Francophones, increase their job prospects, appreciate French culture, and continue to be bilingual. While this study examined all three goals of immersion--academic success, linguistic success, and cultural understanding--it was set within a bilingual context where French is an official language. The following studies examine immersion programs in the United States.

Graber (2008) discussed the benefits of student participation in an immersion program by gathering data in the form of alumni testimonials and responses from parent informational meetings. Qualitative data from alumni testimonials were gathered when the 1st French immersion class returned to speak at the opening of a new Spanish immersion school in South Dakota. Graber discussed alumni, like the chemical engineer who minored in Japanese and the international relations graduate who is currently working with resettling refugees in Austin. She found many of the graduates are presently multilingual. For example, many graduates participated in studies or internships, lived abroad, and many have participated in honor societies in their areas of study. Additionally, Graber (2008) elicited the perspectives of parents of immersion students. The parents discussed how immersion provided their children with increased confidence, cognitive/academic benefits, and more global perspectives. Immersion students focused on how their immersion experiences helped them make friends from various cultures, cultivated a passion for language and travel, and gave them a more multifaceted view of the world. Findings from the Graber (2008) study reinforce the viability of immersion program goals.

DeJong and Bearse (2011) did not study immersion alumni, rather they studied two-way immersion high school students and used a survey and focus groups to see if they felt the program made them bilingual/bicultural, if the program design supported their desired outcomes, and why remaining in the program was important to them. They found that Anglo students in the program felt bilingual but stronger in English, did not feel bicultural, but felt they were more sensitive and comfortable with those with different backgrounds. The Latino students felt bilingual and bicultural with stronger reading than writing skills. Both felt that they had diverse friends and enjoyed speaking with people who spoke other languages. When asked about program design, both groups of students felt that not having a content class in the language during High School diminished their Spanish skills. Latino students also felt they could not express themselves as well without a high school content class and 80% of them wanted one, whereas the Anglo students did not think they would learn as well had the content been in Spanish and 70% did not want a high school content course. Both groups felt that as they got into middle school the program suddenly shifted to a focus on grammar and resulted in their lost oral language proficiency in Spanish. Students did not believe that their high school program was two-way immersion and they did not like the grammar-focused approach. Instead, they wanted an AP Literature class rather than AP Language. While this study offers critical feedback from students approaching the end of their program, it does not discuss how the program actually prepared them for life after high school.

Parks (2013) conducted a qualitative study of three French immersion alumni. Parks' interviews asked alumni about how the program prepared them to be global citizens in the increasingly interconnected world. The first theme Parks found in the interview responses was that all three participants had traveled abroad, intended to do more traveling abroad, and that the program and their language skills motivated them to travel internationally. The second theme was friendship with their immersion classmates. Cross-cultural relationships formed the third theme. The fourth theme was open-mindedness to others. One participant felt that this was due, in part, to her bilingualism. For the final theme of self-perception, two of the participants felt that they identified with global citizenship or cross-cultural relationships. The third participant was less global and saw herself as a Francophile who was interested in French culture, history, and language. Parks' work focused on cultural understanding and touched upon

linguistic success. While qualitative studies provide insight into broad themes that show how immersion prepares students for a more global society, a larger sample size and a more detailed study are warranted to better understand how immersion programs affect alumni.

Mellgren and Somers (2008) conducted a study on a larger sample of immersion alumni from a 20 year-old program in Minnesota. They found the program was successful in terms of K-12 academic achievement and college enrollment. Of the 729 graduates, 200 responded to their survey. Of those graduates, 83% of them graduated with a GPA of 3.1 or above. Other graduates had a 2.0-3.0 GPA. One hundred percent of all immersion program graduates went on to college.

Another research question that Mellgren and Somers (2008) explored was college majors and minors related to language and cultural studies. Nearly 40% of the participants went on to major in the target language, Spanish. Another 21% had language or culturally related college majors or minors. Many participants went on to learn other languages. The most popular third language was French, with 36% of the participants taking courses in French. Other European languages were popular: 17% Italian, 10% German, and 7% Portuguese. Additionally, less commonly taught languages were learned: 7% Japanese, 6% Arabic, and 4% Chinese. Other languages alumni had studied included American Sign Language, Haitian Creole, Russian, Hebrew, Welsh, Finnish, Danish, and Polish. Sixty-two percent of the participants had done a study abroad. Of those study abroad participants, 61% of them went to Spain while another 36% went to other Hispanophone countries. Participants felt they had retained their Spanish, with 65% feeling fluent. Twenty-eight percent felt they could hold a conversation in Spanish, and 6% felt their language skills were at the basic level. Only 1% felt they had lost their language skills altogether. Overall, 97% of the participants felt that they immersion made a valuable contribution to their lives. This study touched upon many of the relevant experiences and effects that immersion had on alumni. However, the demographics of a suburban school district in an affluent suburb of Minneapolis are different from the context of many French immersion schools in Louisiana. Many of the questions Mellgren and Somers (2008) explored will be reflected in this study, but in a different context: French immersion in Louisiana.

Immersion in a Francophone Community

The political need for evidence of the benefits of French immersion programs in Louisiana provided the impetus for this study. Legislators who are creating laws to strengthen immersion need to show that the end results of immersion are positive. A legislative mandate of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) warrants a focus on immersion education. Therefore, CODOFIL must work to convince parents and school boards of the worth and importance of an immersion pathway. In addition, CODOFIL has a new understanding of the importance of marketing. The importance of this marketing became apparent when a group of young Francophones, Francojeunes, raised nearly $100,0000 for CODOFIL when the governor cut that amount, which was 40% of the agency's funding (The Independent, August 14, 2012). Finally, with the aging of our immersion student population, tech savvy alumni have formed a number of Facebook groups and social media groups to which they invite their former immersion teachers.

Method

There were three purposes for this study: (1) to examine former French Immersion students' practices, (2) to examine their beliefs about how French Immersion has affected their lives, and (3) to determine the educational and social success of the program.

Sample, Data Collection, and Analysis

This study used modern social networking and face-to-face social networking to find and collect

information on immersion students who have matriculated from French immersion schools in Louisiana. Using this sample of convenience, the authors distributed an online Google survey to alumni in order to collect data on the schools where alumni did their French immersion studies, and alumni's education and lives after French immersion. The link was an unpublished link and distributed uniquely through social media. The Google survey was based loosely on the Mellgren and Somers (2008) survey. Data from the discrete point questions were analyzed and frequency distributions of the responses were created. Open-ended questions were analyzed through naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The responses were unitized then both researchers looked for emerging themes. The themes were compared and merged until this process was exhausted.

Limitations. There were a number of limitations to this study. The first is voluntary participation; participants were motivated to respond since most of them were Facebook friends and former immersion students of two of the researchers, thus if they looked up their French immersion teacher 20 years after school, we can assume they had positive feelings about the program. The next is the limited scope of a survey sent out via social media; it was impossible to verify the participants, although we did ask for their names and required that they let us know the school site they attended. In addition, the data is self-reported and based on participants' perspectives. Finally, there are issues of the validity or credibility, and reliability of the initial Mellgren and Somers (2008) survey, as well as the survey created for this study.

Findings

The initial findings of this study, based on the above data collection and analysis models, are as follows:

Demographics of Participants

A total of 125 participants responded. Unlike the Mellgren and Somers study (2008) the exact number of graduates of immersion there have been in the past 30 years is unavailable. Gender and age results show that the participants were mostly female (83.2%) and fell, for the most part, between the ages of 21 and 30 (See Figure 1).

While the other studies did not examine gender, previous research by the authors found that there are additional benefits for girls in the immersion context (Haj-Broussard, 2002; 2003). Thus, the finding that there were more female respondents was not surprising and might explain, in part, the overwhelmingly positive results of the study. Another factor that might explain the age and gender of the students was the use of the researchers' Facebook pages. Student in their early 20s would have been in immersion when one of the researchers was teaching, and students in their late 20s and early 30s would have been in immersion when the other researcher was teaching. Considering that both immersion-teaching researchers are female, the gendered demographics of this study are not surprising.

Time in Immersion

No answer	
Not after 5th grade	
Some middle school	
Through middle school	
Into high school	
Through high school	
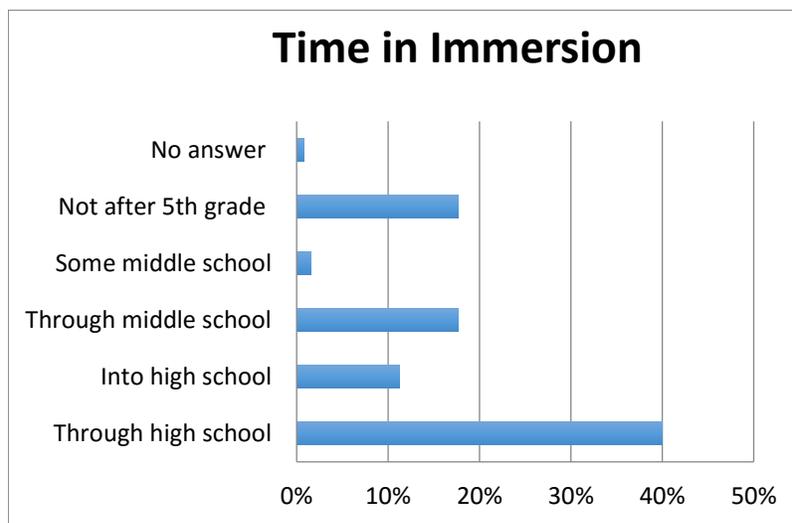
Figure 1. How long were you in immersion?

Education History

When asked how long alumni stayed in immersion, three major end points of immersion were prevalent: 5th grade, middle school, and high school. Though only 40% continued their immersion experiences through high school, 77% took French in high school, indicating that even those that left immersion earlier in their school career continued to study the target language (See Figure 1).

This survey question deviated from the other studies discussed in the literature review due to the variety of programs from which the students matriculated. This is because responses from six different school districts were included. Some of these programs only went to 5th grade, some to middle school, and some to high school.

Education Level

Self-reported GPA while in immersion shows that our sample perceived themselves to be very adept at school with over 95% having an A or B average. This finding of academic success reflects Mellgren and Somers (2008) where 83% of their participants had 3.1 GPAs or higher and the rest of the students had GPAs of 2.0-3.0. This underlines the well-documented relationship between immersion and high academic achievement (Genesee, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001, 2011; Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001).

Immersion alumni did not just do well in the K-12 context, they continued on to post-secondary studies. Eighty percent of the respondents are currently in or have completed post-secondary education (100 out of 125) (See Figure 2). These numbers add to more than 100% because some of the participants selected more than one answer. Compare this to the overall Louisiana state percentage of 40% of 18-24 year old that are in or have completed college (KidsCount, 2014). This post-secondary success is reflected in the Manitoban study, which found that 77% of their immersion alumni went on to pursue post-secondary studies (ESSB-ME, 2002). Graber (2008) also provided evidence of academically successful post-secondary immersion alumni. Post-secondary studies and an immersion experience appear to be related. Whether it is pre-selection by parents already determined that their children will succeed, attrition of students that are not as successful in schools, an actual causal relationship, or some other explanation remains to be seen.

While participants' current levels of education are impressive, alumni's intended levels are even more ambitious. Nearly all participants, 98%, plan to get post-secondary degrees (122 out of 125).

This finding points to belief in the students' self-efficacy. Previous research comparing immersion and non-immersion students has shown that there is a difference in students' self-efficacy, particularly with girls in immersion (Haj-Broussard, 2002; 2003).

Educational Choices

Reflecting Mellgren and Somer's (2008) work, this survey asked if the participants had chosen a major or minor in language or cultural studies. Most of the participants did not study languages, per se. Fewer than 20% had majored in languages and

Alumni Current Educational Level

(horizontal bar chart with categories: No response, High school diploma, Some college or associate's..., Some graduate school, Terminal degree; x-axis from 0% to 40%)
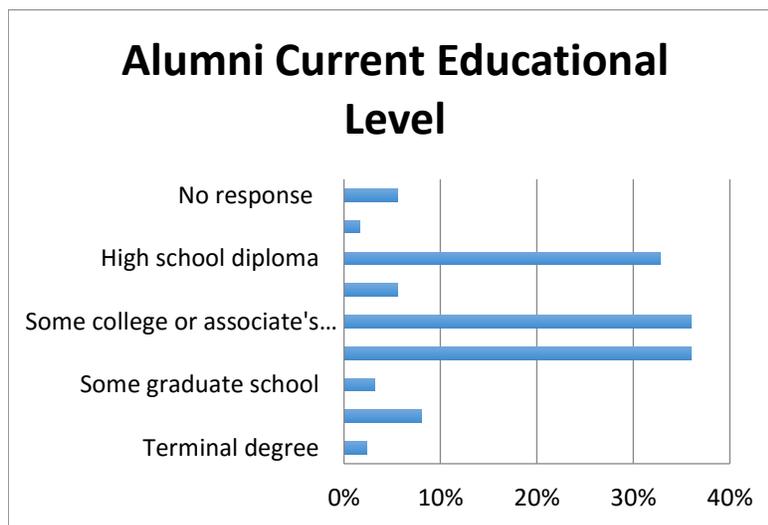
Figure 2. Alumni current educational level

fewer than 5% had majored in international studies. Ex post facto reflection on the survey concluded that we should have inquired about participants' college majors and minors, whether language related or not.

Global Experiences

Of rhizomatic interest, nearly 20% of the participants opted for a study abroad experience, almost 80% of those to Francophone countries. Mellgren and Somer (2008) found that over 60% of their participants had done a study abroad and Graber (2008) found that many immersion alumni had studied abroad.

It is important to consider, for this study, that all of the schools in the represented parishes are in Title I schools, so participants may not have had the financial means to sustain a study abroad. Despite the financial limitations to studies abroad, participants overcame these hurdles out of a desire to grow along the rhizomatic paths established from their experiences that were rooted in French immersion.

Over half of the Louisiana alumni have traveled abroad. Their travels span six continents and 23 countries. For those that traveled abroad, 42% visited Francophone countries. Over a quarter of the alumni that traveled abroad visited multiple countries. This is consistent with Parks' (2013) discussion of how her participants' languages skills motivated them to travel abroad and how they planned to do more traveling abroad. Like Deleuze's metaphor of the nomad traveling along a rhizomes from center to periphery in search of ways

to enrich his life, the French immersion alumni who have studied or traveled abroad recognized the intrinsic, and self-fulfilling importance of international experiences as they connected with their formative French immersion experience.

Current Level and Use of Language

When participants were asked to self-assess their current French fluency level, over 25% felt that they had advanced language skills. Another 50% felt that their skills were still at the intermediate level. About 20% felt they had beginning skills, where they could understand some basic vocabulary and carry on a basic conversation. Fewer than 2% felt they lost their language altogether.

Current perceived language level Mellgren and Somers' (2008) findings were more positive in this area with 65% of the students believing they were fluent, 28% feeling their language skills were at the intermediate level, 6% perceiving they had basic level, and only 1% feeling they had lost their language.

Responses concerning how often they utilized their French found that nearly 60% of participants said they used it often or everyday. Over 35% felt they used it once in awhile. Only 4% said they never use French. The other studies did not ask about the alumni's current language usage.

Opportunities to speak French in non-academic settings fertilize rhizomatic trajectories, strengthening the appetite alumni have for linguistic growth and cross-cultural knowledge. Alumni utilize French in multiple contexts. At home
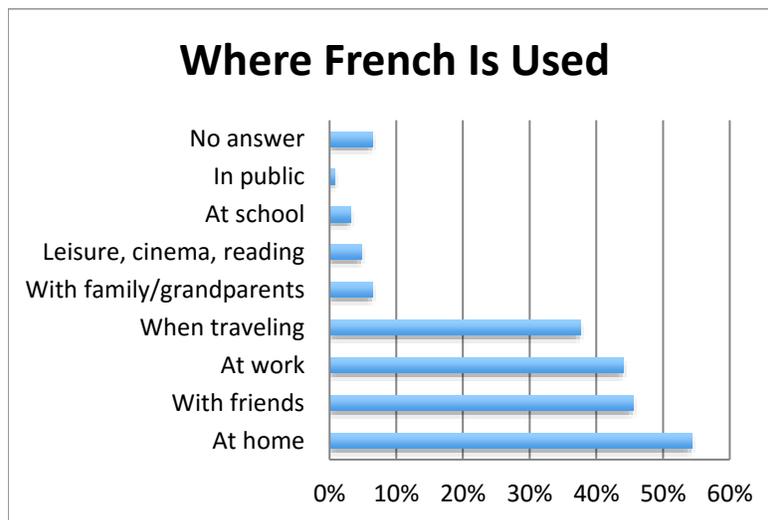

Figure 3. Where do you use your French?

and with friends were the most frequent contexts, followed by work and travel.

Over 40% of the participants used French in multiple contexts, explaining why these statistics do not add up to 100%. It is promising to see that over half of the alumni use French in their homes and nearly half use French with their friends. Interesting to note that the third most used context for French was the alumni's workplace (See Figure 3). This corresponds to the Manitoban study, which found that 45% of the alumni said French was desirable or required for their jobs.

Studies of Other Languages

We inquired if participants, having mastered French, have progressed to attain other languages. We found that 40% of the participants went on to study a third language. Four more went on to study a fourth language. Spanish was the most common language, with 80% of participants formally studying Spanish. It is interesting to note that 16% of the students who studied other languages were studied less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Pashtu, and Chinese.

These numbers closely reflected Mellgren and Somers' (2008) findings. Whereas the French immersion students' third language tended to be Spanish, the Spanish immersion students in Mellgren and Somers tended to learn French. In fact, 36% of the participants learned French as a third language. While other European languages were also popular (34%), 17% of the participants learned less commonly taught languages such as Japanese, Arabic, and Chinese. The French immersion experience symbolizes the center

or core of the rhizome, and when participants (nomads) learn new languages or travel or study abroad, they grow peripheral roots extending outward in a manner that fosters individual enrichment and an expansion of linguistic and cultural interests. French immersion classrooms were where participants' linguistic and cultural interests were piqued, and where their cultivation and subsequent fertilization began.

Perceptions

Participants agreement with the prompt "French Immersion has been valuable in my life" was nearly unanimous, with 98.4% marking agree or strongly agree. This mirrors Mellgren and Somers' (2008) finding that 97% of alumni felt immersion had been valuable in their lives. When the alumni were asked if they planned to put their children in immersion, 76% wished to do so and 20% did not answer. Other studies have not address this question of multigenerational immersion families.

The majority of participants (93%) believe that French immersion education helped and still helps them to accept and understand different cultures. All of the other studies mentioned discussed this aspect of immersion. The Manitoban participants believed that immersion helped them to communicate with Francophones and appreciate Francophone culture. Graber (2008) discussed how immersion helped participants make friends from various cultures. Finally, Parks (2013) discussed increased open-mindedness to others and global citizenship.

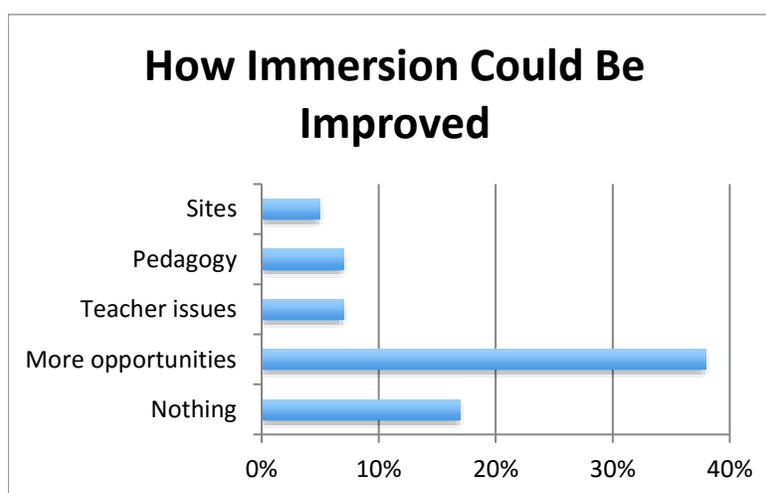Findings from the qualitative open-ended responses indicate that if

Figure 4. How to improve immersion

participants could change their immersion experience, they mostly wanted more opportunities for immersion. Other participants would like to ensure higher teacher or pedagogical quality in the schools. A final theme concerning suggested changes was a wider selection of where immersion is offered (See Figure 4).

The predominant themes included a desire for more immersion opportunities or that the programs change nothing. In terms of having more opportunities, alumni mentioned a desire for more middle school, high school, and college credit courses and French immersion opportunities such as Pre-K, summer camps, field trips, and study abroad. In other words, they want to expand the number and variety of immersion experiences. Alumni also want immersion to be at more school sites and they would like an immersion center, namely a one-track school with French immersion. Another area for improvement was to have more consistency, better screening, and more local teachers. Participants wanted teachers to focus more on their language skills by focusing on grammar, writing, and insisting on speaking in French. Both of these themes dealt with teacher selection and preparation. Overall, participants want more immersion opportunities and better immersion instruction.

Additional comments were positive and focused on how immersion helped alumni's culture, lives, personal development, and social skills (See Figure 5). In this context, the influence of French immersion on participants' lives extended well beyond the classroom setting, causing a myriad of potential rhizomatic trajectories. These trajectories might not have been cultivated had they

not been a part of the French immersion programs in Louisiana.

Discussion and Next Steps

Overall, the immersion alumni that responded to this survey are well educated and happy with their immersion experience. The three goals of immersion: language acquisition, content acquisition, and cultural appreciation appear to have been achieved with the participants in this study. Many students still use French at home, with friends, and at work. Many alumni reported that they have retained the language, but they do not feel that they are fluent. Increasing students' study abroad experiences could help to retain language level. In addition, increasing the immersion experiences in the area with weekend, weeklong, and summer immersion experiences would increase immersion opportunities while increasing students' language proficiency.

These results support the idea that the French immersion experience sparked a nomadic-like agency in students, which propelled them towards adulthood with significant possibilities for academic, linguistic, and cultural richness (Cormier, 2008). Within this milieu, French immersion alumni sought out communities and resources to satisfy a drive for lifelong learning that was sparked by the French immersion experience itself. This created a path of knowledge that branched out in a multitude of directions for the purpose of enriching alumnus' cultural and linguistic identities. Reflecting on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) description, the French immersion
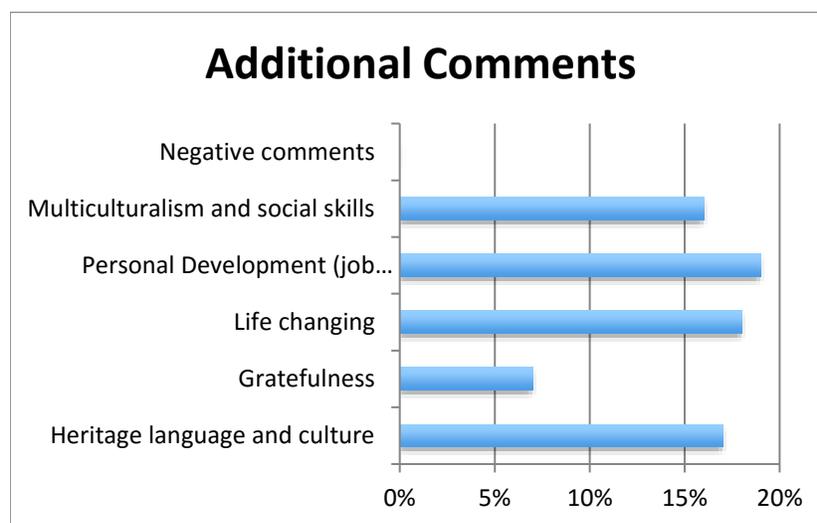

Additional Comments

- Negative comments
- Multiculturalism and social skills
- Personal Development (job…
- Life changing
- Gratefulness
- Heritage language and culture

0%   5%   10%   15%   20%

Figure 5. Additional comments

experience remained a source of inspiration for learning new languages and appreciating and understanding cultural differences.

In future research, we would like to gather data from more school sites. New Orleans students are now at the age necessary to participate in the survey. We would like to further inquire about alumni choice regarding post-secondary areas of study, including college majors and minors. In terms of data analysis, we would like to see if there are correlations with the grade at which students leave immersion, the site at which they are educated, and other factors such as post-secondary level and language level.

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OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS ABSTRACT

The Impact of Louisiana's COMPASS Teacher Evaluation System on Principals in One School District: A Case Study

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As teacher evaluation practices become increasingly high-stakes, principal observation has been made an important source of data in the evaluation process. Driven by the federal Race to the Top initiative, implementation of teacher evaluation systems has been rapid and questions remain about the preparedness of principals to successfully implement the new evaluation processes. The researcher conducted a qualitative case study that focuses on the implementation of the Louisiana Department of Education's COMPASS teacher evaluation system and its impacts on principals in one school district. Interviews were conducted with six principals, a focus group was held with the four members of the district central office that supervise and support these principals, and two more focus group were held with selected teachers from the schools of each of the participating principals. Viewed through the lens of Transformational Leadership, data was collected, transcribed, analyzed, and organized into themes in order to present a practical and real-life perspective on how the COMPASS mandate has impacted principals. Findings indicate that principals perceive that COMPASS was implemented too quickly and they have had to change several of their practices as a result. Additionally, principals believe their biggest success in implementing COMPASS was supporting teachers, while they believe their biggest challenge in implementing COMPASS to be setting student learning targets that are both reasonable and challenging, and aligning school practices with those set forth in the COMPASS Rubric. Findings indicate that principals perceive that COMPASS was implemented too quickly and they have had to change several of their practices as a result. Additionally, principals believe their biggest success in implementing COMPASS was supporting teachers, while they believe their biggest challenge in implementing COMPASS to be setting student learning targets that are both reasonable and challenging, and aligning school practices with those set forth in the COMPASS Rubric. Implications of this research include practical knowledge for current principals and administrators, and a ground-level view for policy makers regarding how mandates and change impact principals, as well as scholars seeking to understand the change process.

ANNUAL MEETING PROCEEDINGS

2016

Servant Leadership Education and the Implicit and Explicit Bias of Physician Assistant Students Toward Individuals of Low Socioeconomic Status

Lindsay Ferrington
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Physician assistants (PAs) are an increasingly important part of the United States healthcare system as evidenced by the rapidly growing profession. Some reasons for this include a national shortage of physicians and the cost-effectiveness of PAs. With this explosion of growth and opportunities in the PA field, educators must strive to produce PAs who can provide quality healthcare. One barrier to effective healthcare delivery is provider bias. Leadership training in the PA curriculum is proposed as a method to decrease bias in PA students. Servant leadership, defined as leadership that places the wellbeing of the follower first, has been identified as a good fit for the medical field including the PA profession. Servant leadership as investigated in this study will focus on PA students as leaders and patients as followers. In addition to improving health care delivery by teaching leadership skills, a case has been made for attempting to identify and decrease provider bias as another means to improve health care. Two associated, yet distinctly different, types of bias have been identified: implicit and explicit. Evidence suggests that a subconscious phenomenon is associated with implicit bias while a conscious process is associated with explicit bias. Individuals instinctively begin to associate things very early in life. Developmental events and culture both play a role in the development of attitudes that form into biases. Repeatedly having social stereotypes reinforced helps solidify biases. Because thought processes are often consistent, people tend to unconsciously assign stereotypes to traits that they identify as good or bad in other people. Stereotypes and bias can lead to suboptimal healthcare. Studies have consistently shown that biases against underserved, elderly, and/or disabled patients actually increased during medical training following negative experiences. Providers who harbor biases toward patients tend to interact differently with them, which can lead to greater health disparities and worse health outcomes. Most PAs are trained in teaching hospitals that put them into contact with underserved patients. Since biases against the poor are likely to form in this situation, educators must specifically address this issue throughout the curriculum to reduce health disparities, which disproportionally affect the poor. Implementing servant leadership training into the healthcare professions curriculum can place students into contact with underserved, low-socioeconomic populations in a controlled environment. Assuming that positive interactions occur during these projects, a decrease in bias may ensue. In this study three quantitative assessment tools will be used to evaluate these topics. These are the Implicit Association Test, the Physician Assistant Students' Attitudes Toward the Underserved, and the Servant Leadership Questionnaire. This study is proposed as a pre-test/post-test format with one cohort of 38 PA students participating in at least two community service projects that put them into contact with underserved individuals. Students will also take part in classroom lectures and discussions about servant leadership, bias, poverty, and perform reflection exercises. If this training decreases implicit and/or explicit bias, this process could easily be implemented into other PA programs to improve healthcare by producing less biased healthcare providers.

Communication that Facilitates Change and Leadership in the Context of Higher Education

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Communication skills appear to be a key trait that is most often overlooked in research that pertains to higher education and leadership studies. The functionality of this skill in the context of instructional leadership and organizational change has been undermined for years. This paper addresses the powerful dynamics of communication in facilitating leadership and change in educational hierarchies. It discusses the implications and the correlation between effective communication and the success of educational leaders who facilitate change and proposes the hypothesis that the better the communication skills of a leader, the greater their chances of being successful leaders and change facilitators in an educational environment. It identifies verbal and paralinguistic cues that pose to be barriers in the process of clear communication and thereby affecting the image of the leader in a negative manner. The advent of early college academies that are fast tracking high school students to their way on receiving an Associate's degree along with a high school diploma and the increased use of online teaching courses and remote access classrooms by way of video conferencing etc. has further stressed the need of communication to be utilized in the most effective and coherent manner. This study highlights the role communication plays in expediting the process of an organizational change or a merge, the soft skills that either make or break a leader and the impact it has on the operational mechanisms of an educational institution.

A Comparison of Principal Preparation Internship Requirements among Louisiana Universities

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Southeastern Louisiana University

Randy Parker
Louisiana Tech University

After widespread criticism from reports that universities were not adequately preparing their school leadership candidates with real world experiences, the movement to reform university principal preparation in the United States began. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) approved a set of standards for universities to follow in preparing candidates for school leadership. These Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards provide guidelines for universities to prepare candidates for the principalship through clinical experiences, such as internships and field experiences. The ELCC standards mirror the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards that practicing principals must follow, but with the addition of a seventh standard, the internship. A previous study conducted by the present researchers comparing the features of Louisiana principal preparation programs revealed that the language used in describing the internships and field experiences is not consistent across the programs and, thus, may cause misperceptions. The present study is an examination of the details of the requirements for field experiences and internships of each Louisiana university principal preparation program. University-School district collaboration is the theoretical framework for the study. The earlier university-school district associations were quid pro quo alliances in which the schools received professional development delivered by university personnel, while the university professors were immersed into the schools of the late 20th Century. These mutually beneficial arrangements did not produce deep and lasting change, however. Therefore the most recent iteration of university-

school district collaborations is a partnership between university and school district to ensure that candidates are prepared to meet the challenge of school improvement. The previous study included interviews of 12 university principal preparation program directors or their designees regarding the features of their programs. The present study is a mixed method descriptive and comparative design of miniature case studies using data from one source for each case study. Follow up interviews investigated details of field experiences and internships required. The various requirements for these clinical experiences are displayed in a comparison table. A comparison of universities' program requirements for clinical experiences (field experiences and internships) is displayed in the final paper. Such information should be helpful to universities and school districts in planning and revising specific clinical experiences.

Examining the Development of Pre-service Teachers' Professional Vision During Field Experience

Min-Joung Kim & David Eller
Louisiana State University

Experts in certain professions have "professional vision" that is "socially organized ways of seeing and understanding events that are answerable to the distinctive interests of a particular social group" (Goodwin, 1994, p.606). Professional vision entails: 1) coding schemes, that are specific ways of classifying complex events of interests, 2) highlighting, noticing and marking coding schemes in complex and perceptual situations, and 3) producing representations about phenomena pertinent to a particular professional's work (Goodwin, 1994). In math teacher education, professional vision has been adapted to characterize important teacher competencies in relation to noticing and reasoning students' math strategies (V. Jacobs, Lamb, Philipp, & Schappelle, 2009; V. R. Jacobs, Lamb, & Philipp, 2010; Sherin, 2001; van

Es & Sherin, 2008). Professional noticing of children's mathematical thinking is a critical competency for teachers to effectively deliver math lessons as endorsed by recent national reform efforts (Kilpatrick, Swafford, & FIndell, 2001; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010; NCTM, 2000, 2014) such as supporting students to engage in doing mathematics and designing developmentally appropriate lesson plans. This study is to examine the development of pre-service teachers' professional noticing of children's mathematical thinking in solving different types of word problems. In previous studies, researchers used video cases or written prompts to assess pre-service teachers' professional noticing (V. R. Jacobs et al., 2010; van Es & Sherin, 2008). These studies have contributed to the field by identifying the construct of professional vision of noticing, but no previous work documented to what extent pre-service teachers notice students' strategies in the authentic classroom setting. In this study, I am going to study pre-service teachers' development of professional vision in classroom settings. Research questions of this study are: 1) To what extent do pre-service teachers use the coding schemes they learned from university lectures during their observation of math lessons? and 2) How do pre-service teachers use their professional noticing to develop lesson plans and orchestrate classroom discussions? Participants of this study are pre-service teachers enrolled a senior level math methods course in the elementary education certificate program at a southern university that is designed to support pre-service teachers to connect theory and practice by pairing university classroom instruction with field experience at elementary school. As part of course requirements, pre-service teachers spend approximately 40 hours where they observe their mentor teachers' lessons and conduct whole class teaching. The data sources include pre-service teachers' classroom observation journals, videos for teaching and their reflection. The preliminary analysis suggests that pre-service teachers noticed significant strategies of solving word problems such as direct modeling, counting, or number facts. More importantly, pre-service

teachers highlighted these different strategies during their teaching with an eye toward supporting elementary students' learning. We will compare professional noticing of children's mathematical thinking in cases of emerging and proficient.

Grit and the Relationship Between Winning and Learning

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Experiencing challenges and setbacks can foster cognitive growth. Robotic competitions present a substantial number of challenges that when encountered are thought to strengthen students' problem solving abilities. Through a framework lens defined as grit, or the tendency to sustain interest and effort toward long-term goals (Duckworth et al, 2007), this study examined the experiences of five veteran high school students on a losing robotics team. What were these students gaining by experiencing challenges and failure? How did continuing to lose affect their outlook on competition? This study used a phenomenological research approach to examine the shared, lived, and prolonged experience of five veteran students on high school robotics team that has never won on the field of play or received recognition through an award (Rossmann & Rallis, 2012). Data was collected through interviews and observations over a two-year period. Interview questions were developed from a meta-theory that described behavior as a function of the characteristic of a person, the environment they work in, and the tasks they are accomplishing (Cronbach & Snow, 1977; McNergney, 1981, 2009). The interview data was generated by asking the following structured questions: (1) How do you feel about participating in a competition where there is a disparity of resources between all the teams? (2) How do you define success on this robotics team? (3) How would you feel if the robotics activity was not a competition but rather an opportunity only to

display your work? (4) Why do you participate on this team when the team continues to lose year after year and has never won an award? The first year of observations focused on becoming familiar with the team while students were designing and building their robot, as well as understanding the entire robotics competition landscape in comparison to other teams at their build sites and competitions. Observations during the second year focused solely on this team. Observations were structured to confirm or refute the response data that came from the student interviews. This structure of observations was used to triangulate the data to increase the validity of the study. First hand students' perspectives revealed their coping mechanisms which included a stronger commitment to working through problems, placing value on improving working relationships, and maintaining a culture of having fun even after working through challenges and losing. While parents, coaches, and teachers place much emphasis on winning in youth competitions, as it is regarded as the major form of success, learning can be argued as a form of success. The author presents four scenarios that compares the association between winning and learning: a team that does not win but experiences a great deal of learning; a team that does not win and does not experience much learning; a team that wins but does not experience much learning; a team that wins but does experience a great deal of learning. A discussion will reveal that there is little association between winning and learning.

Conceptual Frameworks for Virtual High Schools

Luke Purdy
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This discussion explores three theoretical frameworks: Community of Inquiry Model, Sense of Community Theory, and Theory of Transactional Distance. We will also discuss ways in which these theoretical frameworks can be applied to virtual

education at the secondary level. We will further seek to create from these theoretical frameworks a conceptual framework for virtual high schools that is grounded in existing research. While others have published research on each of the three frameworks, there is a dearth of research combining all three theoretical frameworks and applying them to virtual high schools. The overarching question guiding the discussion is: How can online high school classes best be designed to meet the educational and social development needs of online high school students? The literature leads virtual course designers to focus on increased dialogue and highly adaptable course structure that is personalized to meet individual student needs. These elements will address the decreased learner autonomy that is inherent in secondary-level education and will meet the social development needs of high school aged learners.

Predictors of Elementary Students' Intentions to Continue in Music When Entering Middle or Junior High School

Michael Ruybalid
Southeastern Louisiana University

Music Education has often been viewed throughout history as an essential component to a child's learning. Mark (2002) noted that philosophers, religious leaders, aristocrats, and civic officials have described music education as a benefit to society. Research has revealed that music classes have a strong presence in elementary schools. The National Center for Education Statistics found that, as of the 2009-2010 school year, 94% of public elementary schools offered music instruction to their students (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). Yet, the nonprofit research center Child Trends (2012) published data that showed an overall trend of decline in school music enrollment between 1991-2011 amongst eighth grade students (from 55% in 1991 to 50% in 2011). Researchers have also found that student motivation towards school music is at its lowest near the end of the elementary grades (Ghazali &

McPherson, 2009). It is at the end of elementary school when students are often given the opportunity to choose the extracurricular activities in which they will participate during their future school years. The reason why this decline in motivation exists, however, is less clear. Determining the reasons that a student in his or her last year of elementary school would choose to participate in school music when they enter the secondary grades, or choose not to participate, is the aim of this study. This study utilizes the theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985, 1991, 2011) as a framework to aide in examining student behavioral intentions regarding school music participation. The original TPB constructs of (a) attitudes, (b) subjective norms, (c) and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991) are included within this study. Within this theory, the construct of attitude refers to whether the person has a favorable or unfavorable opinion towards a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norm refers to a person's perceived social pressure to perform or not perform this behavior, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) refers to a person's perceptions of how easy or difficult it will be to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Within the current study, additional social influences (parental involvement, peer influence) are also included as independent variables. The addition of social influences has been done successfully in past studies (e.g. Hamilton & White, 2008) to help strengthen the overall predictability of the TPB model. Students in their final year of elementary school will be asked to complete a questionnaire designed to measures each of the constructs being applied in this study (attitudes, subjective norms, PBC, parental involvement, peer influence). The subjects will all come from schools within southern Louisiana. Data will be collected and analyzed in January and early February 2016. The results are forthcoming and will identify variables that predict student intentions to continue in school music when it becomes an elective choice. The information that this study reveals should prove helpful to music educators by providing information on what factors contribute to

student decisions to enroll (or not enroll) in elective school music classes.

The Rhizomatic Effects of Academic, Linguistic, and Cultural Attainment in Louisiana Immersion Programs

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Nicole Boudreaux
Lafayette Parish School System

Louisiana has the most French immersion schools in the United States, with over 30 French immersion programs. Some of these programs have been in existence for two or three decades. This purpose of this study was to examine retrospective perceptions of former Louisiana French immersion students. Through the use of a Deleuzian framework, this study approached the French immersion experience in terms of the rhizomatic effects it had on participants' lives. In this manner, the French immersion experience for participants' created, like a botanical rhizome, "collective assemblages of enunciation that…establish connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative" to participants academic, linguistic, and social experiences (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.7). Using a survey delivered via social media, findings of this study provide rich knowledge on the accomplishment of French immersion academic, linguistic, and cultural goals. This mixed-method study analyzed data through the use of frequency distributions and qualitative, naturalistic inquiry. Findings were consistent with related research within the field of immersion studies (Parks, 2013; Graber, 2008; Mellgren and Somer, 2008). Findings indicate participants have enjoyed a high level of post-secondary academic success. Eighty percent of the participants are currently in or have completed post-secondary education, compared with the 40% of Louisiana students who attend or graduate from university

(KidsCount, 2014). In terms of fluency, 75% of participants believed they retained the French language with at least intermediate proficiency. Channels for language acquisition opened during the French immersion experience facilitated the acquisition of third languages for 40% of participants. Although Spanish was the most common acquired third language, 16% of students studied other languages such as Chinese, Pashtu, and Arabic. Considering that 98.4% of participants reported that French immersion has been valuable in their lives, we report with confidence that the benefits of French immersion extend well beyond academic settings. Of theoretical interest is the fact that 60% of participants reported they used French often or daily, and in multiple non-academic contexts. Additionally, over 50% of the participants have had experiences traveling abroad to multiple countries. A vast majority of participants, 93%, believe French immersion has enriched their ability to appreciate and understand other cultures contexts. This study indicates a rhizomatic fecundity exists for former French immersion students in the domains of academic, linguistic, and cultural growth. Participation in French immersion in Louisiana began a lifelong pattern of growth along many channels, beyond the French immersion experience itself.

Learning Mathematics Through Technology Play

Terrie Poehl
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Amy Moore
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Elementary Lab School

Van Hiele stated, "For children, geometry begins with play" (NCTM, 1999, p. 310). He also stated that misunderstandings exist in geometry and arithmetic in elementary school due to levels of thinking that are necessary for success as compared

to the student's level of thinking. Van Hiele's point of view is to begin teaching in an informal manner. The research project took the use of play to either reward or motivate fifth-grade students when used with a classroom assessment. The research pilot involved dividing the students into two groups. One group completed problem-solving applications on a computer tablet before an assessment with the other group after the assessment. The focus of the research was the completion of problem solving activities with technology as the medium. The technology included using iPad mini units, SmartBoards, and geometry manipulatives.The applications included ones where students made a path for a marble to travel, creating trains to with a specified path or having to change colors then finish its path to a depot among others.The data gathered included the grouping variable of using the problem solving apps before and after the classroom assessments, and state benchmark testing scores as a scaled score (ratio data variable) and as a level score (ordinal data variable). The analyses included a paired t-test with the pretest and posttest benchmark scores, one-way ANOVA using the pretest score and iPad usage as predictor variables for the posttest score, and correlation using the pretest and posttest scores. The presenter will include demonstration of the applications and recommend that participants bring a tablet to the session. The applications are available for iOS and Android operating systems.

Picard Center Activities

Karen Burstein, Raymond Biggar, Kara Farmer-Primeaux, & Steven Dick University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Micheal Mayne & Alicia Bourque Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning

The Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at UL Lafayette is a

multidisciplinary group of evaluation and research professionals that focus on the healthy development essential in early childhood that promotes wellbeing in adolescence, through maturity. The Center provides high-quality, rigorous evaluations of programs that are implemented to address learning from birth through adulthood. Applied research is continually conducted in areas of education, health, and well-being to ensure a prosperous and healthy future for all of Louisiana's children.
The symposium highlights four current Center research initiatives in early assessment, intervention in the juvenile justice system, large scale assessment of classroom quality; and a systematic review of issues related to the use of personally identifiable data. Each has critical implications for improving the educational systems and outcomes for Louisiana's children and youth and strengthens existing statewide educational and social service networks.

Determining the Value of Outdoor Adventure Education for Educational Leaders

Helen Umstead & Dianne F. Olivier University of Louisiana at Lafayette

For over thirty years, researchers have worked to identify skills, functions, and responsibilities of educational leaders. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), the Council of Chief State School Officers (2008), National Association of Secondary School Principals (2010), the Wallace Foundation (2013), and Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) identify many which seem to rely upon competence in people management and soft skills. Collaboration exercises soft skills and is integral to effective educational leadership. According to Bryk and Schneider (2003) another important leadership quality is trust. When properly cultivated, collaboration and trust can positively affect leadership and result in improved student achievement. Outdoor adventure education researchers (Chesler, Single, & Mikic, 2003; Ewert,

1987; Goldenberg, 2007; Goldenberg, Klenosky, O'Leary & Templin, 2000; Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997; Sibthorp, 2007) claim positive effects on leadership skills including team-building and trust, resulting in an increase in the positive impact of educational leaders. Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) or Adventure Education: "is the branch of outdoor education concerned primarily with interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. Adventure education uses adventurous activities that provide a group or an individual with compelling tasks to accomplish. These tasks often involve group problem solving (requiring decision making, judgment, cooperation, communication, and trust) and personal challenge" (Priest & Gass, 2005, p. 17). Outdoor adventure education (OAE) programs vary in structure and duration but researchers have identified similar skills and participant trait outcomes while exploring OAE. D'Amato and Krasney (2011) reported participants' increased self-awareness and self-confidence as a result of participation in OAE, while Hattie et al. (1997) itemized leadership, self-concept, academic, personality, inter-personal, and adventuresome outcomes. Goldenberg, Klenosky, O'Leary and Templin (2000) noted communication as an OAE outcome, while Allan (2012), Ewert (1987), and Neill and Dias (2001) referred to forms of resilience. The purpose of this study is to explore through the literature: (a) the link between outdoor adventure education and leadership specific responsibilities (self-efficacy, collaboration, and trust), (b) the relationship between outdoor adventure education and participants' self-efficacy, (c) the relationship between outdoor adventure education and participants' collaboration (d) the relationship between outdoor adventure education and participants' trust. This critical analysis of the literature explores the potential value of OAE programs for those employed in the educational domain who wish to improve leadership skills, including teachers as informal leaders without a formal leadership role (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The overarching research question guiding this literature review asks, What is the value of outdoor adventure education for educational leaders?

Additional questions explored in the review include: Are educational leadership skills enhanced as a result of participation in outdoor adventure education (OAE) programs? What is the value of outdoor adventure education participation and the impact on participants' self-efficacy, collaboration, and trust?

How to Improve Literacy in an All Male School

Rachel Marquet & Michelle Morris
Northwestern State University of Louisiana

The study of gender specific instructional strategies was significant for teachers to best impact their student's literacy skills. The lack of explicit instructional methods in an educational setting decreased the opportunities for the development of literacy skills in children. An examination of gender differences revealed variations in maturity and literacy skill levels. Literacy skills led to success in academics as well as in life. An original survey created for teachers of the lower school at Berchmans Academy discovered approaches that were beneficial in single gender education. The research question was do gender specific teaching strategies increase test scores. Data collected from a statistical test demonstrated to administrators and teachers the growth of literacy skills. The target population were grades 2-5 in these findings, limitations of the study and guidance for future research. The instruments used to measure the data included DIBELS as well as the survey and ERB test scores. A goal of the study was to discover and apply specific strategies for the improvement of test scores. The study examined gender differences and how to implement the necessary educational strategies.

Teaching English in Different Countries: Examination of Teaching

Nidaa Brinjee, Bobby Franklin, & Minadene Waldrop
Mississippi College

This paper compares teaching English as a second language in Saudi Arabia and China. The goals of teaching English in these countries are provided. A focus of this paper is the Chinese and Saudi Arabian teachers' opinion about how teach English should be taught. The American English as a second language teacher's opinion is also included. Suggestions about how to improve teaching English as a second language is also a focus of this paper.

Social Media Usage in Education: A Comparison between Saudi Arabia and the United States

Jubran Almusam, Bobby Franklin, & Minadene Waldrop
Mississippi College

This paper examines the impact of social media on education in Saudi Arabia and the United States. Social media usage as a pedagogical feature has increased over the past few decades, though in different ways. Recent advancement in technology has brought a significant transformation in the educational sector. The use of mobile phones and computers has created an exciting environment for both teachers and learners. The role of social media usage in education has been made possible due to various policies adopted by various institutions in many countries. As the usage of computers continues to grow rapidly, education policy makers have suggested that schools should encompass Information and Communication Technology (ICT) programs in their curriculum. The use of the Internet has enabled faster communication methods and online discussion forums. The emergence of online communication such video conferencing and Skype has brought a tremendous change in communication. The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, has necessitated online discussions for various topics. The education sector has tapped into this opportunity to make learning exciting. Teachers have made use of youtube podcasts to prepare teaching aid materials that can be accessed by students at any time. The role of social media in education cannot be undermined. It has changed the whole learning process causing teachers, parents and students to experience learning in a transformative manner. Social media has reshaped the way we communicate in all aspects of business, leisure and professional activities. While social media in both Saudi Arabia and the United States have roles to play in the education sector, the response in Saudi Arabia for the integration of social media into the education system is significantly lower. While the infrastructure exists in Saudi Arabia the will to use social media is lower than in the United States. Social media usage by females is much lower in Saudi Arabia due to the strict Islamic culture. Schools will not embrace the use of social media unless the Saudi government makes this a high priority.

The Impact of Louisiana's COMPASS Teacher Evaluation System on Principals in One School District

David Schexnaydre, Jr.
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This presentation focuses on a study of how implementation of Louisiana's COMPASS Teacher Evaluation System has impacted principals. As teacher evaluation practices become increasingly high-stakes, principal observation has been made an important source of data in the evaluation process. Driven by the federal Race to the Top initiative, implementation of teacher evaluation systems has been rapid and questions remain about the preparedness of principals to successfully implement the new evaluation processes. The

researcher conducted a qualitative case study that focuses on the implementation of the Louisiana Department of Education's COMPASS teacher evaluation system and its impacts on principals in one school district. Interviews were conducted with six principals, a focus group was held with the four members of the district central office that supervise and support these principals, and two more focus group were held with selected teachers from the schools of each of the participating principals. Viewed through the lens of Transformational Leadership, data was collected, transcribed, analyzed, and organized into themes in order to present a practical and real-life perspective on how the COMPASS mandate has impacted principals. Findings indicate that principals perceive that COMPASS was implemented too quickly and they have had to change several of their practices as a result. Additionally, principals believe their biggest success in implementing COMPASS was supporting teachers, while they believe their biggest challenge in implementing COMPASS to be setting student learning targets that are both reasonable and challenging, and aligning school practices with those set forth in the COMPASS Rubric. Findings indicate that principals perceive that COMPASS was implemented too quickly and they have had to change several of their practices as a result. Additionally, principals believe their biggest success in implementing COMPASS was supporting teachers, while they believe their biggest challenge in implementing COMPASS to be setting student learning targets that are both reasonable and challenging, and aligning school practices with those set forth in the COMPASS Rubric. Implications of this research include practical knowledge for current principals and administrators, and a ground-level view for policy makers regarding how mandates and change impact principals, as well as scholars seeking to understand the change process.

Should I Stay or Should I Go: An Exploration of Factors Influencing Teachers' Decisions to Remain in the Classroom

Angela Webb
Louisiana State University

A "revolving door" of teachers into, but mostly out of, the profession comes at a high cost to schools and school districts with regard to loss of instructional expertise (Ingersoll, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The majority of such teacher turnover is due to job dissatisfaction, including want or need for better salary and benefits, little community support, disagreement with or ill-prepared to implement reforms, dissatisfaction with workplace conditions, lack of administrator support, lack of autonomy, and lack of opportunities for professional development (Ingersoll, 2006). Large data sets illuminate this disheartening national trend, but do little to provide nuanced insights into why newly qualified teachers leave or stay in the profession (Bang, Kern, Luft, & Roehrig, 2007). This paper will report findings and recommendations from qualitative retrospective and concurrent case studies with three experienced high school math and science teachers. Specifically, I sought to unpack the decision making process that accompanied the annual renewal of their teaching contracts with respect to the influence of supplemental funds and professional involvement. I also strived to uncover additional factors that greatly influenced participants' decisions to stay in the classroom, those factors that would make the decision to stay easier, and ones that complicated participants' decisions to remain in the classroom. In accord with most research exploring the roles of teacher preparation and learning to teach in early career years on teacher retention, these case studies were qualitative, employing semi-structured interviews to collect data and a constant comparative method for data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This line of inquiry contributes to a body of research focused on teacher preparation and learning to teach in early career years by concentrating on how teachers'

early career experiences affect their commitment to the profession, and thus their retention (Cochran-Smith, Cannady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2011). Based on findings from participants' experiences, recommendations for improving teacher retention are offered for teacher education and induction.

Policies and Practices for Hiring Effective Teachers: A Qualitative Study of Louisiana Public Schools

G. Andrew Kling & Dianne Olivier
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Of all the school-level factors that contribute to the education of a child, the teacher has the greatest effect on student achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Donaldson, 2011). For schools to have the greatest effect possible on students, principals and district administrators must hire the most effective teachers available to fill their classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In Louisiana, a highly qualified teacher is one who has completed a bachelor's degree, has proven subject-matter knowledge, and is state certified (Louisiana Administrative Code §28, 2014; NCLB, 2002; Rutledge et al., 2010). However, these requirements are considered entry-level qualifications and do not necessarily identify an effective teacher (NCLB, 2002; Rothman & Barth, 2009). This seemingly simple task of hiring the most effective teacher is complex and challenging because of the tremendous variance in teacher effects on student achievement when comparing an effective teacher to an ineffective one (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Cohen-Vogel, 2011). Further complicating the teacher effectiveness gap is the higher concentration of ineffective teachers in schools that serve low-performing students (DeAngelis et al., 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). The purpose of this research study was to explore how Louisiana's laws governing K-12 education are being interpreted and implemented by local districts at all levels throughout the state

and the effects of this understanding on local hiring practice. Specifically, the study focused on (1) exploration of current policies and practices governing teacher hiring in public K-12 schools in the state of Louisiana, and (2) determining if certain district interpretations of policy resulted in the hiring of a greater number of effective teachers. The overarching question which guided this study was: Is there a particular process currently used by districts in the state of Louisiana that leads to hiring a greater number of effective teachers? Two primary research questions also guided this study: (1) Does Louisiana state policy restrict individual districts from hiring the best candidates available to them? and (2) Are districts adding layers to the policy to ensure the hiring of effective teachers? The research design was based on two data sources. First, a thorough review of 17 district policies was conducted. The policy documents were clustered into themes and codes to determine the most important factors in teacher hiring. Second, five district level personnel representing four districts were interviewed and verbatim transcripts were analyzed to determine current practices implemented throughout the state. Data were further analyzed to determine if any local interpretations resulted in the hiring of effective teachers. Results of the study indicate current policies do not restrict the hiring of effective teachers; furthermore, no additional hiring requirements are placed on teacher candidates in Louisiana. Ten of the 17 districts analyzed contained 92% or more of the codes, indicating rigorous policy is present in all levels of education. Further findings indicate Louisiana suffers from pockets of insufficient teacher supply. There were no major distinctions in hiring practices found across the districts. Technology, including social media, serves as a valuable tool in recruiting and hiring of effective teachers.

Readiness of Middle School Students for High School English: Perceptions of English Teachers in Southwestern Louisiana

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Are middle school students being adequately prepared for high school English courses? As explained in Becoming a Nation of Readers, reading is the foundation upon which every individual's life work is based (Anderson, Heibert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). Students in the United States are not reading well enough as described in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Furthermore, too many of America's students are not capable of reading complex text (Common Core State, n.d.). For those readers who do not struggle, it is a task that is done easily, quickly and without any idea of the process it entails. However, reading is a complex task which involves "two processes: decoding unfamiliar words and attaching meaning to those words in sentences, paragraphs, pages, and entire books" (Donoghue, 2009, p. 157). Snow and the Rand Reading Study Group (RRSG) (2002) recognize reading well as a "long-term developmental process" (p. xiii). Therefore, processes in which the reader engages to understand the text, practices that involve both teacher and student, and how the practices lead to prepare middle school students guided the creation of the review's conceptual framework. This study's framework illustrates the primary aspects of reading comprehension and delineates the how and why related to reading strategies. Reading teachers have an understanding of reading content (Donoghue, 2009) and the strategies involved. Reading content has two components, comprehension and fluency. Snow and RRSG's (2002) conceptual framework for reading "consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading" (p. xiii). The elements' relationships are "interrelated" and "occur with a larger sociocultural context" (p. xiii). That is, the reader's background helps him to interpret what is being read. The purpose of this mixed –methods study was to discern whether or not middle school teachers believe their students are adequately prepared to enter high school English Language Arts courses. This study explores types of instruction needed to prepare middle school students. Finally, the study examines teachers' perceptions of their students' reading skills including comprehension and fluency. The overarching research question of this proposed study is, What are the perceptions of 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade English Language Arts teachers of their students' reading skills, specifically comprehension and fluency, and those students' readiness for high school English? To assist in answering this overarching question, three specific questions were explored: What are the perceptions of teachers of middle school students' reading skills specifically those skills associated with comprehension and fluency? Are middle school students exhibiting enough basic skills associated with comprehension and fluency in English Language Arts to matriculate into high school courses and succeed? What are teachers' perceptions of essential skills needed to transfer into high school ELA? The primary focus of this paper will be to share the development of the conceptual framework and relevant literature. Additionally, initial study findings will be shared.

Full Range Leadership Behaviors of Principals in Highly Rated Louisiana Schools Serving Elementary Through High School Grades

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Lamar University

Louisiana's accountability system for public schools changed beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Schools are now rated primarily by achievement scores. Additionally, the Louisiana Department of Education (2012) implemented a new evaluation system for both teachers and

administrators. This new era of increased accountability in Louisiana brings to the forefront more than ever the need for effective school leadership. This study examined the experiences of principals in highly rated schools serving elementary through high school grades in central and southwest Louisiana in regards to transformational and transactional leadership. Highly rated schools are defined as schools achieving an A or B rating under the Louisiana accountability system. The research questions focused on leadership experiences, including transformational and transactional leadership. According to Avolio (1999), full range leadership is leadership that encompasses transactional, nontransactional, and transformational behaviors. Full range leaders exhibit a variety of leadership behaviors and how often these leaders exhibit specific behaviors determines their success or failure (Avolio, 1999). First identified by Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders rally followers to work together to achieve goals that are bigger than any one person and accomplish more than followers originally thought they could (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transactional leadership occurs "when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower, depending on the adequacy of the follower's behavior or performance" (Avolio, 1999, p. 49). This study was organized as a phenomenological narrative. A purposeful sample of principals was used, and six school principals participated in this study. To meet the criteria, principals had to have served as principal at their schools serving elementary through high school grades for two consecutive years during which school performance scores had to rise. Additionally, their schools must have been rated an A or B for both of those years. All participating principals were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Ten open-ended questions were used in interviews with the principal of each school. The research questions asked participants to describe their experiences in regards to leadership in general, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership. Themes included the following: principals need to be

supported and provide support to accomplish changes, community support is valuable, everyone works at the same school but has different needs, involving teachers in decision-making is necessary, communication with faculty goes a long way, everyone must work together, people need to be recognized for doing the right thing, and problem areas with faculty are rare and must be dealt with fairly. The behaviors exhibited by the principals in this study are consistent with Avolio's (1999) full range leadership theory. Moreover, these findings are consistent with Leithwood (1992), who noted that although transformational leadership promotes growth while transactional leadership does not promote growth, the two leadership styles can be complementary. Principals in these schools perceived themselves to primarily utilize transformational leadership in their schools and believed that these behaviors have a positive effect on their faculty. Additionally, the principals in the studied schools exhibited transactional leadership when dealing with mistakes and providing reinforcements.

Using a Decision-Making Model to Understand the Reasoning Behind Non-Public School Choices

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Using interview data from ten parents of homeschooled and private school children in Louisiana, this phenomenological study examined the decision-making process that guided parents in choosing non-public schools. Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory framed the interview and analysis process. The results of the study yielded themes identified as critical mitigating factors in the decision-making process: community, environment, religion/worldview/moral values, academics, and

time/convenience/flexibility. Community, environment, and time/convenience/flexibility were common findings in both homeschool and private school parents. Religion/worldview/moral values was a stronger factor among private school parents than homeschool parents. The influence of academics was more highly referenced among homeschooling parents. This study showed parents to be thoughtful and deliberate in following the sensemaking process in making educational decisions for their children.

A Comparison of Teachers' Motivations to Pursue School Administration

Kathleen Campbell & Nan Adam
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The principal as the instructional leader of the school is instrumental in school improvement. Yet for the last several decades as baby boomer principals have been retiring, there has been a shortage of qualified applicants for the position of school principal. Research suggests that several disincentives to choosing a school leadership role are the ever changing role of the principal and high stakes accountability for student achievement. And yet, many teachers are enrolling in university principal preparation programs. What motivates them to consider becoming a school principal? What factors make them believe that they can be effective principals and successful school improvement leaders? Do their attitudes change or remain the same throughout the course of their two-year preparation program? The study is an online survey of teachers enrolled in a university M.Ed. principal preparation program. The research literature informed the online survey questions, which presented questions on two topics: a) motivators, and b) deterrents. Quantitative results are displayed as descriptive statistics and disaggregated by students' length of time in the principal preparation program. Online survey subjects are volunteer graduate students (who are also teachers) enrolled in the principal preparation program at a south Louisiana university. They represent students in all six semesters. The results indicate that teachers who chose to pursue school leadership were intrinsically motivated mainly by altruistic reasons, often for the same reasons they chose the career of teaching. There were several differences among the students according to length of time in the program, but, in general, students seemed to maintain a positive attitude toward their career path. The information should be helpful to school districts and universities in recruiting school leaders, while knowledge of the deterrents may be helpful to the state department of education. Hopefully, solutions will be considered by all those in authority.

Higher Education and Americans' Trust Levels

Robert Slater
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

This paper uses a national data set, the General Social Survey to explore the relationship between higher education and Trust. Why should we be interested in the higher-education-trust relationship as an area of inquiry? Trust seems to play a role in both macro and micro events. It seems relevant on the broadest levels, such as those having to do with national and international politics as well as on more micro levels, such those having to do with organizations and organizational life. Trust is a basic component of human interaction, and as organizational and collective life on both the largest and smallest scales depends on human interaction, trust is relevant. Trust is fundamental to functioning in our complex and interdependent society. We trust that care has been taken to produce the food we eat, the houses we live in,and the cars we drive so that they will contribute to our well being and not harm us. We trust our government officials to make decisions to our benefit. In every aspect of our lives we depend on people to act in ways that justify our confidence in them. Trust is essential to the efficient

functioning of our modern, complex societies. Accordingly, it is important that we understand the sources of our trust, the experiences that enable us to trust more and doubt less. Education appears to be an important source of trust. This paper explores the effects of higher education on Americans' trust levels and suggests that too much attention has been paid to the economic effects of higher education and not enough to its cultural effects.

Change Leadership - Facilitator Guides

Nan Adams, Kara Washington, Gail Blouin, Julie Rexford, Stephanie Sorbet, & Donna Heck-Reno
Southeastern Louisiana University

Doctoral students in the SLU-ULL shared Ed.D. program will present Change Facilitator Manuals developed as part of a doctoral seminar. Each manual focuses on a different Change/Innovation Implementation and will be presented in context of its relationship to Change Theory and Research-Based Change Strategies.

Reducing Student Dropouts due to Apathy by Increasing Motivation in the Classroom

Ronald Dore' & Nancy Autin
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Today, more than ever in the history of our schools, the dropout rate is alarming. Every year over 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the United States. Some of the risk factors for such a high dropout percentage include lack of parent engagement, poor academic performance, work economic needs, disconnect between school academics and work and low student engagement. Due to these reasons, apathy sets in and the student becomes discouraged and defeated. There are different ideas to describe apathy in the classroom which range from students not following due dates,

not caring, to parents not being involved enough. Physical evidence of apathy may include: head down, off task, zero class participation, no homework, unfinished projects, etc. Audible evidence includes: "I don't care," "I'll never use that stuff in real life," etc. To reduce apathy, motivation is definitely the key. Some suggestions to reduce apathy include making personal connections with students outside the class such as attending community events, providing students with a nurturing and safe learning environment, demonstrating enthusiasm, motivation and passion in what is being taught, engaging the students by making the lesson meaningful with real-life experiences, and providing several teaching methodologies/strategies to reach all students. Moreover, teachers should personalize the lesson so students can feel ownership, select topics or activities that appeal to students, integrate technology to capture student interest, keep the lesson creative, stress communication and output over fear of making mistakes, gear the lesson for students to experience a series of successes and achievements, and finally challenge all students to keep them interested and motivated. Educators in all of our educational systems must work collaboratively to ensure success in all of our students who represent our future.

Role Identity Development among Doctoral Students Enrolled in an Interdepartmental College of Education Ph.D. Program

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University of New Orleans

Background/Purpose: In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of professionals with postgraduate qualifications who have sought doctoral studies to enhance professional practice skills and knowledge. While doctoral education provides many unique options for knowledge acquisition and scientific research, the process

contributes to the student's sense of role identity, an essential element for professional development and independent scholar. Despite the growth and relevance, much of the existing literature on doctoral education has addressed structures and programs rather than student development. Focus has shifted to the doctoral student experiences; however, the research has been limited on the student's perspectives on role identity development in and outside the higher education settings. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the role identity process of doctoral students enrolled in an interdepartmental College of Education Ph. D. program.

Methods: A phenomenological research approach was used in order to gather data from doctoral students and better understand how they perceived the role identity development process. A purposeful sampling was utilized with three doctoral students from College of Education participated in the study. Data was obtained using semi-structured interviews, observations in classroom settings, and images of work and school environments. Interview recordings were transcribed and analyzed with a later dialogue process used to reach consensus on clusters of meaning and grouping significant statements into themes. Visual inspect of the photographs expanded the descriptions of the experiences and elaborated on the themes. The results yielded four interrelated themes and sub-themes that provided insight on how doctoral students' experience the development of role identities in the educational and non-educational settings: reflective practice (ongoing self-assessment pre-program and post enrollment phases), role identities (influences of experiences on development, types, and multiple roles), factor impacting development (positive and negative), and challenges (intrinsic challenges of the self, extrinsic challenges of the environment and situation, and developing strategies to cope with the challenges). The meaning of role identity development from the participant's point of view included engaging in reflective practice, developing role identities, identifying negative and positive factors, developing relationships, and incorporating

strategies to overcome challenges. This research highlighted the interrelationship of reflections, experiences, interactions, and relationships, can have on the students' overall role identity development pre-program and during their doctoral studies. Findings from our study suggested further examination of current doctoral education models of developmental network experiences and relationships may have on the role identity development process of doctoral students. As we continue to engage efforts to improve our understanding doctoral students, we acknowledge the importance of further research on the transformative role identity process in doctoral education. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of reflective practice and support systems in educational and non-educational environments, can assist doctoral education programs to improve their current support mechanisms and structure to promote successful student experiences, progression, and ultimate program completion.

Co-Teaching: When It All Comes Together

Bertha Myers
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With the increased transition of students with exceptionalities into regular classroom settings, it is imperative that teachers combine their expertise and teach all students. The co-teaching model lends itself to play on the expertise of both teachers. It is imperative that all stakeholders in this process share or establish a common philosophy of education. Administrators, parents, teachers, and students need to be introduced and trained on the effective strategies for co teaching. Professional development for all stakeholders should be the first step taken in establishing this model. On the administrative level, flexible scheduling and class structure needs to be addressed. Administrators need to recognize the need to not only schedule students with disabilities into certain classes during certain time slots, but also schedule teachers based on expertise

and collaboration skills and knowledge. Professional development of teachers should consist of the most effective practices of co teaching. With any model both benefits and barriers need to be addressed. Teachers need to face the barriers of co teaching and through collaboration discuss the methods which would work best for all students. Co-planning is one of the essential components of co teaching. In order to seamlessly present information to students, teachers must co plan. Decisions on activities, presentation of information, and follow up work all need to be planned. Utilizing the knowledge of both teachers opens opportunities for students with exceptionalities to reach their potential. Successful implementation of co teaching requires commitment of all stakeholders, improved communication among teachers, and professional development.

Creating a Nationally Recognized Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) Program: A University Undergraduate Middle School Class Management Course

Edye Mayers
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Creating a Nationally Recognized Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) Program: A University Undergraduate Middle School Class Management Course Institutions preparing middle level teachers have courses and field experiences that specifically and directly address middle level education. In August 2015, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette was nationally recognized for its Middle Level Education program. This poster session will show the various artifacts used to obtain that recognition. AERA has three Special Interest Groups whose missions speak to this poster session. First is the Adolescence and Youth Development SIG whose mission is "to bring together educators, researchers, and youth advocates interested in examining ways to improve upon the experiences, behaviors, and perceptions of

adolescence and youth as they develop over time". Second is the Class Management SIG that promotes "research on classroom organization and management, alternative discipline models, group and learner social interactions, and approaches to teacher education." The third is the Middle Level Education Research SIG that hopes "to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle-level education". The AMLE standards include Young Adolescent Development, Middle School Philosophy and School Organization, Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment, Middle Level Teaching Fields, Middle Level Instruction and Assessment, Family and Community Involvement, and Middle Level Professional Roles. To meet these standards, middle level candidates in a course on class management were engaged in various activities. Candidates studied the development of the young adolescent and wrote a paper elaborating on how the information could inform their teaching of middle level learners. Readings on the philosophical differences between a "junior high" and "middle school" enabled candidates to interview middle level principals to determine into what category their school fit. Candidates visited and interviewed directors of various community agencies that would benefit their middle level students and families and created brochures to have available for parents and students. Having excellent classroom management often determines the success of a classroom; therefore, candidates studied routines and procedures to implement in their classrooms and wrote management plans outlining those routines and procedures. Candidates even created a power-point introduction to show their students on the first day of school.

Mixed-Methods Study of Relationships between School Culture, Internal Factors, and State of Flow: Qualitative Findings

Amanda Mayeaux & Dianne Olivier
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this research is to discover the impact school culture, internal factors, and the state of flow has upon motivating a teacher to develop teaching expertise. This research is designed to find answers concerning why and how individual teachers can nurture their existing internal factors to increase their motivation to seek expertise development. Additionally, understanding the research base, where the pursuit of expertise is the norm and optimum cultures exist, will contribute to a change in education praxis and generate movement toward justice by recognizing the need for the development of expert teachers for all students. This paper will share qualitative findings related to the overarching research question: How do the internal factors, the State of Flow, and school culture motivate teachers to develop towards expertise?

STEAM into Literacy

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Katey Champagne & Ashley Mays
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The project STEAM into Literacy makes an effort to bring highly engaging STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities into Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms in our community and world. Children are fascinated by the natural world, creating and designing, visual and performing arts, and all things tech. We can use these interests to help young learners to become avid readers and writers. With this project, STEAM into Literacy, we want to merge these two worlds to develop top-notch lessons for easy implementation in any classroom.

This is a growing trend in education and a perfect time to impact the discipline. This research-in-progress will first investigate the current practices of PreK-5 teachers in regard to STEAM and literacy initiatives. Lessons will be developed with the 6 language arts (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Viewing, and Visually Representing) taking a prominent role in disguise of fun, high interest STEAM games and activities. With the implementation of the lessons, we will also examine the benefits to students regarding their learning and engagement. A long term plan of this research is to develop a global website where teachers can easily access STEAM lessons suitable for a specific grade level that will meet desired National Core Arts Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, or Common Core State Standards. Teachers will no longer have to come up with these ideas on their own or spend hours searching for appropriate plans. We will maintain only the highest quality of resources to ensure teachers can trust that our product will get the job done in a fun and meaningful way. STEAM is often reserved for middle and high school students. We want to extend these experiences down to early learners to discover the impact it may have on literacy, creativity, and 21st century skills. If these skills are developed and nurtured from preschool, imagine what these kids will be able to do.

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions: Dispositions of Effective Teachers

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In addition to content knowledge and skills, is it necessary that teachers have "good" dispositions? Osguthorpe (2008) suggests, "teachers act as moral exemplars and models, which in turn is believed to have a direct effect on the moral development of students (p. 288)." Intellectual dispositions include, "teachers' inclination to process knowledge of content, pedagogy, and awareness of what the

educational context requires for desired learning outcomes to be reached, and their inclination to put their knowledge and awareness to use accordingly in the classroom (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010, 352)." Cultural dispositions have been defined as, "teachers' inclination and desire to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom (Schussler et al., 2010, 352)." The development of both intellectual and cultural dispositions in teacher preparation programs is considered significant by accreditation agencies in the United States (Dottin, 2009). To gain insight into candidates' perception of "good" dispositions probing questions arise: As teacher candidates enter the teacher preparation program, what do they believe are the required dispositions to be effective teachers? Do these dispositions change as candidates continue through a teacher preparation program? This poster presentation will illustrate teacher candidates' perceptions on a variety of characteristics of the effective classroom teacher. It includes information indicating what teacher candidates in a nationally accredited college of education program perceive as desirable dispositions of effective teachers as well as their perceptions of learner needs in the classroomResults from the Teacher Dispositions Surveys are tracked by semesters from the first year through the last year of the program. Trends during this time period will be documented on the poster. As acknowledged by Talbert-Johnson (2006), "teacher education programs are at a critical link for the preparation of teachers who possess an ethical stance regarding the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to intervene effectively with all students (147)." The results of this study will help teacher preparation program designers understand which dispositions of effective teachers are considered essential by candidates and which ones are identified as less important.

Service Learning and Family Literacy Activities as Vehicles for Addressing the Cradle to Prison Pipeline

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The acquisition of early literacy skills is the foundation on which future reading abilities are built, and the ability to read opens doors to opportunities and progress throughout one's life (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Children who have access to age-appropriate books and who are read to by their families demonstrate stronger motivation to read and exhibit fewer behavior problems than children who do not grow up with such advantages (Fawcett, Padak, & Rasinski, 2013). More specifically, children who are read to in the home environment at least 20 minutes per day and who engage in meaningful conversations and interactions about books are more likely to experience success with listening, speaking, reading, and writing in school (Rockwell, Andre, & Hawley, 2010). With that said, the number of children born into poverty increases each year (Espinosa, 2010). Research shows that children born poverty-stricken circumstances are less likely to have parents with high school diplomas, and they are less likely to be exposed to books. Without access to a print-rich environment, they are more likely to begin school behind their more socially affluent peers, repeat grades, drop out of school, and be incarcerated (Children's Defense Fund, 2009). Because research has long documented the benefits of family literacy activities on young children's development, the purpose of this session is to describe our experience involving undergraduate Early Childhood Education majors in service learning projects to donate family literacy activities and tutor children in low performing schools. By providing one-on-one instruction, encouraging families to take active roles in their children's literacy learning at home, and giving the families the necessary tools for achieving this goal, we sought to remap the Cradle to Prison Pipeline to

a Cradle to College Pipeline. First, the preservice teachers donated school supplies. Next, they selected a children's book, designed developmentally appropriate activities which families could engage in that were aligned with Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning Standards or Kindergarten Common Core State Standards, and then donated the family literacy bags. Additionally, they tutored the preschool or kindergarten children for two hours each week, providing one-on-one support for children performing below grade level. At the end of the semester, the preservice teachers were asked to complete journal prompts to reflect on their experiences. Data from the journals will be analyzed and shared.

Analyzing the Results from a Math Olympiad for Students

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This presentation will summarize 5th grade students' feedback after attending a mathematics competition as part of STEM education in Southeast Louisiana. Approximately 40 students were asked a variety of questions on a feedback questionnaire after the mathematics competition to gather information about their background and experiences with mathematics. The presentation will discuss implications based on students' demographic data, predispositions about mathematics, motivations for participating in the contest, and what they liked about the competition. The goal of this research study was to examine the role of mathematics competitions in STEM education and highlight the activity for other STEM programs.

Motivating French Immersion Teachers Towards Expertise Development: Motivating French Immersion Teachers Towards Expertise Development

Amanda Mayeaux & Michelle Haj-Broussard
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Motivating French Immersion Teachers Towards Expertise Development is a mixed-methods study of the relationships between school culture, internal factors, and the State of Flow. The purpose of this study is to expand the research base concerning the development of optimum cultures where the pursuit of expertise is the norm. This study focuses upon the motivation of French immersion teachers in Louisiana immersion programs. Over five decades of language immersion research demonstrates the benefits of such programs upon students' academic achievement, language and literacy development in two or more languages, and cognitive skills. Students engaged in an English proficient immersion program achieve equally or better than students in non-immersion programs. Specific instructional strategies successful immersion teachers apply are a focus of the work, as are the motivational factors of the teachers. Recruiting and retaining highly effective immersion teachers is critical to the success of immersion programs.

The Unknowable Other: Reimaging Relationship in Education through Levinas and Laozi

Shaofei Han
Louisiana State University

The philosophical tradition of the West has been a repetition of leading the other person back to what he calls the "same" or immanent consciousness, which is the problem of the Western tradition that Levinas aims to critique. Levinas points out that ontological thinking maintains the priority of the Self, but only in the ethical attitude of responsibility

is this priority given up and do we acknowledge the Other as our Better. Western philosophy has traditionally been an ontology, as "a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being. For the work of ontology consists in apprehending the individual (which alone exists) not in its individuality but in its generality (of which alone there is science). This proposal will start with the critique on the problematic of teacher-student relations in current educational practice, which rooted in Western traditions, followed by an exploration on the understandings of human beings and human relations by Emmanuel Levinas and Eastern philosophy. The last part will call for a pedagogy of unknowing from an ethical perspective. In an 1894 publication, the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey wrote that "die Wissenschaft der Pädagogik kan nur beginnen mit der Deskription des Erziehers in seinem Verhältnis zum Zögling " — which roughly translates as "the science of education can only begin with a description of the educator in his relation to the one Being educated" (Biesta, 2012, p. 1). It is difficult, or even impossible to envision education without thinking in terms of human relations. By examining the teacher-student relationship, as the core relation in education, we could re-evaluate what it means for something to be "educational". Gert Biesta, in his article "Learner, Students, Speaker: Why it matters how we call those we teach", raises a question about the teacher student relationship: "How should we call those who are the subjects of education?" (Biesta, 2010, p.540). The question – how should we call those we teach - is also what I am ambitious to discuss in this paper. Are they the learners? The students? Or the speakers? The way we name the students should reflect the way we communicate with them. Elwood Murray (1951) points out that "the problems of communication in human relations are very similar if they are not often the same, as the problems of human relations themselves"(p.23), what kind of relationship is revealed through different ways of calling them? In addition, I also question part of the statement Biesta (2010) makes in his question: "[Are] those we teach the subjects

of education? If so, why? If not, what kind of human relation are we calling for in education? One common theme that runs through this line of inquiry is: what human relation is called for in education?" (p. 540).

The Implications of Corporal Punishment Practice on Social/Emotional Development and Learning

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Corporal punishment remains an acceptable method of discipline in school systems in 19 states. The findings suggest that those exposed to this destructive and degrading measure of behavior control may very well become abusive later in life, thus leading to the creation of unsafe and unhealthy environments in our homes, neighborhoods, and schools. Research suggesting negative effects such as lowered cognitive functioning, limited academic achievement, aggression, futures of violence and criminal behavior, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, and a possible future of domestic abuse – outline a prescription for failure for the children and youth who experience it. Ultimately this practice is an unsafe, unhealthy, and unmistakably dangerous method of controlling desired behaviors. Worldwide 122 countries have banned the use of corporal punishment in school systems. Thirty-one states in the United States have banned its use as well. Texas is one of 19 states that authorize school officials to administer corporal punishment in the schools, and it is one of the top ten states in terms of the amount of corporal punishment that takes place in the schools. An extensive review of official school board policies in 1025 Texas school districts and a review of data from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights on corporal punishment practices in Texas revealed positive findings about corporal punishment practices in Texas, at least from the perspective of corporal punishment opponents. Although more than 800

Texas school districts permit school employees to paddle students (more than 80 percent of the total number of Texas school districts), the largest Texas districts have all banned the practice through school board policy, including all the major urban districts. Thus, 66 percent of Texas students attend school in districts that have formally abolished corporal punishment. Furthermore, a review of OCR data shows that more than 300 school districts that permit corporal punishment in the schools did not practice it during the 2011-2012 school year. Thus, in 2011-2012 (the most recent year for which we have OCR data), 72 percent of Texas school students were enrolled in a school district that did not paddle a single student. These research findings are in harmony with research conducted by doctoral students at the University of North Texas and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette on corporal punishment practices in the public schools of the South. All these studies have found that corporal punishment has been virtually eliminated in urban school districts and is largely confined to small towns and rural areas. The presentation will articulate the implications of corporal punishment practice on social/emotional development and learning as well as the research findings in Texas and suggest ways that policymakers and legislators might address the practice of school-based corporal punishment.

The Role of the State Education Agency: Supporting School and District Effectiveness

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Public schools are an essential component in a democratic society. They provide the opportunity for all citizens to become literate and enable social mobility. The federal accountability policy was designed with the intent to ensure quality educational opportunity for all students (Ravitch, 2010). NCLB set the goal that all states would have 100% of students proficient in English Language Arts and Math by 2014. The Obama Administration has implemented multiple reform initiatives that allow flexibility to states in an attempt to determine what strategies and elements should be included as part of future ESEA reauthorization. The administration is implementing three signature initiatives for SEAs: ESEA Waiver, Race to the Top, and School Improvement Grants (SIG) 1003(g). These initiatives all focus on significant changes in teacher evaluation systems, standards for curriculum and assessment, transforming low performing schools, and establishing performance goals for accountability for change (Fullan, 2010). The overarching question guiding this study is What is the role of the State Education Agency (SEA) in supporting the development of effective schools and districts? This research aims to explore how learning to date can be leveraged for future results. A series of quantitative and qualitative research questions address the study's overarching research question. The overall purpose of this mixed-methods study is to look at the role of the SEA in supporting the development of effective schools and districts. The quantitative study design focuses on outcome measures of schools and districts over a period of strategy change for the role of the SEA in four states that have approved ESEA Waiver, Race to the Top, and SIG 1003(g) applications. This quantitative portion includes an annual trend and achievement gap analysis of NAEP and state mandated accountability assessments on Louisiana, Kansas, Indiana, and Georgia data. The state results are compared using differential statistics for whole group and minority and socioeconomic subgroup data. The qualitative portion of the study is an examination of the implementation of SEA reform strategies and policies with the corresponding quantitative examination of student assessment results before and during the strategy implementation. This qualitative aspect will result in case studies on the policy, organization, and activity changes to support the implementation of reform activities at the SEA level in four selected states. The case study analyzes original implementation plans submitted by the selected states. The analysis also examines alignment across

reform initiative applications. Interviews will be conducted with SEA staff responsible for implementation to gain insight to evolution of the plan as activities were rolled out. Similarities and differences across state implementation will be noted. Student achievement data from pre and post reform implementation is reviewed for implementation impact on federal and state mandated assessments.

The Impact of Turnaround Practices on School Turnaround Reform Efforts

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For over a decade, school accountability and student achievement have been at the forefront of educational reform. In an effort to improve the education system in the US, the "lowest-performing schools increasingly have become a focal point of scrutiny and concern" (De la Torre et al., 2012, p. 1). According to Mass Insight (2007), "turning around the 'bottom five' percent of schools is the crucible of education reform. They represent our greatest, clearest need – and therefore a great opportunity to bring about fundamental change" (p. 2). In fact, "policymakers have called for swift and dramatic action to improve the nation's 5,000 lowest-performing schools, arguing that the magnitude of their dysfunction requires a robust response" (De la Torre et al., 2012, p. 1). The need for swift action has been the basis for the concept of school turnaround, which involves various models and practices for dramatically improving low-performing schools (American Institutes for Research, 2010). Many of our nation's public schools continue to fail in spite of these ongoing school improvement efforts. In relation to chronically low performing schools, Mass Insight (2007) contends that many low performing schools have become immune to school improvement efforts. "Low-expectation culture, reform fatigued faculty, high-percentage staff turnover, inadequate

leadership, and insufficient authority for fundamental change all contribute to a general lack of success, nationally, in turning failing schools around" (p. 4). Peck and Reitzung (2013) note that turnaround refers to the rapid, significant improvement in the academic achievement of persistently low-achieving schools. The turnaround model has emerged as an effective strategy because it has the potential to lead to expedient results. According to O'Brien and Dervarics (2013), the research on turnaround however is limited; in fact, most research is concentrated on numerous case studies and is often focused narrowly on the four turnaround models described in the Race to the Top (RTT) and School Improvement Grant (SIG) literature. The purpose of this paper is to present research related turnaround efforts including: (1) district support practices; (2) foundational leadership practices; (3) teacher practices; and (4) school conditions (climate and culture and community relations). The overarching question of this literature review is What is the relationship between district support, school leadership, teacher practices, and school conditions (climate and culture) on the school turnaround reform process? Guiding questions include: In what ways does each construct impact school turnaround reform efforts? and Are each of the constructs viewed as highly influential in turning a school around? A conceptual framework is presented illustrating research related to school turnaround reform efforts. Based on the current research available on school turnaround reform efforts, the framework offers multiple relevant constructs. First, district support has substantial influence on school leadership practices. Subsequently, leadership practices influence teaching practices and school-wide conditions. School-wide conditions impact climate and culture and community relations. The framework highlight change as a continuous influence on turnaround practices at all levels. The paper concludes by offering research implications and recommendations that can result in improved school performance.

Development Educational Leadership

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The purpose of this theoretical paper is to introduce the concept of "development" educational leadership. This concept is informed by the human development work being done in the United Nations and its Human Development Program. It also draws on Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's work in development economics and Martha Nussbaum's work at Harvard in the philosophy of human development. The theoretical discussion of development educational leadership focuses on what general principles school principles and educational leaders should keep in mind as they articulate their vision of what educational leaders should aim to be and do in our time. The practical focus concerns strategies for organizing and mobilizing political, economic and non-profits to create environments in which individuals can use their capabilities to be healthier, to educate themselves, and to get good jobs.

Technology and SACSCOC Standards: Building an Evidence Based Model for Higher Education Strategic Planning

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This paper describes a research study on the impact of the use of technology in the form of an electronic dashboard and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Standards as components of a higher education institution's strategic planning process. Technology and SACSCOC standards are used to foster institution-wide collaboration, support and accountability. Participants in the study were introduced to a proposed new strategic planning model that incorporated a dashboard as a major interactive component of the plan. Focus groups were used to conduct a preliminary assessment of leadership's reaction to the new model. Challenges faced by anyone ever charged with the duty of developing an institutional strategic plan can be very humbling, and in most cases frustrating because of a lack of support across campus (Hinton, 2012). Research in this study investigates the use of technology to build an interactive strategic planning model. SACSCOC standards are used to 1) garner institution-wide support from the administration and departmental units; and 2) demonstrate where "Accountability" falls or fails in the plan. This research utilizes specifically SACSCOC Standard 2.5 and Standard 3.3.1 as a foundation for the strategic planning model. Technology is used to created an interactive dashboard that promotes both accountability and transparency. Several researchers attempted to define strategic planning and bring understanding to the significance of the process (Baer & Ramaley, 2018; Chance, 2010; Nickols, 2012).   The fact that strategy drives the planning process, strategic planning is and of itself an ambiguous topic that requires understanding of definitions and meanings that align with the institution mission, visions and goals. Nickols (2012) research aimed to make the concepts of policy, strategy, tactics, ends, and means more useful to those who concern themselves with the strategic planning process. Building on Nickol's research this current study demonstrated that strategy is a key element of planning and is essential to higher education operations and accountability. Nickols (2012) unambiguous definition of strategy was used to build the conceptual framework. Since strategy itself is such a broad and ambiguous topic, higher education institutions must come up with respective understanding and meanings of strategic planning relative to the institutions goals, mission and vision. This study demonstrates the importance of an institutions taking charge of its own strategic planning process by first defining the process and then testing the results of the defined process. This study included 7 participants who were either in leadership and/or administrative roles at the university. Participants were purposefully selected

to ensure the inclusion of key leadership. Participants were given a presentation on the new planning process and a brief demonstration of the proposed strategic planning model.   The results of focus group meeting revealed that none of the participants had previously linked SACSCOC standards to the development of a strategic planning process. The study implied two significant findings 1) Participants believed that an understanding of the role of SACSCOC standards would increase broader participation in institutional strategic planning and 2) a strategic planning dashboard promotes accountability and transparency.

Educational Achievement and Political Involvement

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The relationship between educational achievement and political involvement is examined using data from the National Opinion research Center's General Social Survey (GSS). The correlation between the two was found to be strong and statistically significant. Broadly speaking, the respondents with less education donated or contributed less monetarily towards a political cause whereas respondents on the other end of the spectrum who were highly educated gave more money to a political party or a candidate. There exists a 49.5 percentage point difference among the most educated and least educated males and a 40.7 percentage point difference between the least educated and most educated females in America. Racially the most educated Whites donated 10.3 percentage points more than the Blacks. Furthermore, the variation in the least educated category for both races was 5.3 percentage point away. These results probe further research in this area of study since both education and political participation are pivotal factors that mobilize social reform and growth in any democratic society. The outcomes of this paper advocate the need for not

only exploring other factors that influence this relationship, but also instilling and enhancing formalized civic knowledge at the most fundamental level of the American population such as, at the elementary and middle school level, so that people from that strata of the population may also make sound and educated decisions about the future of their country.

Using Graphics to Teach Statistics for Non-Statistics Students

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With the development of information technology, the world is becoming more quantitative and data driven. Statistics now plays a very important role for us to view and know about the world. We need to be able to use statistics to reason from data and make decisions from quantitative information, not only in the workplace but also in our personal lives. However, the learning of statistics is quite difficult for most students from majors not related to math. As students from educational leadership and research, we have the responsibility to figure out what make statistics so difficult and what we can do to help improve students' learning in statistics. I will review the research in this area, with a specific focus on how to teach statistics effectively. In this proposal I will focus on whether using interactive graphics software can improve students' learning in statistics. In this proposal, the experiment research design will be used since I want to see whether a specific treatment (interactive graphics) would impact an outcome (students' success in statistics learning). Two groups of students are included in this experiment, experiment group and control group. However, in this research, since a lot of other variables may impact their final score, the internal validity must be considered to reach a convincing conclusion. Some actions are taken to response to the internal threats. For the history and testing threats, the control group is introduced to eliminate

the external influence. For the maturation threat, it is not problem for this experiment since the duration of time is too short to cause the change in the scores. For the mortality threat and instrumentation, since only the post-test scored are collected, these two threats are not problems. Furthermore, the criterion of measurement is reliable since the scores for the pre-test and post-test are graded by the same administrator. The regression threat is not a problem either since the subjects are random. The ANCOVA will be conducted for this research. In this experiment, the dependent variable is the post-test score, and independent variable is the treatment, and the covariate variable is Pre-test score. The logic for this statistics is that we want to compare whether the post-test score are significantly different between the two groups of students. However, the different backgrounds (Pre-test score) may lead to the difference of the results. Then the covariate variable is added to adjust the post-test score before we compare the significance. After this adjustment, this experiment assumes that all students have the same level of background with statistics before the intervention of the treatment. If there is any improvement in their final score for the treatment group, we could contribute this influence to the interactive graphics.

Root Cause Analysis: A Process to Identify Factors which Impact Student Performance and School Process

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The challenges that K-12 educators and school leaders face today are very complex and the strategies that they use to address them are, more often than not, inadequate. They have little if any effect in overcoming these challenges. It is recognized that there are many factors that impact student learning and school processes. Educators are often able to identify areas of concern such as student discipline, academics, teacher retention, etc.

They may "solve" the student discipline problem by revising the discipline code, attempt to raise academic performance by providing tutoring for at-risk students, or changing the length of class periods. The solutions tend to be one-dimensional and based on anecdotal and/or biased assumptions rather than on data-based information. The purpose of this presentation is to present and discuss the concept of Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and how this process, which has its origins in the various fields of engineering as a troubleshooting tool, can be used in K-12 education. The presentation will introduce examples of the application of RCA in non-educational settings so that the reader may gain a basic understanding of the process. The presenter will then introduce a brief case study of how student performance, demographic, school process, and perception data along with the RCA process can be applied in a school setting to effectively address areas of concern.

"This is a thing…": Technology Conference Meta-Analysis: What Are We Missing?

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This paper presents insight gained from a meta-analysis of sessions presented at a popular state technology conference related to technology applications in today's classrooms. Researchers used an iterative process of categorizing, sorting and coding more than 200 conference sessions to determine dominant threads and popular applications of technology. Using brain/mind principles as explicated by Caine and Caine (2015), the researchers identify areas of concern, what they call an "invisible presence," that challenges the ubiquitous nature of technology as well as promotes uncritical applications of technology tools. Through their analysis, the authors necessarily connect their data to the larger project of neoliberal education reform and subsequent emerging trends in social anxiety. Brain/mind principles as explicated by

Caine and Caine (2015) provide not only a strong argument to use technology in instructionally responsible ways, but also as a measure of instructional decision making that aims to support the social and emotional aspects of complex learning. The authors argue for a more explicit understanding of technology pitfalls while discussing implications and recommendations for supporting teachers, teacher educators, administrators and policy makers with more informed technology use and applications.

Louisiana Believes in Charter Schools, but what Type? Privatization, the Public Sphere, and Democratic Schooling

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Charter school expansion is currently presented by edupreneurs as the solution for failing urban school systems. However, charter schools vary greatly in their approaches. This paper works to move the discourse of urban education reform away from the historical reductionist binary of charter school support or opposition toward a more complex understanding of how charter schools are constructed and maintained. By applying Habermas' notion of the public sphere, I argue for all schools to work towards a democratic educational philosophy, a stark alternative to the undemocratic business philosophy common in many, but not all, new charter schools. Ultimately, future discourse over urban education reform should emphasize the foundational philosophies driving schools as opposed to the current language of accountability, choice, and autonomy which sounds promising but lacks substance. This study is based on data collected during two years of teaching at an urban charter school in New Orleans, Louisiana between 2010 and 2012. Data sources were a combination of autoethnography by the researcher and interviews with former teachers. Teacher interviews differed from traditional methods because the participants were no longer classroom teachers. Therefore, the participants were solely reflecting on their time in the classroom after they had moved into new fields. Prior research on my cohort of 8 first year teachers has focused on teacher retention, specifically how a lack of trust between groups of teachers, students, parents, and administrators can result in low annual teacher retention. The focus of this paper is to determine how New Orleans Charter School is unique from comparable charter schools in the city and how these differences influenced the first year cohort of teachers. The purpose of this paper is to propose alternative considerations to education reforms in Louisiana. Currently, public charter schools are presented as the solution to a state habitually ranked at or near the bottom of state education rankings. I suggest viewing traditional public and charter schools by their underlying democratic or undemocratic foundations, thus eradicating 'charter school' from assumptions of autonomy, accountability, and choice. Utilizing Foucault's notion of power and Habermas' notion of the public sphere, I work to resist common deficit discourse in an effort to reimagine 'successful' schools. Ultimately, I found that integral components of what constitute a public space were lacking at NOCS, resulting in an undemocratic institution. This was apparent in both my own reflections and interview data from my teacher cohort. This has implications for how we view charter schools as a solution for the historically underperforming urban public school. Future work should collect student and parent data, especially over time, to compare findings across schools participant groups.

Teacher Preparation and the Tenants of Accountability

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There are frequently many initiatives and programs implemented in K-12 schools to target school

improvement focusing specifically on student achievement. Schmoker (2011) suggests that there are three simple elements essential for school improvement: reasonable coherent curriculum, sound lessons, and purposeful reading and writing in all disciplines. Smoker (2011) defines coherent curriculum as the information that is taught, sound lessons are defined as how information is taught, and the purposeful reading and writing is authentic literacy; interestingly, Schmoker (2011) notes that the three essentials are rarely implemented. At the heart of school improvement, specifically student learning and achievement, is teacher preparation. The historical challenge of the under-performing students, the implementation and the debate surrounding the implementation of common core with the smarter balance and Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as assessments, emphasis on value-added teacher accountability models, and the recent report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) all contribute to the heightened emphasis on high quality teacher preparation programs (http://www.nctq). Mike Schmoker (2011) suggested in Focus that student learning depends on what teacher the student has. Similar assertions were made by other theorists; however, others (e.g. the Coleman Report) expressed an alternative opinion. The findings of the Coleman Report indicated that schools made slight, if any, contributions to student achievement. A number of variables have been correlated with student achievement since the Coleman Report in 1966. Hattie (2011) completed meta-analyses documenting 138 effective sizes and influences across areas related to student achievement. He suggests that there are six areas are contributors to learning: teaching and learning approaches, curricula, teacher, school, home, and the student. In this article, the issue of effective teaching is addressed from the perspective of how students are prepared in teacher preparation programs. First, a brief overview of the challenges of accountability is presented beginning with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Accountability measures for teacher education preparation

programs are included with a specific look at accrediting agencies. The Six Essential Elements for Improving Teacher Preparation published in Education Week are also discussed (Marshall, 2013, August).

Building Better Teachers for a 21st Century Classroom: Examining Coursework's Possibilities and Limitations

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The digital, twenty-first century "exponential" world, with its connectivity and information possibilities, has drastically shifted the needs of both student and teacher populations at all levels. Therefore, the demands on teacher preparation, including coursework in combination with clinical experiences, are increasingly growing. Can college preparation programs satisfy these demands and "build better teachers" (Robinson, 2015)? This paper examines the coursework the preservice teachers are required to take to complete a teacher preparation program (TPP). The leading research question of this project is: How does required coursework in combination with clinical experiences prepares teachers who are confident and effective in the 21st century classroom? The participants are 54 preservice secondary teachers majoring in English, Social Studies, Math, and Biology at a large research university. The qualitative data obtained via focus group interviews, written journal entries, and a questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted using narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008). The findings established that the preservice teachers value the courses that are required for successful completion of the TPP. However, they accentuate the need for more depth in exploring the diversity of students and their learning abilities. The topics of teaching students with special needs, whether they are English language learners, deaf, visually impaired,

have mental disabilities, or extremely gifted are discussed mostly on the surface level. During the clinical experiences, the preservice teachers observe and interact with these diverse students, and often they do not know how to approach the child, much less how to successfully teach this child. While the results of the study cannot be generalized because of a small sample size and a local character of the research project, the obtained data, its analysis, and interpretation may serve to inform the educators and educational researchers who are engaged in teacher preparation programs and are searching for the ways to invigorate them. The study allowed for policy and practice implications to revitalize the TPP, improve the quality of the coursework, and clinical experiences.

Is Mentoring New Teachers the Key to Retaining the Mentors as Well? What Drives Mentors to Mentor?

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Peer into any typical classroom and chances are you will see a teacher balancing the daily routine of teaching, grading, counseling, inspiring, and learning. First-year teachers are also challenged with all of these tasks and some without guidance and support. Principals attempt to monitor and assist new teachers but are also overwhelmed with administrative duties. With nearly half of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching, (Ingersoll, 2012) administrators could find this information useful for securing and supporting their faculty and improving teacher retention within their schools through quality mentoring programs. Mullen, Ellen, J. & Joe explained that the relationship between the mentor and protégé is developed to promote the professional and personal growth of the protégé through coaching, support and guidance. According to Decker, mentoring programs provide those first-year teachers with the support and collaboration they need to create their

own classroom environments (Decker, 2008). Through mentoring protégés in this way it will allow the mentors to increase their own understanding of educational communities and expand their own idea of the teaching profession as found by Grode, 2009. Mentoring could also serve as meaningful and practical professional development for mentor teachers and protégés' in a time when teachers have very limited professional learning time in professional development workshops (Darling-Hammond, 2005). These mentoring opportunities could actually be key in increasing their intrinsic motivation and in retaining these mid-career teachers as well (Doan & Peters, 2009). In 1959 Frederick Herzberg explained how to motivate employees in the workforce and that humans had two different kinds of needs. One need Herzberg focused on is the ability to "achieve through achievement and to experience psychological growth." (Frase, 1989, p. 91). Herzberg also looked at intrinsic motivation in that the motivation factor in any workplace is achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility, growth and advancement and the work itself (Frase, 1989, p. 91). Frase further connected Herzberg's findings in that intrinsic rewards serve as motivators and teachers tend to get greatest satisfaction from simply reaching and educating their students and only secondly by job recognition (Frase, 1989). His study attempted to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the teaching profession and supported the belief that school boards and administrators cannot buy teachers' motivation through salary raises. Mentoring and the reasons why mentors are called to support and assist new teachers is key in determining which veteran teachers are qualified and driven to be the best qualified to support and assist new teachers in their journey into the beginning years of the profession. As administrators seek answers to retention and providing support for new teachers, they could be led towards the idea of entrusting their veteran teachers to aid in this challenge. Studying the phenomenon of mentoring and what drives mentors to be called to take on this responsibility is the basis

for administrators to gain knowledge about improving retention of veteran teachers while supporting new teachers.

A Mixed Methods Study: Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Implementation of Response to Intervention at the High School Level

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More than half of the ninth graders entering high school are unable to read at the level of the required curriculum. Consequently, students are failing to achieve at the minimum level for promotion to 10th grade (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). These statistics indicate a need for a framework or process for identifying students who are at-risk for poor performance as early as possible. The early identification of students reading below grade level could offer direction to educators in providing targeted and strategic interventions in order to improve student achievement, reduce the potential for high school dropout, and increase the potential for on-time graduation. Response To Intervention (RTI) has been proposed as a potentially effective process to identify and intervene with struggling students. It is a general education initiative that was introduced through the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Humphreys, 2008). IDEA identifies RTI as a multi-tiered process to intervention that provides services based on a student's response to research-based interventions (National High School Center, 2007). The overarching goal of this research study was to develop best practices for RTI implementation at the high school level that includes teacher professional learning, and effective universal components and methods that contribute to increased student performance, specifically in the areas of literacy development and reading comprehension. Offering comprehensive RTI best practices may increase teachers' knowledge of literacy development, increase methods and

practices associated with reading intervention, as well as inform district-level decision makers of needs associated with RTI. The purpose of this study was to: (1) examine the programs and processes teachers are using to identify, intervene, and remediate reading deficits with ninth grade students; (2) review and analyze data from ninth grade below-benchmark; (3) review and analyze progress data of students receiving interventions; and (4) explore teachers' perceptions regarding resources, professional learning, and student performance. The research design chosen for this study was a concurrent nested mixed method, multiple case study approach. The target population was ninth grade students from a school district in southwestern Louisiana (identified through an assessment database) who were identified as below level according to their performance on the fall benchmark assessment. These students represented five high schools across the school district. Quantitative student performance data were collected on the universal screening measure, as well as progress monitoring data. Relying solely on quantitative data would leave out the perceptions of teachers, as well as any outside factors that may or may not be contributing to, or inhibiting teacher and student performance. Thus, the study's qualitative component was designed to collect focus group interview data from teachers to provide deeper meaning and understanding of crucial RTI components and processes impacting student performance.

Teacher Quality and Human Resource Management

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For decades, accountability for student results has been at the forefront of school reform. While many school-based factors have influence, teacher quality has consistently been identified as the most important school-based factor related to student

achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2000; Stronge, 2007). Research also suggests that a quality teacher can substantially minimize the challenges faced by at risk students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1998). However, defining a quality teacher and determining the factors related to teacher effectiveness is not an easy task. Given the high expectations placed on teachers by educational policymakers, district leaders, school leaders, and other stakeholders, it is not surprising there is a significant amount of research surrounding the construct of teacher quality. At the heart of most educational reform efforts is the understanding that value of a good teacher cannot be disputed. While there is an extensive amount of literature surrounding the construct of teacher quality, the literature is not highly conclusive. This review explores literature pertaining to teacher quality, both through the lens of teacher inputs and system inputs. This review seeks to demonstrate how understanding teacher quality directly relates to human resource management. Thus, the purpose of this literature review was two-fold: (1) examine research identifying characteristics of a quality teacher and (2) explore system inputs influencing teacher quality and illustrate how human resource management serves as a key factor in improving student outcomes. The overarching research question guiding this review was: What characteristics are most often cited by researchers as constituting a quality teacher? Secondary questions included: What system inputs related to human resource management influence teacher quality and What are the key elements involved in comprehensive hiring practices? The paper offers a conceptual model that provides the research-based framework guiding the literature review regarding teacher quality. The framework encompasses seven factors comprising teacher inputs regarding teacher quality including certification, teaching experience, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom practices, and teacher dispositions. The framework also presents six factors comprising system inputs relating to teacher quality including comprehensive hiring practices, resource management, shared decision

making opportunities, professional development opportunities, general school working conditions, and school culture and climate. While the conceptual model examines each of the factors individually, the model also represents teacher quality as a collective result of teacher inputs and system inputs relating interdependently to influence a pipeline of qualified personnel who directly impact student achievement. A second graphic model presents the research-based framework related to comprehensive hiring practices and highlights five ongoing hiring practices processes including recruitment, interview protocols, utilization, induction and mentoring, and retention which are cyclic in nature. Determining and researching factors directly related to teacher quality is important for district and school leaders because of the implications these factors have when attempting to recruit, hire, place, develop, manage, and retain high quality teachers. School leaders must set high expectations for student achievement, but must also have the capacity to strategically manage human capital.

Thinking in Pictures: Analyzing the Effects of Visual Thinking Strategies on Secondary ELL Students' Language Development

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This session on Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) presents findings from an action research study in progress that explores the ongoing effects of Visual Thinking Strategies on high school English Language Learners. Findings include improving language comprehension, developing critical thinking, increasing enthusiasm, and promoting collaborative engagement. Grounded in the work of Housen (1999) & Yenawine (2013) Visual Thinking Strategies originated from a research-based arts integration methodological approach. Specifically, VTS has been proven to bridge the gap between students' visual literacy and their analytical and

linguistic development. VTS establishes visual art as text, encouraging students to analyze the visual, draw inferences from it, and support their assertions with specific evidence. In Yenawine's book Visual Thinking Strategies (2013), qualitative studies indicate that this instructional approach fostered critical thinking in traditional elementary students and improved their analytical writing over the course of the school year. However, current research has not explored the efficacy of VTS on English Language Learners. This study seeks to explore what would happen when VTS is used as an instructional approach with high school ELL students. Questions guiding this study included the following: (1) Does VTS have a positive effect on the students' language skills? and (2) Does VTS inspire critical engagement in the analysis process? Findings, which include improving language comprehension, developing critical thinking, increasing enthusiasm, and promoting collaborative engagement, will be discussed.

Effective Schools in KSA and USA

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There are differences between the education programs in the countries of the world which is attributed to its historical developments. These are seen in the source of funding for education, policies that change the education structures, the perception of different genders in the society, role of religion in education, ethnic differences, and globalization. This paper presents these differences as evident in the countries of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The analysis shows that the enactment of constitutional backed education policies have changed the historical development of education in both countries. However, due to the differences in the role of the government in education in both countries, issues such as the curriculum, education type, sources of

funding, management and administration of schools begin to emerge. The differences and similarities of education in the two nations have been captured in this paper. This paper is able to show the following differences. Education in KSA is managed, administrated, and funded by the State while in the USA the role has been given to the state, localities, and school administrations. Gender differences have affected the development of education in the KSA but not so much significantly in the USA. Religion in the KSA has a significant influence on the curriculum of education as compared to the USA. The paper also showed the following similarities. Globalization has pressured the countries to reform their education frameworks. Participation of the female gender in education has increased over time. Childhood education is mandatory and free.

At-Risk Students: Finding Meaning in a Career-Driven Setting

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The at-risk students in this study come from several demographics; including low SES, minority neighborhoods, crime-related backgrounds, drug and alcohol involvement, and challenged learning abilities. Moving these students through an academic learning environment often means finding the best career training match for each student and then supporting the individual students in both their career and academic choices. The research done at a local career center in southern Louisiana, demonstrates how important it is to link students to a career nurtured by academics, but developed around each individual student using that student's individual accommodations when he or she had accommodations, and building accommodations into the classroom, when the students had none. This study follows 45 students who enrolled in a

specific high school in southern Louisiana to obtain career certification and a diploma or GED during the 2015-2016 school semester. The programs are designed to equip students with labor-ready skills for the immediate future, as well as lead some of the students to additional job and career training in the near future. All career paths are centered on project-based learning. Business skills are also taught, including collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Included in the work-based learning programs are cosmetology, digital photography and graphics, culinary arts, nursing, auto tech, carpentry, industrial technology and safety, and welding. While the program is ongoing, the study follows the initial students registering in August 2015, until December 18, 2015 reviewing several artifacts as well as teacher-related input. The results of this study support the conviction that many students need an alternative to an academic diploma, yet need an organized space to meet their potentials. While the specifics of the study indicate that more change is necessary to help all students reach his or her potential, the availability of a school that both accepts these challenged students and actively recruits them is the best indicator that both the students and the community benefit from career training at the high school level.

A Mixed Method Examination of College Students' Physical Activity Motivation: Do Social Factors Matter?

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Objectives: The impact of situational interest (SI) in physical activity (PA) has been reported in previous studies. Even though evidence points to the multidimensionality of SI, there is a need for mixed methods research to provide both quantitative and qualitative understandings of the issue. Apart from understanding students' perceptions of their levels of interest in PA, this research also examined the relationship among sources of SI and overall interest. In addition, the study provides an understanding of the contribution of social support to SI. Participants were students ages 19 to 34 (Median= 21), predominantly seniors (58%), Caucasian (89%), and female (72%) from a large research extensive university in Southeastern, United States. The present study was modelled on an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The rationale was significance enhancement that is, mixing of quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to augment the researchers' interpretations of data (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006). Component 1 of the study utilized a survey (examining association between sources of SI and total SI) administered to participants at PA sessions (N = 82). In component 2 a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with a parallel sample (N = 8). This study had a large probabilistic sample and a small purposive sample, which lends itself to justifying interpretative consistency (Collins et al., 2007). Quota purposive sampling strategy based on race, year of study, and age was used to select the interview participants. The study had five predictor variables (novelty, optimal challenge, instant enjoyment, attention demand, and exploration intention) and one dependent variable (Total SI). Correlation results revealed relationship among the five sources and total SI (range .383 to .946). Optimal challenge had the lowest correlation (.417), while instant enjoyment had the highest (.946). Results from multiple regression was $R^2 = .926$, $F (5, 76) = 191.49$, $p < .000$. Optimal challenge was the only statistically insignificant variable ($p > .669$). Qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts yielded 2 themes related to interest and disinterest: (1) Time for Free Play –"I find pleasure playing more and more" (2) Being Competent –"I get involved in what I know better, than what I do not know". Two themes related to social support were: (1) Instrumental Support - "The greatest support is showing up for a game or practice session" (2) Emotional support- "We encourage each other." Conclusion: Quantitative findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies (Chen, 1999, 2001) which point to relationship among the sources of SI and total SI.

Qualitative outcomes affirmed the findings by showing that autonomy (free play), competence, and instructional and emotional support trigger and maintain SI. Physical activities that are perceived to be difficult may inhibit SI. Socially supportive environment should be encouraged in learning institutions as means of eliciting SI.

Technology in Education between Saudi Arabia and the USA (Whiteboard and iPad)

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The modern world has entered into an era of innovation and inventions. The 21st century is known as the era of technology, and the use of technology can be seen in almost every aspect of life. Technology has changed the life of modern mankind on an individual level and on the corporate level. The use of technology is obvious in the education sector. Educational institutions incorporate technology in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of student learning, bringing improved results. Teachers also use a variety of technologies as tools to enrich the value of different teaching methodologies and improve the results of students learning. This paper addresses the use of the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) technology in the classroom. For the purpose of exploration, reviews, interviews, and class perceptions will be assembled from teachers and students in the US and from Saudi educators. In particular, the questionnaire answers two primary inquiries: What are the best techniques/hones for instruction using the IWB? To what degree do Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) expand student interest and performance? Likewise, US and Saudi educators were contrasted to decide if there are any distinctions in the utilization of the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB). Saudi educators may not be as experienced as US educators, therefore the aim is to strengthen them in utilizing the IWB more

adequately. Overall, the IWB technology has created the impression that it can bring a huge change in learning over the customary writing board. Both educators and students interviewed concurred that IWB technology builds student cooperation. Whether the IWB builds student performance also, is not clear. The viability of the IWB relies on the creativity of the educator whether in the US or in Saudi Arabia. Most instructors utilize the IWB to show recordings and PowerPoint presentations. The best educators inspire students to collaborate using the IWB by employing alternate accessible components. It is vital that instructors get formal training in the utilization of the Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs). Of the US educators researched, just 10% had formal training. While the Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) are an improvement over the customary board, a more recent innovation called the eBeam, changes any written work surface into an IWB, earmarking it as a superior option. The eBeam surpasses the IWB by being less costly, less difficult to utilize, and has less specialized issues. Both primary and secondary sources will be used for the collection of data. A questionnaire will be used to gather primary data, while online sources and scholarly sources will be used for the collection of secondary data.

(Re)turning to the Pedagogical Tradition of Buddhism: (In)vestigating Ourselves Where We Learn

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Racism is well documented in American history. The ongoing (mis)conception that somehow the Civil Rights Movement has eliminated racism between Whites and people of color has led to certain narratives being silenced. Issues of racial inequalities are often discussed through the problematic nature of the Black/White racial paradigm, which silences those who find themselves in the liminal spaces of the binary.

Asian/American college students occupy this   this space, and their experience with invisibility silences their issues in higher education. Incidents involving Asian/American students who are victims of racial crime are often not documented, reported, and/or acknowledged. Through an autoethnographic approach using Asian Critical Race Theory, this presentation will explore the Racial Triangulation, Model Minority Stereotype, and Racial Battle Fatigue and how it ultimately puts our Asian/American college student in danger on our campuses.

Film: Born into Brothels

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This paper is a review and analysis of the various educational leadership theories that are reflected throughout this documentary on the part of the director Zana Briski and all the children involved in the making of this Oscar winning documentary "Born into Brothels." This documentary is strongly characterized by a sense of strife and the unconditional dedication of Zana, to press on against all odds in order to achieve her goal of getting the children out of the deplorable conditions of these brothels that they are born into. The personalities of the children are varied and cheerful, and speak to the viewer at a personal level. The various leadership models that are discussed in this review transpire to highlight all those traits and skills of the director and the children that are frequently mentioned in most theoretical constructs of leadership. The theories discussed in this paper add a realistic aspect to the otherwise purely theoretical implications of the theories defined. It demarcates the mechanisms of organizational and structural changes that are needed to provide an impetus to a stagnant situation. Zana's efforts to bring the plight of these children to a global pedestal are remarkable and commendable. The leadership theoretical constructs validate her skills

and traits as they imply to the enrichment of research in the field of education and communication.

Identifying and Responding to Needs of At-risk Students that are Exposed to Domestic Violence

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The purpose of this action research is to investigate the effects of domestic violence on at-risk students. To be more specific, I am interested in learning about at-risk students in first through third grade. Every year, millions of children in this country are exposed to domestic violence. While the devastating effects of domestic violence on women are well documented, far less is known about the impact on children who witness domestic violence. The effects of domestic violence exposure, problematic in their own right, also have a detrimental impact on two key developmental challenges, namely, children's social adaptation and academic achievement. Given the negative repercussions of children's exposure to domestic violence, there exists a need for programs that can improve their safety and academic progress.   In keeping with Maslow, "Before a student's cognitive needs can be met they must first fulfill their basic physiological needs. When a child feels safe, that child is able to take the risks necessary to be in relationships, to explore, and to try new things. Simply put, feeling safe makes learning possible." This action research is motivated by three research questions: (1) What is the best practice to identify the at-risk students? (2) Once identified, how do we respond to the needs of the at-risk students? (3) How prevalent is exposure to domestic violence for at-risk students in our community? To examine these questions, the action research will target at-risk elementary school children (grades 1-3). A pilot study will be conducted at MW Elementary School, a low-income school located in a high-crime area. The program will work in partnership

with the multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the fields of education and criminal justice. The pilot study will present an opportunity to further develop and refine the research instruments as well as practice using the research instruments and analyzing data. To explore the psychosocial experiences of these students, this proposal aims to conduct a qualitative, phenomenological study of students who regularly witness violence. Data will be collected over the course of the spring semester through interviews and student questionnaires. The major findings of this study will demonstrate that a large percentage of at-risk students witness domestic violence on a regular basis. Without appropriate and timely data, it is impossible to know where to concentrate efforts to respond to the needs of at-risk students.

The Development of the School Reform Model: The Impact of Critical Constructs of School Culture, School Climate, Teacher Efficacy, and Collective Efficacy on Reform

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Reform is a common tool used by policymakers to increase student achievement. Unfortunately, reform efforts are not always successful. However, researchers have demonstrated that school culture and climate both impact student achievement. The purpose of this literature review is to present research related to: (1) school culture as a foundation for school reform; (2) climate as a critical aspect of culture; (3) collective efficacy as an important variable of reform; and (4) the change process and relationship to school reform variables. The overarching question for this study is: What is the relationship or impact of school culture, climate, teacher efficacy, and collective efficacy on reform movements? Three other questions also guide this review of literature. First, what is similar and contrasting among the constructs? Second, how are the constructs interrelated? Third, in what ways can these constructs impact school reform efforts? This study amasses foundational and contemporary research on school culture and climate and the connection between the two. The literature review concerning teacher and collective efficacy begins with the foundational work of Bandura on the construct of self-efficacy and motivation. Teacher and collective efficacy are discussed in relation to Bandura's work, Gibson and Dembo's instrument, Guskey and Passaro's research, and Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy's summation of the research. Change theory is also discussed in relation to school culture, school climate, teacher efficacy, and collective efficacy. Lastly, the success or failure of the implementation and sustainability of reform movements due to school culture and climate is presented. A conceptual framework incorporating all constructs and the relationships among these constructs is presented and utilized to guide the discussion. The paper offers recommendations based on the conclusions and gaps in the literature. First, clarification of the concepts of school culture and school climate is needed. Numerous studies address school culture, and an extensive amount of research has been conducted concerning school climate. Several studies address the relationship between the two. However, several of these studies present similar and somewhat conflicting findings. For example, Cavanaugh and Dellar (1997), Fyans Jr. and Maeher (1990), Hongboontri and Keawkhong (2014), Hoy and Hoy (2003) and Olivier (2001) outline different culture dimensions using empirical data--even different numbers of dimensions. This study amasses research concerning culture and climate, but further clarity using empirical data is merited. Second, although the concepts of teacher and collective efficacy are firmly rooted in empirical data since its inception in 1977 by Bandura, further research is necessary to determine the influence of culture and climate on efficacy and vice versa. This study proposes a framework that represents the influence, but it is noted that the concepts are always interacting with one another, affecting one another in various ways. Lastly, empirical data is needed to determine the

strength of influence that school culture, climate, and efficacy have on reform efforts. Although the concepts interact theoretically, empirical data will substantiate the findings, influencing policymakers and school leaders to consider policy changes and school culture and climate before making impactful or controversial decisions.

Re-culturing of Faculty and Staff following Mergers of Institutions of Higher Education

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Mergers within the higher education sector are "relatively rare occurrences and each merger has a distinct set of circumstances, actors, and characteristics" (Etschmaier, 2010, p. 1). Institutional mergers require well-planned and strategic organizational change and include an examination of organizational culture and the process of re-culturing. Selected literature on mergers provides guidelines for a successful merger. The literature clearly suggests that leadership is important in any merger. In particular, transformational leadership can make a difference in terms of the success or failure of a merger as it focuses on the individual needs, morals, ethics and values of the employees of the organization. While there has been research on various aspects of higher education mergers, there has been little on the process of integrating institutional cultures. Compounding the challenge is that the degree of assimilation among institutions is variable. This integration of cultures takes time to fully accomplish. Researchers have estimated varying time periods for full integration, as much as ten years or more in some cases. Millet (1976) suggested that "Merger is a more complicated business than many persons in higher education have thus far been disposed to expect" (p. 5). As institutions of higher education undergo re-organization, several components of change management must be addressed, looking

particularly at culture as a critical element of the change process. Research in this area is limited and the purpose of this literature review is to examine why institutions of higher education entertain the idea of merging with other institutions, the role of change management during a merger, conceptual models used in understanding reorganization, and the role that culture plays during a merger. Given the economic conditions in higher education, interest in mergers is growing and this literature review on mergers, change management and the cultural assimilation of the individuals involved in the merger will be of value to state boards of education, policy-makers within the states, and higher administration in colleges and universities across the nation.

Best Practices for Recruiting, Retaining, and Graduating the Overlooked Applicants

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If you don't have hope, you're defeated before you start. There are many bright students in America who have had restricted access in their educational systems based upon socio-economic status or living in rural communities. These students are not afforded the same opportunities as students who have had access to dual credit classes, AP courses, and test prep embedded into the curriculum. In addition, they may have not have the support systems at home that their counterparts have had the privilege to experience. In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson said, "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'you are free to compete with all the others' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair." This same quote can be applied to the college admissions processes in the United States. Current admissions processes in the United States are flawed. Most universities require the ACT and/or SAT scores for admissions. Studies

have shown that both tests are racially and culturally biased. In addition to these tests, many students are at a disadvantage based upon the communities in which they lived. Universities need to explore other options for evaluating students for admissions purposes. Often bright, driven students are overlooked because their resumes cannot compete with their peers. If these students are successfully admitted to the university, additional issues may arise for those students. New programs must be implemented to give these students a fair chance at being successful in college. It is imperative that university officials realize that not all students come from the same backgrounds or have the same experiences. Some students may need a little more assistance to make it through the maze. Programs that include whole student support systems have proven to be helpful for successful student experiences.

"I'd Always Thought I Was Going to be in the Classroom for the Rest of My Life": How to Do Resignation with Language

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The tools and analysis of sociolinguistic tools are especially helpful in teasing out and understanding the multiple ways in which language is used to create and sustain the social order. This case study explores the phenomenon of language-in-use within the context of a single teacher actively planning to leave the classroom to pursue a job as an assistant principal. Clearly, today's teaching climate is fueled by strict mandates, tightly-aligned curriculum and high-stakes accountability measures that limit teacher intellectual labor, autonomy, creativity and their ability to critically contribute to curriculum development (Achinstein & Owaga, 2006; McNeil, 2000; Meier, 2004; Valenzuela, 2005). In addition, tension and stress related to content area mastery comprehensively impact teachers' work, teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction (Floden &

Meniketti, 2005). Under such exasperating conditions, research tells us that some teachers are prone to leave teaching prematurely; causing stress and creating havoc on schools and the children they serve (Oakes, 2004; Peske & Haycock, 2006). In this case, Speech-Act theory (Austin, 1962) is employed to frame the study and understand how discursive practices of the speaker are used to construct social realities within certain social contexts. The following research questions guided this case study: 1. How does she bring into being closure, departure, resignation, and transition with her language? 2. How does she perform and negotiate her identities in the classroom and with colleagues? 3. Does her language change, if so, how and under what conditions?4. In what ways can discourse analysis of language-in-use be used to inform teacher education and public school policy about the nature and needs of teachers? Examining how teachers react to and within their teaching spaces offers insight into the nature and needs of teachers. Likewise, studies of this nature have implications for improving how teachers are recruited, supported and retained. Additionally, it provides insight into the ways in which school leadership is impacted by this phenomenon.

Working Together: Collaborating to Read and Write

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Cooperative learning and collaboration are not simply using student groups in the classroom, but having the students in those groups teaching each other the content and skills required. Cooperative learning and collaboration are both types of teamwork which prepares students for "the workplace by providing opportunities to learn the social and organizational skills necessary for productive teamwork" (Wolfe 5). Furthermore, research suggests people learn the most when they work together toward a common goal. While

students usually love to work together, the benefits of collaboration are apparent in their academic learning not only in reading and writing but also in math and other subjects as well.

When it comes to teaching English language arts and reading all ages can benefit from cooperative and collaborative learning. Not only are academic lessons and skills learned and developed better, but those lessons and skills are remembered more correctly long term. Important social skills are also developed and practiced as well. In order to make these methods of learning beneficial for students, educators must first understand the difference between the two methods. Cooperative learning is not only using student groups in the classroom but having the students in those groups teach each other the content that is required of them through assigned roles. Collaboration focuses more on completing a final task together either within assigned roles or simply all together. In the higher grades and university level of study, students who work in cooperative and collaborative groups tend to produce higher quality end results. These positive results not only include the final work that is turned in, but also the students' level of learning in terms of internalizing skills and concepts is increased substantially. Overall, the benefits of collaboration and cooperative learning far outweigh any doubts or negativity from critics who may say that collaborative work does not produce true and equal end results in learning. The days of students thinking that working in groups means doing nothing and letting one person do all the work are over. Educators today use collaboration and cooperative learning techniques in the classroom often with students working to meet the expectations of doing their own part and learning for themselves. Indeed, collaboration is more than simply working together.

Social Stories as an Intervention to Increase Child Compliance and Decrease Verbal Aggression in a 5-year old

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A multiple baseline design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of social stories to increase compliant behavior and decrease verbal aggression in a 5-year-old girl. Enduring consequences on social behavior, such as loneliness and peer rejection that impede education and social interactions have been liked to non-compliant behavior/disruptive behavior (Austin & Agar, 2005; Buhs & Ladd, 2001). In this study social stories (Rogers, 2000) were used as an intervention to target three situations to decrease non-compliant behavior and verbal aggression. The target child was a kindergarten-aged girl with a history of non-compliant and argumentative behaviors. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted using social stories as a behavioral intervention with non-autistic children, results showed an increase in compliant behavior and a decrease in verbal aggression for one of the three routines. The first routine included increasing compliance during the morning when the target child was getting ready for school. The second routine focused on improving behavior at dinnertime. The final routine concentrated on encouraging social play and increasing compliance during morning recess. Based on these findings and past research, social stories can be used as a low-cost, low labor-intensive intervention in modifying disruptive behaviors for all young children.

Using Short-term Wins to Change Culture: An ACT Intervention Program in Rural Louisiana High Schools

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The project seeks to improve culture and collective efficacy of a rural high school through an ACT intervention program, which uses short-term wins to increase student engagement and reflection. The project has been done on a limited basis in two other high schools with positive results. The researchers seek to establish clear protocols, which can be used to replicate the project in other high schools.

Evaluating the Dissertation

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An area that has long presented a problem for faculty teaching in a doctoral program is the evaluation of a student's dissertation. A commonly used evaluation approach involves each committee member assessing the document using their own set of criteria and communicating their concerns related to these criteria in a formal context such as the dissertation defense. The student "passes" once the concerns of all committee members have been met. This process is often unreliable and can easily lead to frustration and consternation on the parts of committee members and the student.

This paper reports the progress of an ongoing action research project related to this problem. More specifically, it describes three specific aspects of the project. The first discusses the need for and development of a rubric to assess the quality of different aspects of the dissertation. Many groups have developed rubrics by which various elements of a dissertation can be assessed. These rubrics, while often complicated, establish a set of "objective" criteria against which a student's work can be assessed. The overall plan to develop such a rubric by the faculty in a doctoral program is presented, as well as an example of one dimension of the rubric (i.e., writing), the criteria identified within this dimension (i.e., writing conventions; conceptual organization; cohesiveness of ideas, concepts, and arguments; and APA formats), the four levels of the rating scale (i.e., accomplished, proficient, emerging, and unacceptable), and descriptors of those levels. A second aspect of this action research project discussed in this paper is the development of the performance standards associated with scores from the use of the rubric. While the assessment of a student's performance is important, so is the evaluation of this performance. The paper contains a brief review of the literature on alternative methods for developing performance standards (e.g., judgments about content, judgments about mastery and non-mastery groups, norms and passing rates) along with discussions of the contexts in which specific methods are used (e.g., tests, performance assessments) and the nature of the standards themselves (i.e., compensatory or conjunctive). A third aspect of the project discussed in the paper focuses on the issues related to the reliability of the scoring of a student's work, a proposal for establishing inter-rater reliability associated with the scoring, and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using a compensatory or conjunctive model to establish performance standards.