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Table of Contents

2019 RAYMA HARCHAR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PAPER AWARD

An Examination of University Sophomore Students' Thriving Factors, Second-Year Experiences, and Student Success Outcomes.....1
Margarita Perez, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

2019 OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER AWARD

Assessment of High School Coaches' Knowledge Retention of Sport-Related Concussions.....25
JD Boudreaux and Jessica Dolecheck, University of Louisiana at Monroe

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES and PROCEEDINGS

Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Literature Review on Issues and Impact.....42
Kathleen Williams, McNeese State University
Dustin Hebert, Louisiana Tech University

A Statistical Analysis of Diversity in the Prinz Awards.....51
Anita Dubroc, Louisiana State University

2019 Louisiana Education Research Association Annual Meeting Proceedings.....65
Adam Elder, Program Chair, Southeastern Louisiana University

RAYMA HARCHAR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PAPER AWARD

An Examination of University Sophomore Students' Thriving Factors, Second-Year Experiences, and Student Success Outcomes

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Abstract

Most universities have focused retention efforts on the first year of college; however, just as many students leave college between the second year and the third year (Berker, He, & Forest, 2002; Lipka 2006). The overarching question for this study was: What is the relationship or impact of Thriving Factors, experiences, and success outcomes during the sophomore year of college. Thriving is defined as engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship (Schreiner, 2010). Thriving is more than just succeeding in the classroom, it encompasses success outside the classroom, psychological well-being and the relationships which are a part of the college experience (Schreiner, 2010b). Thriving implies students are not just surviving and getting by in college, but are also engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally and are experiencing psychological well-being that contributes to their being successful in college and in life after college (Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009).

Keywords: higher education, student success, student attrition, sophomores

Overview and Purpose of Study

The study of student retention has been a subfield of higher education since the 1930s. The focus of this body of knowledge was centered on what was known at the time as “student mortality,” or the failure of students to graduate from college (Berger & Lyon, 2005). Seminal publications like Gekoski and Schwartz’s (1961) “Student Mortality and Related Factors,” Panos and Astin’s (1968) article “Attrition Among College Students,” and Feldman and Newcomb’s (1969) book, *The Impact of College on Students*, were influential in bringing attention to the topic of retention. Retention is defined as percentage of first-time degree-seeking students who return from fall to fall (Noel & Levitz, 2008). Over the last 85 years, the research and study of retention, and why students leave, has grown significantly.

As the study of retention has progressed, so have attempts to create programs to help retain students at their institutions of matriculation. During the last two decades, there has been an increased focus on improving and transforming the first-year student experience (Alexander & Gardner, 2009). Beginning with summer

orientation and continuing through the entire first year, institutional programs and initiatives focus heavily on first-year students and their experience. New programs have been developed, classes added, staff positions created, and student leaders have received specific training to create an intentional first-year experience program (Marina & McGuire, 2008). The focus placed on the first-year experience has been driven by research that indicates that college attrition is most likely to occur during the first year or before the start of the second year of college (Tinto, 1993).

In recent years, as more retention research has been conducted, there has been a shift to also consider the sophomore, or second-year experience, as it was found that retention through the junior year is also critical to graduation rates (Schaller, 2005). However, the research on the second-year student experience and retention remains meager. Therefore, shifting research priorities toward understanding the role of the sophomore year in student retention and persistence should be the next reasonable step toward improving current persistence and graduation rates (Schaller, 2005). Universities need to focus more attention on sophomores, a group of students who historically have been forgotten in higher education (Tobolowsky, 2008). Sophomores are prone to high levels of dissatisfaction, challenges, attrition, and an overall disconnect with the university, yet they receive the least amount of support from universities (Boivan, Fountain, & Baylis; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006).

Colleges and universities have overlooked sophomores because most institutions have continued to operate under the arguably false belief that first-year programs were adequately and successfully addressing students' needs, and that students were successfully transitioning to college after the first year (Hunter, Tobolowsky, & Garner, 2010). However, colleges are experiencing a high attrition rate after the sophomore year (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000). After freshmen, sophomores have the highest attrition rate among undergraduates (Gardner, Pattengale, Tobolowsky, & Hunter, 2010; Lipka, 2006; Noel-Levitz, 2013).

To fully understand attrition, retention, and persistence, it is important to understand student experiences in college, how students develop, and challenges encountered during the transition (Astin, 1993). College students encounter many changes and face multiple challenges during their first two years of college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Over the years, colleges and universities have primarily focused on developing engagement and retention initiatives to assist first-year students (Barefoot, 2000). Campuses nationwide have created First-Year Experience programs, which include resources, engagement initiatives, and programs focused on the first-year student (Griffin & Romm, 2008). Research indicates that First-Year Experience programs have strong positive influences on student development, engagement, and retention across the first year (Barefoot et al., 2005). Based on this research, it is not surprising that 95% of colleges and universities in the country have some type of First-Year Experience program (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, a closer look at research has begun to show a high rate of attrition between the sophomore and junior year (Schreiner, 2000).

Normally, student attrition is highest from the first to second year of college, and attrition rates are typically cut in half each subsequent year (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000). Student attrition is the measure of students who leave after any term compared to the original first-year cohort. Thus, we would expect to see the sophomore-to-junior year attrition to be about half of what the first-year-to-sophomore year attrition rate was in a given year. However, sophomore to junior attrition rates are about equal to or slightly less than first-year to second-year attrition rates (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000). It is concerning that given the current sophomore to junior year attrition rates, only 46% of institutions that participated in the National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives (2008) indicated they offered at least one specific program for sophomore students.

The sophomore year has been considered the forgotten year, the lost year, and the middle child of higher education (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007). These stereotypes of the sophomore year are slowly beginning to change as institutions realize the concerning attrition rates between the sophomore and junior year (Gardner, Pattengale, Tobolowsky, & Hunter, 2010). Many institutional leaders are beginning to ask the questions, “Why are students leaving after the sophomore year?,” “What can we do to retain them?,” and “How can we learn from the success of First-Year Experience initiatives?” In 2008, The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition conducted a National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives. The information gathered through this survey indicated a strong correlation between sophomore-year initiatives and second-to-third-year retention rates (as cited in High-Impact Programs on Student Persistence Evidence from Institutional-Level Data, n.d., slides 15-16). According to Padgett (2010), 66.7% of institutions with sophomore initiatives had second-to-third-year retention rates between 75% and 100%, while 33.8% of institutions without sophomore initiatives had second-to-third-year retention rates between 75% and 100% (as cited in High-Impact Programs on Student Persistence Evidence from Institutional-Level Data, n.d., slides 15-16). “Overall, institutions that develop and deliver sophomore-year success initiatives generally yield higher third-year return rates from their students, suggesting that such second-year programming is a worthy investment” (Keup, Gahagan, & Goodwin, 2010, p. 26). Therefore, it is imperative for colleges and universities to identify ways in which they can address the high sophomore to junior year attrition rates to retain students and support their persistence through graduation.

Most universities have focused retention efforts on the first year of college; however, just as many students leave college between the second year and the third year (Berker, He, & Forest, 2002; Lipka 2006). This paper shares an overview and findings of a research study designed to examine university sophomore students’ thriving factors, second-year experiences, and student success outcomes. Specifically, the purpose of this research study was to determine: (1) the level of thriving among sophomore students; (2) what sophomore students are experiencing during their second year of college including the frequency of those experiences and how they report their level of satisfaction with their experiences; (3) the relationship between sophomore students’ perceptions of

thriving factors and students' reported experiences; (4) relationships between students' perceptions of student success outcomes in relation to intent to graduate; (5) which thriving factors account for the greatest amount of impact on student success outcomes; and 6) which sophomore experiences account for the greatest amount of impact on student success outcomes. The overarching question for this study was: What is the relationship or impact of thriving factors, experiences, and success outcomes during the sophomore year of college?

Over the last 85 years, researchers have studied why students leave college, why they stay in college, and experiences that impact those decisions. These findings have led to a transformation of the first-year experience for new students around the country. As of 2005, over 95% of colleges and universities offer new students some type of first-year experience to assist with their transition from high school to college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These programs have been developed because of research indicating college attrition is mostly likely to occur during the first year of college and before the second year of college (Tinto, 1993).

Since the 2000s, research has shifted to focus on the experiences and needs of sophomore students. The research has explored sophomore retention, the sophomore slump, sophomore experiences, sophomore development, and sophomore initiatives on college campuses. This research has led to an understanding that sophomores are a group of students who have been deemed the *forgotten child* or the *middle child* of higher education (Tobolowsky, 2008). A major source of research has been the Sophomore Experiences Survey (SES) and the National Survey of Sophomore Initiatives (NSSI), both providing valuable information about what is occurring during the sophomore year and what universities are doing or not doing to serve these students.

One of the major findings of previous research has been the revelation that universities continue to operate under the false belief that first-year programs are adequately addressing transition needs for students and that students are successfully transitioning after the first year of college (Hunter, Tobolowsky, & Gardner, 2010; Schreiner, 2010). A focus on retention data indicates sophomores have the highest attrition rates after freshmen, and these rates are continuing to rise (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000).

It is believed that understanding what sophomores are experiencing during their second year of college will help universities create environments and conditions that foster academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development, along with high satisfaction and high completion rates. In addition, this study asserted that relationships exist among the constructs of thriving factors, sophomore students' experiences, and student success outcomes and that these constructs impact intent to return and graduation rates.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) encompasses four main factors that comprise the inputs that influence retention and student success: pre-college characteristics, university initiatives and support, Thriving Factors, and student experiences.

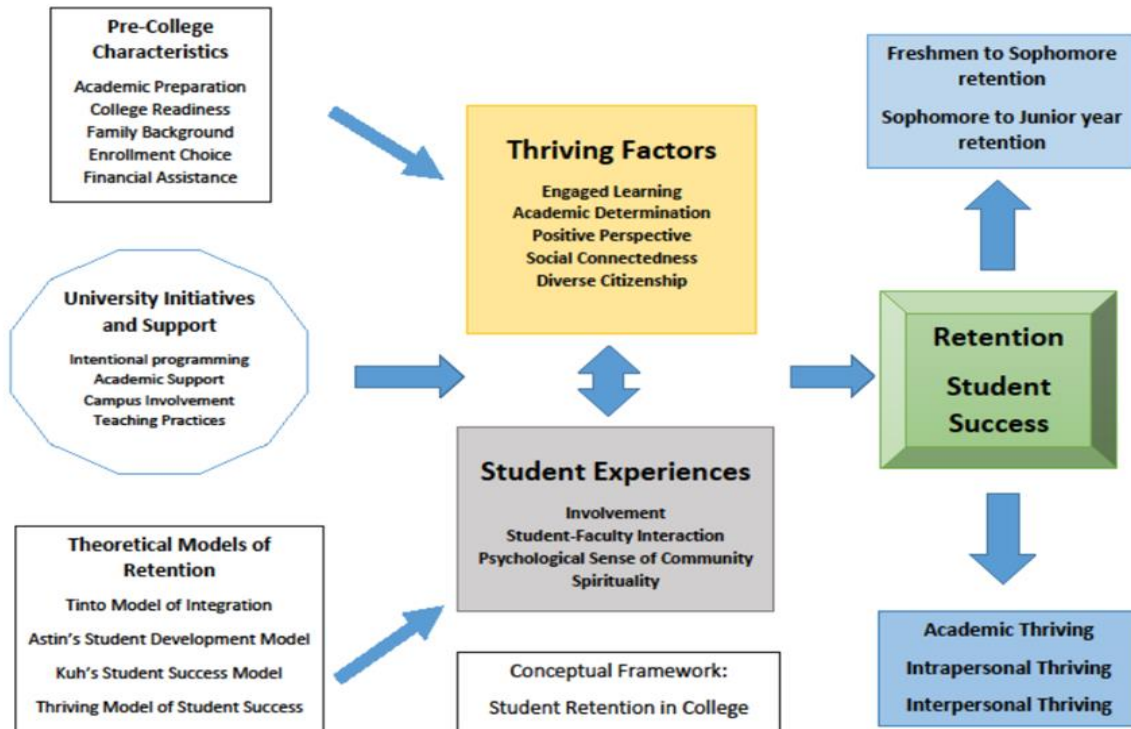


Figure 1. Student Retention and Success in College

The *first factor* of the model represents students' pre-college characteristics. These characteristics include academic preparation in K–12 schools, college readiness, family background, enrollment choices, and financial status, which all play a role in determining students' potential for success in college. The *second factor* represents university initiatives and support, which are created to intentionally support and motivate students towards meaningful learning (Tinto, 1993). The single best predictor of student success in college is the amount of time spent on educationally purposeful activities (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Contributing sub-factors to creating a culture of retention and student success include programs developed to focus on the first-year experience, the sophomore experience, creating an environment of academic support, providing opportunities for campus involvement, and developing intentional teaching practices. The *third factor* of the model represents the Thriving Factors, which impact student success: engaged learning, academic determination, positive perspective, diverse citizenship, and social connectedness (Schreiner, 2010). The *fourth factor* of the model represents student

experiences, specifically student involvement, student-faculty interaction, psychological sense of community, and spirituality (Schreiner, 2010). It is not enough for universities to create a network of support, opportunities, and experiences; universities must induce large numbers of students to participate, engage, and utilize the support services to enhance student retention and success (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011).

Transitions

Transitions are a way of life, and some of the biggest transitions occur during the college years. “Transition begins with an event or nonevent that is perceived as significant by the student: something occurs that was either anticipated or unexpected, or a significant event that was expected to happen and does not” (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012, p. 3). Transitions are a process, not an event, and this process requires students to move in, move through, and move out of this process (Goodman et. al, 2006). “Successful transitions have five characteristics that separate them from unsuccessful transitions: students perceive them positively as opportunities for growth; students use healthy coping skills; students believe they have the support needed to navigate the transition; students access resources during the transition for important information, assistance, and support; and students come out of the transition having grown in significant ways” (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012, p. 4).

This study confirms prior research that the sophomore year is a time of continued transitions for students (Baxter & Magolda, 1992; Bridges, 1980; Parks, 2000; Schaller, 2005). Transitions are occurring in all aspects of a students’ life: self, relationships, expectations, and future goals and aspirations. Students respond differently to transitions; what they learn, and how they grow from these transitions is influenced by the amount of support they have during this time. It is critical for universities to realize the importance of continued support during the sophomore year and to provide the support and resources to assist students in persisting to the junior year.

Sophomore Development

Contrary to beliefs, transition does not end at the completion of the freshmen year; it continues into their sophomore year (Schaller, 2007). Sophomores enter their second year of college with excitement after first-year experiences filled with new opportunities, strong support, and intentional programming to assist with their transition and acclimation to the new setting. They are soon faced with the realization that this year will be different than the previous one. Schaller (2007) notes four stages of development sophomores encounter during this second year of transition: random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices, and commitment. Schaller (2005) suggested that sophomores could move among four different stages relating to themselves, their relationships, their academic experiences, and their decisions. As they progress through these stages, they gain confidence in their decision-making skills, which positively impacts their second year of college.

This study implies the importance of providing an environment on campus that is conducive for development among sophomores. As students move through these stages of development they need adequate

resources to assist them in developing their purpose, recognizing their strengths, committing to a major or career choice, and creating supporting and rewarding relationships. Without a community of support, students may not perceive their transition or development positively which may lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement, which ultimately leads to sophomore slumping to students leaving the university.

Sophomore Slump

Some students encounter what is known as the “sophomore slump” (Freedman, 1956, p.15). Kennedy and Upcraft (2010) characterize the slump as a time when at least one of the following is occurring: (a) academic deficiencies; (b) academic disengagement; (c) dissatisfaction with collegiate experience; (d) major and career indecision, and (e) developmental confusion. Richmond and Lemons (1987) also see it as a time of unhappiness in relationships and increased concern with financial aspects of paying for college.

This research revealed that many students in the study were experiencing the sophomore slump. The respondents indicated difficulties with classes, lower grades, dissatisfaction with their overall experiences this year, and a lack of involvement in the campus community. These students described themselves as not surviving, barely surviving, or surviving when asked: *If they were getting the most out of their college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the college experiences.* These findings suggest a need for universities to provide more support during the sophomore year. Sophomores need assistance and support to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Why Sophomores Leave

Sophomores leave because they are not fully equipped to handle the struggles they encounter during the second year. The struggles typically seen during the sophomore year have related to the higher-than-expected attrition that occurs between the sophomore and junior year (Schaller, 2005). Some of the consequences of these challenges include decreased grade point averages, disconnection from the university, and little or no engagement in the social circles of the university (Flanagan, 1991). In addition, sophomores leave due to financial issues, uncertainty with major and career selection, and housing concerns (Juillerat, 2000). Without the structured support in place, students feel abandoned and left on their own to navigate the university. Research also indicates sophomores place a lot of emphasis on being intellectually challenged through good instruction and strong course content; they desire supportive faculty who are fair and consistent, and expect knowledgeable and accessible advising (Juillerat, 2000). They also desire adequate financial aid, tuition that is reasonably priced, a registration process that is smooth and offers options, and an enriching student experience (Juillerat, 2000). In addition, sophomores are increasingly apathetic, report lower satisfaction, and have decreased motivation due to the challenges encountered during the sophomore year (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000).

This study reveals that while low grades, difficult classes, and financial issues create challenging transitions that cause many students to experience the sophomore slump, the main reasons students leave are a lack of engagement in learning, poor or inadequate friendships or relationships, and a lack of belonging or sense of community. It can be inferred that universities should focus their efforts on these areas to increase satisfaction, retention, and completion rates.

Thriving Model of Student Success

Thriving is realized when students are functional at a satisfactory level in three key areas that contribute to student success, retention, and persistence: (a) academic engagement and performance, (b) interpersonal relationships, and (c) psychological well-being. “The thriving model of student success addresses well-being across all aspects of a students’ life and is comprised of five factors: (1) Engaged Learning, (2) Diverse Citizenship, (3) Academic Determination, (4) Positive Perspective, and (5) Social Connectedness” (Schreiner, Pothoven, et al., 2009, p. 9). “Rather than defining success solely in terms of academic performance and persistence to graduation, a focus on thriving encourages a more holistic view of student development that includes establishing healthy relationships, contributing to the community, and proactively coping with life’s challenges” (Schreiner, Pothoven, et al., 2009, p. 21).

Academic Thriving. Academic thriving includes the factors of Engaged Learning and Academic Determination. Students who are thriving are engaged, motivated, and commit to continuous effort to be successful.

Engaged learning. Students who are thriving academically are meaningfully processing what happens in class; they are excited and energized by learning in the classroom and remain committed to learning long after class is dismissed. Engagement offers the student the opportunity to create goals, invest effort in reaching their goals, and reflect on the meaning of these experiences. Student who are engaged in learning have immersed themselves in the behavioral and cognitive aspects of learning (Schreiner, 2013). Kinzie (2012) notes that engaging in activities that contribute to learning is a key predictor on whether students will persist and thrive.

Academic determination. Students who are thriving also have a strong sense of academic determinations. These students are self-motivated and give the investment of effort to accomplish goals. Thriving students effectively manage their time, which allows them to successfully balance the demands in and out of the classroom. Grit is an important element of academic determination. Seligman (2013) states grit accounts for extraordinary achievement. “The more grit you have, the more effort you put on a task, the more effort you put towards the completion of a task, the more likely you are to achieve your goal” (p. 121).

Interpersonal Thriving. Interpersonal thriving includes the factors of Social Connectedness and Diverse Citizenship. Students who are thriving have meaningful relationships with others, including those who are different from them.

Social connectedness. Social connectedness is a sense of belonging to a friend group or community. Thriving students develop and maintain healthy relationships with others. These students have good friends—friends who listen and support them. These support groups can be the difference in whether a student retains year after year. Students who are thriving feel connected to others. They feel valued for whom they are, and for the contributions they make to the community.

Diverse citizenship. Diverse citizenship is an interest in understanding people from diverse backgrounds and the willingness to make a difference in other people's lives (Schreiner, 2010c). Thriving students take the time to get to others in a manner that displays openness and curiosity. Openness and curiosity create an increase in reasoning and critical thinking skills. Students who get to know people from diverse backgrounds also get to understand different perspectives. This awareness of others creates a desire to make a difference in their community through service and other volunteer efforts.

Intrapersonal Thriving. Interpersonal thriving includes the factor Positive Perspective. Thriving in college requires a healthy perspective on life.

Positive perspective. Positive psychology is the foundation of positive perspective. Researchers in the field of psychology refer to a healthy state of mental health and a positive well-being as subjective well-being. Seligman (2013) indicated that well-being is made up of the elements of emotions, meaning in life, accomplishments, and relationships (Seligman, 2013). He also asserted that positive emotions and engagement contribute to well-being. Students with an optimistic view of life have better cognitive attention and have more effective problem-solving skills (Schreiner, 2010c), they tend to be happier in general and more satisfied with their experiences and life. When life gives them lemons, they make lemonade. They find the good in negative situations and they learn from every part of the journey. Students with a positive perspective also have a growth mindset. A growth mindset is a belief that effort is a natural part of learning. These students believe they can create positive change and they do. This study revealed that many students at the study university are thriving in some capacity. Most students seem to be in between surviving and thriving. It may be in one or two of the factors, but not in the other three factors. When students were provided with a definition of thriving as “Getting the most out of your college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the college experience,” 22.9% described themselves as thriving most of the time or consistently thriving (scores of 5 or higher on a 6-point scale). Thus, students perceived themselves as not surviving, or surviving to a greater degree than reported by their actual levels of engaged learning, academic determination,

social connectedness, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship. The difference in these answers may reflect the level of sophomore development they were currently experiencing: random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices, or commitment. If students were in focused exploration, they may still be trying to make sense of what they were experiencing and feeling. This period is a time of self-reflection, and students may not have been able to see the big picture of their development and sophomore experiences.

Methodology

Quantitative research methods were used to address study questions and relationships of study variables. Convenience purposeful sampling was utilized for data collection. The sample population included 2099 students returning for the second year of college at a large-sized, public Higher Research Activity institution in Southern Louisiana. The target population included students currently enrolled in their second year of college (approximately 2000). Data were collected through SurveyMonkey and exported to IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 to conduct further statistical analyses. A total of 752 responses were collected; however, 426 usable surveys met the criteria for analysis. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, demographics, and student characteristics of the sample; descriptive statistics and frequency analyses for survey items; Pearson's correlation among the variables; bivariate correlations among variables; and multiple regressions.

This study explored the thriving factors of engaged learning, including: social connectedness, academic determination, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship; student experiences, including faculty-student interaction, satisfaction, student involvement, psychological sense of community; and student success outcomes, including tuition worth, college fit, happiness, intent to re-enroll, and intent to graduate. The study's survey instrument, "the Sophomore Experiences Survey (SES), is an instrument that assesses numerous indicators of student well-being, success outcomes, participation levels, interaction with peers and faculty, satisfaction, and entering characteristics" (Young, Schreiner, & McIntosh, 2015, p. 27). Included in the SES is the Thriving Quotient, a 25-item measure of psychosocial well-being that incorporates five factors: (a) engaged learning, (b) academic determination, (c) social connectedness, (d) diverse citizenship, and (e) positive perspective (Schreiner, 2012).

The research questions for this study included the following:

- What is the level of thriving among sophomore students related to perceptions of engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, diverse citizenship, and positive perspectives?
- What are sophomore students experiencing during their second year in relation to frequencies and levels of satisfaction?

- What relationship exists between sophomore students' perceptions of Thriving Factors and students reported experiences?
- What is the relationship between students' perceptions of student success outcomes in relation to intent to graduate?
- Which Thriving Factors account for the greatest amount of impact of student success outcomes?
- Which sophomore experiences account for the greatest amount of impact on student success outcomes?

Major Findings and Conclusions

This study identified four major research findings resulting from quantitative analyses of survey responses and open-ended questions.

Major Finding 1

Based on analyses of research, many sophomores are experiencing what is described as the sophomore slump.

Conclusion. Approximately 32% of the respondents are considered slumping based on their reported dissatisfaction with grades, courses selected, amount of learning, health status, living situation, and advising. This confirms prior research, which suggests the main areas of dissatisfaction are around academics, both with sophomores' ability to do well academically, interactions with the faculty, and their perceptions about a lack of institutional support (Graunke & Woosley, 2005; Juillerat, 2000; Schaller, 2005; Schreiner, 2007). Graunke and Woosley (2005) found that choice of major was a significant predictor of sophomore academic success, as were faculty interactions. Feldman and Newcomb (1994) reported that sophomores were the "most likely to be dissatisfied with the college and their experiences there" (p. 92). Sophomores also place a high level of importance on their interactions with advisors, registration, class scheduling processes, faculty feedback, and their interactions with faculty (Juillerat, 2000).

Major Finding 2

Of all the Thriving Factors and student experiences, academic determination has the strongest relationship with satisfaction.

Conclusion. Academic determination was the thriving factor with the strongest relationship (.588) with student satisfaction. This finding suggests academics play an important yet meaningful role students' perception and sentiment of satisfaction. Students with high levels of academic determination describe themselves as being very committed to reaching their academic goals (Schreiner, 2010c). These students invest substantial effort to do whatever it takes to be successful (Schreiner, 2010c). Students with academic determination take control of

their own learning. This finding supports prior research about the role academic experiences and learning play in student satisfaction (Schreiner, 2010c; Gardner, 2000; Adelman, 2006; Juillerat, 2000). Although satisfaction encompasses many different aspects of the college experience.

Major Finding 3

Of all the Thriving Factors, engaged learning makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes.

Conclusion. Engaged learning was the strongest predictor of student success outcomes, which includes the variables of intent to re-enroll, intent to graduate, fit with institution, enjoyment, and choose this institution again. Engaged learners describe themselves as excited about learning. These students make meaningful connections between what they are learning, what they already know, and what they would like to learn (Schreiner, & Louis, 2006). Schreiner and Louis (2006) describe engaged learning as “a positive energy invested in one’s own learning, evidenced by meaningful processing, attention to what is happening in the moment, and involvement in learning activities” (p. 9). This finding supports previous research on engaged learning, which found that engaged learning significantly predicted positive student success outcomes (Schreiner, 2010, Schreiner & Louis, 2006, Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009). Students with high scores on these factors reported higher college grades, a greater sense of fit at their current institution, a higher likelihood of choosing the same school again if given the chance, and stronger intentions to eventually graduate from the institution (Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009).

Major Finding 4

Of all the student experiences, psychological sense of community makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes.

Conclusion. Psychological Sense of Community was the strongest predictor of the student success outcomes. The finding supports previous research that indicates that students who feel socially connected to the university and have high levels of satisfaction with the university are more likely to re-enroll and graduate from the institution (Schreiner, 2010; Schreiner, Miller, Pullins, & Seppelt, 2012). Psychological Sense of Community is the feeling or perception of belonging, sense of making a difference, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). It is also viewed as perceived institutional support, connectedness, mattering, acceptance, and being valued (Strayhorn, 2012).

Discussion and Implications of Major Findings

This quantitative study is important because it offers an understanding of the issues sophomores are experiencing, which are critical to addressing persistence and success of sophomore students. The thriving construct offers a framework for understanding the sophomore year. Each of the Thriving Factors represents an

element of academic, intrapersonal, or interpersonal thriving that can contribute to sophomore student success. Understanding students' thriving levels, combined with knowledge about their experiences during the sophomore year, along with their impact on student success outcomes will provide data that can increase retention and increase the quality of their student experiences. The implications of the major findings are discussed in reference to the primary constructs and relevant literature.

Sophomore Slump

The sophomore slump is characterized as a “multidimensional phenomenon, which can include one of the following: (a) academic deficiencies, (b) academic disengagement, (c) dissatisfaction with the college experience, (d) major and career indecision, and (e) developmental confusion” (Kennedy & Upcraft, 2010, p. 39). Respondents in this study noted dissatisfaction with the amount learned, the grades received, living situation, health, advising, courses, and with sophomore year in general. The responses to the open-ended questions also reinforced these issues. These responses reflected difficulty with courses, financial challenges, health issues, lack of strong peer relationships, poor grades, lack of effort, and dissatisfaction with faculty as contributing to their response about surviving or thriving. Based on the results of the SES, 32% of respondents are considered to be slumping. Approximately 48% of the respondents indicated they are surviving, barely surviving, or not surviving. These results support previous research on the sophomore slump and about the challenges facing students during the sophomore year (Graunke & Woosely, 2005; Juillerat, 2000; Schaller, 2005; Schreiner, 2007). These results also suggest a myriad of support and programming are needed to help these struggling students.

Thriving Factors

Overall, thriving students are “academically motivated, and have high self-concept, direction, motivation, and engagement” (Young, Schreiner, McIntosh, 2015, p. 43). When reviewing their scores on the thriving quotient, 44.4% are thriving when that is defined as a score of 5 or higher on a 6-point scale. When students are provided with a definition of thriving as *Getting the most out of your college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the college experience*, 22.9% describe themselves as thriving most of the time or consistently thriving (scores of 5 or higher on a 6-point scale). Thus, students tend to perceive themselves as not surviving, or surviving to a greater degree than reported by their actual levels of engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship. These results indicate students do not see themselves as thriving, but many are indeed thriving. They also reinforce the need for intentional discussions and reflections about their experiences during their sophomore year.

Academic Determination

The thriving factor of academic determination is highly correlated with satisfaction. Thus, when academic determination is strong, satisfaction is as well. Approximately 44% of respondents indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” and had a mean score of 4.50 on the questions related to academic determination. This mean score is lower than the SES national mean score of (.481). Many students are thriving in the area of academic determination. Respondents indicated *People would say they are a hard worker* with a mean of (4.85) and said they are *Confident they will reach their educational goals* (4.78). Those who are thriving in this area are characterized by an investment of effort, an ability to manage one’s time and the personal and academic demands of college, are motivated to succeed and are focused on the pursuit of their goals (Schreiner, 2010). However, the remaining 56% are not thriving and are lacking in many areas needed to be a successful student. A strong correlation with satisfaction indicates that those who are not thriving may not be satisfied with their experiences at the university, especially regarding classes, grades, faculty, support and learning. These results indicate a need to focus on instilling grit and hope in students and equipping them with the tools needed to problem-solve when things get tough.

Engaged Learning

Engaged learning had strong correlations with satisfaction (.576) and psychological sense of community (.561). Engaged Learning was also the strongest unique contributor in explaining student success outcomes. Students’ perception of engaged learning yielded a mean score of (4.12), which is lower than the SES national mean of (4.54). Approximately 55% of respondents reported “agree” or “strongly agree” to the questions linked to engaged learning. These thriving students feel as though they are learning material in their classes that is worthwhile to them as a person, as evidenced with a mean score of (4.27). These engaged students also indicate they find themselves thinking about what they are learning in class when they are not in class (4.24). “Engaged learning is measured by three components: meaningful process, focused attention, and active participation” (Schreiner, 2010, p. 5). For those who are not thriving in engaged learning, they are not energized by learning, don’t see their classes as meaningful, and are not thinking about class when they are not in class. When students are engaged learners, they feel more connected to the university; they feel that being at the university fills an important need in their lives. This connection and sense of belonging drives their enjoyment with college, and their desire to re-enroll and graduate from the institution. These results indicate a need to engage students intentionally in the learning process through structure of classes and activities in class. Students need to be taught how to be engaged when they are in class and when they are outside of class working on class material. Lessons are needed on how to ask questions, how to reflect on the meaning of the lessons, and how to connect new material

to prior knowledge. Creating a community of engaged learners is a must; the university and the student will both see the most gains from this effort.

Social Connectedness

Respondents' perceptions of social connectedness yielded a mean score of 4.09, which is higher than the SES national mean score of 3.80. Thriving on the scale of social connectedness denotes students who have friends and healthy relationships. They are connected to others on and off campus in good, positive ways. They have people in their lives who listen and support them. Approximately 36.5% reported a high level of social connections. The factor of social connectedness did have correlations with psychological sense of community (.404) and satisfaction (.354) and is considered a predictor for student success outcomes (.321). Feeling supported and valued by others is important. These results indicate a need to create a sense of belonging and acceptance for all students. The correlations with psychological sense of community, satisfactions, and student success outcomes suggest the importance of belonging, feeling comfortable, and fitting in are more important than having the ability to succeed academically. If students are unable to find people to connect with, hang out with, or feel supported by, they may not retain or graduate from the institution. The results infer a need for the university to create opportunities for students to interact and connect with one another so friendships can be forged. Today technology allows us to feel connected to everyone, yet not really connected to anyone. Students spend more time on gadgets and less time interacting in person, and there is a need to intentionally create connections for students.

Positive Perspective

Respondents indicated a mean score (4.21) which is lower than the SES national norm mean (4.30). Students who are thriving on the scale of positive perspective have healthy attitudes about themselves and learning. These students have a positive outlook on life and view the glass as half-full. Thriving students can put things into perspective and see the bigger picture. Approximately 30.3% of respondents reported "agree" or "strongly agree" to questions related to positive perspective. Positive perspective did have correlations with satisfaction (.284), student involvement (.220), and psychological sense of community (.264). Positive perspective was removed in the stepwise regression model. It was the only factor that did not impact student success outcomes. However, positive perspective is the cornerstone of thriving. The positive, can-do attitude is what helps students get through the difficult times. The results indicate a need to help students understand who they are, learn how to identify strengths, and how to use these strengths to navigate all aspects of college life. In order to change the perspective of a struggling student, programs should teach them to shift their focus from unproductive thoughts (e.g. what is not working, what skills are lacking, why tasks seem undoable), to productive thoughts such as their strengths and the skills that they possess.

Diverse Citizenship

Thriving students have a deep appreciation for, and a desire to understand, those who are different from themselves. Thriving students have a desire to serve their community. “They also can internalize one’s values and beliefs while respecting others’ rights to have differing views and beliefs” (Schreiner, 2010, p. 8). Approximately 57% reported a high level of diverse citizenship. Respondents indicated a mean score (4.60), lower than the SES national mean score (4.76). Diverse citizenship did have small to medium correlations with student involvement (.375), faculty interaction (.168), satisfaction (.307), and psychological sense of community (.474). The stepwise regression model revealed diverse citizenship is a predictor of student success outcomes. Surprisingly, the study students scored the highest on this factor.

Satisfaction

“Student satisfaction results when [the institution’s] actual performance meets or exceeds the student’s expectations” (Elliot & Healey, 2001, p. 2). Approximately, 77% of respondents indicated being satisfied with their overall experiences at this institution. Respondents indicated some level of satisfaction with faculty, grades, learning, peers, health, living situation, and academic advising. Approximately 16.6% are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of money they have to pay for college at this institution. Satisfaction correlated with all of the Thriving Factors, student involvement, psychological sense of community, and faculty interaction. Satisfaction was also a predictor of student success outcomes. Prior research indicates satisfaction is a predictor of academic success, intent to return, intent to graduate, feelings of fit, and pride in university (El Ansari, 2011; Schreiner, 2009; Schreiner & Nelson, 2013; Suhre et. al, 2007). High satisfaction benefits both the student and the institution.

Faculty-Student Interaction

Previous research indicates that satisfaction with faculty-student interaction is a strong predictor of sophomores’ academic success and satisfaction to overall experience (Graunke & Woosley; 2005; Keup, 2002; Schreiner, 2010a). Respondents indicated infrequent interaction with faculty outside of the classroom; however, 42% indicated satisfaction with the quality and the amount of faculty interaction this year. The results revealed that the quality of interactions with faculty within the classroom is more impactful than informal interactions. Faculty who create a classroom environment that is engaging and supporting are promoting an environment conducive to thriving.

Student Involvement

Student involvement was found to positively impact students’ success in the classroom (Kuh et al., 1991, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Student involvement in co-curricular activities and groups such as student organizations, leadership positions, and activities in campus residence halls, has a positive correlation with

retention and academics (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Approximately 33.9 % indicated some involvement with organizations. However, only 20% of the respondents of this study indicated some attendance at co-curricular activities. Overall, students reported infrequent and occasional involvement in student organizations. These scores were surprising, considering 57% said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with *Your experiences with your peers on this campus this year*. Astin (1993a) indicated that a student’s peer group is the single most important source of influence on growth and development during college. Previous research from Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) also revealed student interactions with peers play an important role in retention, diversity appreciation and understanding, interpersonal relationships, choice of study, career choice, and overall development. Student involvement did have correlations with all the Thriving Factors except engaged learning. In a 2010 study using the SES, student involvement explained less than 3% of the variation in thriving. In this study, student involvement was not a predictor of student success outcomes.

Psychological Sense of Community

Previous research indicates that sense of the community is the strongest predictor of all student outcomes on the SES (Schreiner, Miller, Pullins, & Seppelt, 2012). Strong correlations also exist with all five of the Thriving Factors: engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship. These results infer that when students report a high level of sense of community, they are more likely to be thriving. Likewise, when there is a high level of sense of community, more than likely, the satisfaction will be high as well due to being very strongly correlated with satisfaction. McMillan and Chavis (1986) describe a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). McMillan and Chavis (1986) propose that sense of community is composed of four elements: membership, influence, fulfillment, and shared emotional connection. First, students must feel like they belong at the institution; second, they must feel like their voice is being heard about important issues; thirdly, students must feel like they have the resources they need and know where to find them; and lastly, they must have connections or an affinity to the university.

Student Success Outcomes

Student success outcomes were found to be impacted by four of the five Thriving Factors with engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, and diverse citizenship all displaying as predictors of student success outcomes. The results also revealed that psychological sense of community, faculty-student interaction, and satisfaction are all predictors of student success outcomes. The results indicate that the Thriving Factors, sophomore experiences impact students’ decision to return for the junior year, and whether they will graduate from the institution. This research confirms what prior research has found: universities must offer more

intentional sophomore experiences, with robust programming and support to prevent students from slumping and to keep students persisting to the junior year. The research and results of this study also indicate a need to go beyond understanding how to retain students, to understanding how to push them beyond surviving to a state of thriving. The thriving model of success implies a need to focus on the broader outcomes of the college experience that have been overlooked in prior models of retention. The presence of personal growth, healthy relationships, connections to the larger community, and additional ways of seeing the world allow the student to get the most out of the college experience and life after college (Schreiner, 2012). “Thriving implies more than just surviving the college environment, it conveys that a student is fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally and is experiencing a sense of psychological well-being that contributes not only to his or her persistence to graduation, but also to success in life” (Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009, p. 4).

Implications Related to Conceptual Concerns

The research conducted regarding thriving and the SES has increased over the last ten years. Research is still in its infancy; however, it has become clear that when students are thriving and have high levels of engaged learning, academic determination, social connectedness, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship, they are more satisfied, more likely to re-enroll, and more likely to graduate from the institution. Research continues to increase because of the strong correlations among thriving, student experiences, and student success outcomes. This conceptual framework encompasses four main factors that comprise the inputs that influence retention and student success: pre-college characteristics, university initiatives and support, Thriving Factors, and student experiences. All the factors together result in retention, student success and thriving, and ultimately completion.

Implications for Theory

The findings of this study confirm what the literature and previous research maintain— a strong predictor of student success is the amount of time students spend on educationally purposeful activities (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). Tinto’s Model of Integration (1993) indicated experiences that support academic success and encourage and motivate students to invest in learning positively impact retention. Universities must focus on the characteristics of students prior to college as well as creating an environment once they are in college that creates positive academic and social experiences. The results of this study also reinforce Kuh’s Student Success Model, which focuses on the educational opportunities and support offered to the student by their institution as the criterion for success, retention, and completion (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, 2005). Finally, this research validates and supports the Thriving Model of Student Success, which suggests student success is defined by more than academic performance, persistence, and completion; a focus on thriving encourages a more comprehensive view of transitions and development that includes developing healthy

relationships, being a part of a community, and learning to overcome life's challenges (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012).

Additionally, this research revealed the need to concentrate on the role of belonging and sense of community in sophomore development and student success. A sense of belonging includes the following: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Individual relationships are vital as well as the connection to the larger campus community. A feeling of belonging, a sense of mattering, and a positive answer to the question, *Does anyone care?* helps create a connectedness that is important to the success of the student. Strengthening the sense of community and belonging will improve the level of thriving, student experiences, and student success outcomes.

The conclusions reached by the researcher support the need to focus on transitions and development that occurs during the sophomore year. Sophomore students need intentional support and resources to assist in reaching the level of thriving, a level which is distinguished by academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal thriving. Additionally, students need to be connected to the community; need to belong and understand people care about their success.

Implications for Practice and Leadership

For most institutions, the focus has been on engagement opportunities and retention initiatives to support freshmen during their transition from high school to college (Barefoot, 2000). Across the country, 95% of colleges and universities offer first-year experience programs, which include resources, programming, and support for freshmen. This study reinforces the need to expand transition and retention initiatives to include sophomore students. As attrition continues to rise between the sophomore and junior year, universities should begin to address their needs by increasing support, resources, and intentional programming to sophomore students to help them transition, develop, and persist to the junior year. Institutions that develop and deliver sophomore year success initiatives generally yield higher sophomore to junior return rates than those who do not have success initiatives in place (Keup, Gahagan, & Goodwin, 2010). The following suggestions are provided on how universities can support and enhance the sophomore year experience.

- Create a sophomore year experience coordinator to oversee and organize all initiatives related to the sophomores' development and retention.
- Create a sophomore year task force that includes, faculty, staff, and students that advises and implements practices for supporting sophomore students in and out of the classroom.
- Reinforce academic advising to ensure sophomore development and transition needs are being considered.
- Create opportunities for more faculty and student engagement and interaction.

- Create undergraduate research opportunities for sophomore students.
- Create and implement events and traditions that can motivate and reconnect sophomores when they return for their second year.
- Develop mentoring programs by academic college for students in their second year.
- Develop activities to create opportunities for sophomores to develop a sense of community and enhance peer relationships.
- Continue to support major exploration and career exploration.
- Create a regular communication plan with sophomores.
- Create a collaborative and comprehensive space on applicable social media outlets that are specifically targeted at sophomores.
- Develop a sophomore checklist for opportunities and experiences designed for sophomores.

Conclusion

This quantitative study explored the relationships of Thriving Factors, students' experiences, and success outcomes during the sophomore year of college. Therefore, this study explored the Thriving Factors of engaged learning, social connectedness, academic determination, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship; student experiences including faculty-student interaction, satisfaction, student involvement, psychological sense of community; and student success outcomes including tuition value, college fit, happiness, intent to re-enroll, and intent to graduate. The six research questions were used to understand students' perception of the Thriving Factors, students' experiences and satisfaction, and the nature of the relationships among Thriving Factors, sophomore student experiences, and student success outcomes.

Major findings of the study indicate: (1) Many sophomores are experiencing what is described as the sophomore slump; (2) Of all of the Thriving Factors and student experiences, academic determination has the strongest relationships with satisfaction; (3) Of all the Thriving Factors, engaged learning makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes; (4) Of all the student experiences, psychological sense of community makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes.

Discussion of findings was presented in relation to implications for theory, practice, and leadership regarding the need to focus on the transitions and development that occurs during the sophomore year. Sophomore students need to be encouraged by healthy relationships, supported with resources, connected to the community, and engaged in educationally purposeful activities. Recommendations for future research included further research on the sophomore year, with a focus on community college students, student athletes, as well as on the influence of race, gender, and sexual orientation on students' level of thriving and student success.

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OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER AWARD

Assessment of High School Coaches' Knowledge Retention of Sport-Related Concussions

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Abstract

Sport-related concussions continue to be a serious epidemic for youth participants. A pathway to improper management, created by improper reporting by athletes, lack of recognition by coaches, and lack of access to athletic training services, must be mitigated through effective concussion educational initiatives. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of an online concussion education program, *Concussion in Sports*, on the knowledge retention among high school football coaches over a 15-week follow-up period.

A quasi-experimental repeated measure design was used to measure knowledge retention over time for high school football coaches from two parishes in south Louisiana. The main outcome measure in this study included coaches' knowledge retention in the follow-up period. The assessments consisted of 31 questions divided into three distinct subsections: signs and symptoms recognition, common concussion misconceptions, and scenario-based questions. A 2-tailed paired samples t-test was conducted to test knowledge retention.

High school football coaches had significantly lower overall knowledge scores as well as signs and symptoms subsection scores on 15-week follow-up assessments compared to post-course assessments, but the participants did not have significantly lower misconception or scenario subsection scores. This study provides some foundational support that knowledge was not retained in high school football coaches in south Louisiana. This study confirms the need to continue to assess long-term outcomes to assure knowledge retention in high school football coaches after online concussion education.

Keywords: sport-related concussion (SRC), education, knowledge transfer

Introduction

Concussions continue to be a serious epidemic in youth and competitive sports. The incidence of sport-related concussions continues to rise, as approximately 1.6 million to 3.8 million sport-related concussions occur each year (Bagley et al., 2012). In a 2017 national survey, 15.1%, or approximately 2.5 million, of high school students reported having at least one concussion during the 12 months before the survey, and 6.0% reported two or more concussions (DePadilla, Miller, Jones, Peterson, & Breiding, 2018). Sport-related concussion (SRC) is defined as "a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces" that may occur with a direct blow or indirect force to the head, face, or neck (McCrory et al., 2017). Since SRCs may be difficult to recognize, improper

management of head trauma can be extremely harmful and detrimental to the career of any athlete. Due to the continued concern of concussive injuries during athletic participation, investigators must provide increased attention and research to enhance proper recognition and management of SRC.

Leaders within the field of sports medicine have addressed athlete safety through educational programs. Concussion legislation, adopted throughout the United States between 2009 and 2014, contains a preseason education provision targeting various groups including coaches, athletes, and parents (Lowrey, 2015; Register-Mihalik, Baugh, Kroshus, Kerr, & Valovich McLeod, 2017). The Louisiana Youth Concussion Act (2011) includes a provision for coaches' education, removal from play requirements, and return to play guidelines. The educational provision requires that all coaches complete an annual concussion recognition course. Any training material made available by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), including *Concussion in Sports*, satisfies the annual education requirement for coaches. Despite these enacted laws, legislation efforts alone may be insufficient in changing the sports culture of concussion management (Rivara et al., 2014).

The inaccessibility of appropriate healthcare providers during sport activities further indicates the need for coaches to appropriately recognize concussion injuries. Pryor et al. (2015) stated that 70% of public high schools within the United States have access to a certified athletic trainer (AT), while only 37% of schools have access to a full-time certified athletic trainer. ATs are often absent from practices and competitions at the youth level causing even greater responsibility for the coach to properly recognize concussive injuries (Hainline & Ellenbogen, 2017). Since many student-athletes do not always have access to appropriate medical services, coaches may find themselves in a critical decision-making capacity to correctly recognize a suspected concussion and promptly remove an athlete from play.

The health and safety of high school athletes is at risk due to the inaccessibility of certified athletic trainers. Louisiana currently ranks 35th out of 51 within the United States in managing the sudden death and catastrophic injuries in high school athletes (Adams, Scarneo, & Casa, 2017). Adams et al. (2017) created a health and safety policy grading rubric for evidence-based practices for preventing death and catastrophic injuries in sport, including sections for sudden cardiac arrest, head injuries, exertional heat stroke, appropriate medical coverage, and emergency preparedness. Louisiana scored at 41% overall on the health and safety policy grading rubric, well below the median score of 47.1% established in this analysis (Adams et al., 2017). Louisiana only obtained 10 of the 20 points on the "Traumatic Head Injury" section, with all the deductions coming from training of coaches. Louisiana has an opportunity to improve the healthcare of athletes and ascend the rankings as compared to other states by evaluating the effectiveness of current educational programs used within the state.

The effectiveness of coaches' education to enhance appropriate behaviors and attitudes toward concussion injuries is paramount (Provvidenza & Johnston, 2009). McCrory et al. (2017) noted that "identifying the needs, learning styles and preferred learning strategies of target audiences, coupled with evaluation, should be a piece of the overall SRC education puzzle to have an impact on enhancing knowledge and awareness" (p. 8). According to Rivara et al. (2014), 40% of coaches were not aware of athletes exhibiting concussion symptoms even after completing concussion education mandated by state laws. Most coaches recognized a need for additional educational training for managing concussions in their football programs. A study by Faure and Pemberton (2011) of 128 Idaho high school football coaches demonstrated that 94.2% of participants confirmed the risk of concussion in football did concern them, while 86.3% of these high school football coaches identified the responsibility to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of concussions and to safely return an athlete to play. Although research indicates that most high school and youth coaches accept their role with concussion recognition, there remains a disparity between educational programs and concussion awareness.

Knowledge retention after concussion educational programs is an integral component to consider. Coaches may need to apply knowledge and skills at various time intervals throughout the season, which may be distant from the educational encounter. The inability for high school coaches to retain knowledge from annual concussion education programs significantly inhibits proper management of SRCs.

Countless considerations are critical when evaluating the effectiveness of any concussion education program for coaches, since many current programs, such as *Concussion in Sports*, show information through the convenience of the Internet (Caron, Bloom, Falcao, & Sweet, 2015; Provvidenza & Johnston, 2009). Educational efforts are successful when concussion education programs are user-friendly, interactive, and implement more than one technique to present the information (Mrazik et al., 2015;). Caron et al. (2015) identified common weaknesses within all concussion education programs including the limited use of interactive tools, delivery of education at one-time point only, and lack of long-term assessment. Furthermore, Caron et al. (2015) stated that additional research is needed to consider these factors that would improve participants' long-term knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors after concussion educational program exposure. It is necessary to assess the knowledge retention after online concussion education programs for high school coaches since many of these weaknesses are apparent through an online delivery method.

The increasing epidemic of concussion injuries in sports continues to attract significant attention throughout society, due to recent law implementation, significant injury incidence, and the lack of access to appropriate healthcare providers during sport participation. A pathway to improper management created by lack of recognition by coaches in addition to the lack of access to athletic training services must be mitigated through effective concussion educational initiatives. It is essential to evaluate current online concussion educational

programs for coaches to assure appropriate knowledge retention to enhance proper management, reduce the risks of damaging long-term health consequences of participants, and mitigate potential litigation. There is a significant need to evaluate the effectiveness of current online concussion education programs and develop more effective population-specific educational modules (Kroshus, Garnett, Baugh, & Calzo, 2015; Tator, 2012). Currently, limited research has been performed to evaluate the effectiveness of online concussion education programs and knowledge retention (Mrazik et al., 2015; Williamson et al., 2014).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of an online concussion education program on the knowledge retention among high school football coaches over a 15-week follow-up period (approximate length of one competitive season). The following research question and hypothesis were addressed.

- Research Question: Does an online concussion education program significantly improve knowledge retention in high school football coaches as measured by differences in post-course and 15-week follow-up assessment scores?
- Research Hypothesis: Knowledge retention in high school football coaches will significantly increase following 15 weeks as measured by follow-up assessment scores being greater than or equal to post-course assessment scores.

Method

This author investigated the effect that an online concussion education program has on the knowledge retention among high school football coaches. The researcher measured knowledge retention over time for high school football coaches through a quasi-experimental repeated measure design. Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM), administrators at local school boards and individual schools were contacted to obtain a letter of support from project sites as required by the ULM IRB. The school boards were contacted by phone and email to inform the organizations of the study's purpose and to request participation during the semester. The researcher received permission to contact the individual coaches employed within each parish by email.

Subjects

A convenience sample of high school football coaches from two parishes in south Louisiana were recruited to participate within this study. The researcher contacted a total population of 143 participants between these two parishes. Parish A had 12 schools participating in high school football that included 116 football coaches; whereas, Parish B was composed of four football schools and 27 football coaches. Fifty of the 57 football coaches who attended the concussion education course completed the post-course assessment. Thirteen of the 50 football coaches were removed from the initial sample since they did not complete the 15-week follow-up assessment. The final sample size was comprised of a total of 37 high school football coaches who watched the online

concussion education course and completed both the post-course and 15-week follow-up assessments. This sample was comprised of 35 public school coaches and two private school coaches. When considering school sizes based on student enrollment, the final sample included 20 coaches from 5A-schools (54%); nine coaches from 3A-schools (24%); and eight coaches from 2A-schools (22%). All 37 coaches were male with an age range of 20-54 years of age. From an educational degree perspective, two coaches had a high school diploma, 26 had a Bachelor's Degree, and nine had a Master's degree. In this sample, coaching experience ranged from 1-31 years of experience with 5-15 years of experience being the largest cohort (16 coaches). In addition, 28 of the participating coaches reported coaching at least one additional sport besides football. Among the 37 coaches, 27 reported having access to a full-time certified athletic trainer at their school daily. Seven of the participants reported being previously diagnosed with a concussion. Finally, these participants reported the primary source of concussion information being obtained from health care professionals (doctor/AT). Benefits to participate in this study included completion of a mandated annual concussion recognition course as required by Act 314 (Louisiana Youth Concussion Act, 2011).

Inclusion criteria of the participants required individuals to be a high school football coach within the selected parishes. Exclusion criteria within this study included individuals who did not coach football, did not coach at the high school level, and were not employed within the two parishes. A power analysis following Cohen's procedure (1969,1992) was conducted to assure an appropriate number of individuals would agree to participate and complete the study. An a priori power analysis requires an alpha value, power level, and an effect size to calculate an appropriate sample size to assure validity. A typical alpha size in the social sciences is 0.05; whereas, an acceptable power is 0.80. Cohen (1969,1992) has identified 0.2 as a small effect size, 0.5 as a medium effect, and 0.8 as a large effect. With a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, β of .20, and effect size (d) of 0.50, a sample size of 34 participants from the population would assure an acceptable power level.

Table 1

Participation in Concussion Education Course, Post-Course, and Follow-Up Assessment by Coaches

	Parish A	Parish B	Total
Total Coaches	116	27	143
Total Completed Education Course	41 (35.3%)	16 (59.3%)	57 (39.9%)
Post-Course Assessment Completed	37	13	50
Follow-Up Assessment Completed	30	7	37

Table 1 shows the number of coaches from each parish who completed the concussion education course, post-course and follow-up assessment. Fifty of the 57 football coaches who attended the concussion education course completed the post-course assessment. Following the 15-week intermission between assessments, 37

football coaches out of 50 completed the 15-week follow-up assessment. The final sample size for this study included these 37 football coaches.

Research Procedures

Two dates were set within each parish to present the online concussion education course to maximize participation. The entire population of participants was contacted multiple times to inform them of meeting times to enhance attendance at these meetings. An introductory script briefly describing the study was read orally by the researcher to each group of participants. The researcher obtained written consent for participation from individual participants through in-person dissemination of the informed consent form. The participants completed the online concussion course sponsored by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) entitled *Concussion in Sports* during the scheduled meeting with the researcher. The researcher was present to assure attendance and obtain formal consent for participation within IRB guidelines, but the researcher did not interact with the participants or interrupt the online course at any time to reinforce content. Objectives of this 30-minute online concussion education course included acknowledging the impact of SRC on athletes, teaching how to recognize a suspected concussion, and providing protocols to manage a suspected concussion with steps to help players return to play safely after a concussion. The researcher's personal computer and projector were used to display the online concussion education course onto a large surface within the meeting rooms. Each attendee received an initial introductory email immediately after the online concussion education course requesting completion of the post-course assessment. The participants had three calendar days to complete the post-course assessment via Survey Monkey, so that the researchers could gather individual coaching characteristics while also measuring immediate knowledge gained. Reminder emails were sent prior to the expiration of the survey to enhance response rate.

All participants resumed normal duties after completion of the online concussion education program. An email was sent to each participant to request completion of an identical follow-up assessment once 15 weeks elapsed from the completion of the online concussion education course. The participants had seven days to complete this 15-week follow-up assessment. Reminder emails were sent throughout this time window prior to the expiration of the assessment to enhance cooperation and participation.

Data Collection

Data within this study were transferred and collected through electronic methods. All forms were submitted by the participants through Survey Monkey. The researcher assured anonymity of the respondent by choosing to exclude all respondent information on the survey platform. The researcher requested each participant create a unique, individualized code consisting of alpha and numeric characters by answering a series of five

questions prior to beginning the post-course and 15-week follow-up assessment. These codes were used to match the post-course assessment and 15-week follow-up assessment scores.

Demographic data and assessment scores were transferred directly to an Excel spreadsheet for coding into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 25.0; IBM Corp, Armonk, NY) statistical software. Raw scores from the post-course assessment were reviewed to obtain overall as well as subsection scores. Each correct response to each question was scored with a value of 1, and all incorrect responses were scored with a value of 0, thus allowing for a total score to be calculated along with scores for each subsection. The 15-week follow-up assessment followed the same scoring procedures as the post-course assessment.

The post-course and 15-week follow-up assessments consisted of 31 questions divided into three distinct subsections: signs and symptoms recognition, common concussion misconceptions, and scenario-based questions. The *16-Item Concussion Symptom Recognition Checklist* was used to assess signs and symptoms recognition (Saunders, Burdette, Metzler, Joyner, & Buckley, 2013). This section consisted of 16 yes/no questions, with eight correct and eight incorrect symptoms each. Many previous researchers have used the symptom recognition aspect of this assessment, which has been deemed valid and reliable (Glang, Koester, Beaver, Clay, & McLaughlin, 2010; Saunders et al., (2013); Valovich McLeod, Schwartz, & Bay, 2007).

The next subsection of the assessment was composed of nine true/false questions to assess common misconceptions. Saunders et al. (2013) assured appropriate validity for this section by having 10 ATs who were knowledgeable on the topic of SRC review the tool for face validity. Finally, the last subsection included six scenario-based questions to evaluate appropriate decision making during concussive injuries. Both the scenario-based and misconception questions were based on questions previously used in studies on the knowledge of SRCs (Faure & Pemberton, 2011; Guilmette, Malia, & McQuiggan, 2007; Sullivan et al., 2009; Valovich McLeod, Bay, Heil, & McVeigh, 2008; Valovich McLeod et al., 2007).

Content Validity of Instrument

Content validity of the instruments used in this study as it relates to the online concussion education course was assured by using subject-matter experts (SME). The assessment of content validity involved nine certified athletic trainers and one sports medicine physician. Experts were asked to provide feedback related to the questions generated by the researchers after reviewing the online course, *Concussion in Sports*. The SMEs were initially asked to rate whether the knowledge or skills measured by each question on the assessment was “essential”, “useful, but not essential”, or “not necessary” to the proper performance of managing a concussion by a high school coach. The content validity of the individual questions is considered higher as more SMEs agree that items on the assessments are essential. The SMEs had 80% agreement on “essential” knowledge for coaches on 12 out of the 16 questions on the instrument tool. Two of the remaining four questions achieved 80% agreement

when combining “essential” and “useful” responses together. Next, the subject-matter experts were asked if the material on the assessments were presented within the online concussion education course. Agreement among 90% of SMEs were achieved on five of the six questions presented on the content validity form. In summary, experts expressed agreement throughout both validation procedures leading to enhanced validity of the instrument used to assess knowledge retention throughout this study.

Statistical Procedures

Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviations) were calculated for all demographic coaching categories, independent variables, and dependent variables. All statistical analyses were performed in SPSS statistical software. A 2-tailed paired samples t-test was conducted to assess knowledge retention among high school coaches after an online concussion education program. The paired-samples t-test compared scores across time for overall scores as well as subsection scores. A priori alpha level of significance was set at 0.05 for all analyses.

Results

Knowledge retention was measured through the difference between post-course assessment and 15-week follow-up assessment scores. Raw scores were reviewed to obtain scores for each subsection: signs and symptoms recognition, common concussion misconceptions, and scenario-based questions.

Table 2

Post-Course Assessment Correct Responses^a

Section	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall	22	31	28.43	2.328
Signs and Symptoms	8	16	14.32	2.148
Misconceptions	6	9	8.46	.900
Scenarios	5	6	5.65	.484

^an=37

Table 2 shows all descriptive statistics from the post-course assessment regarding overall and subsection scores. The overall average of scores on the entire post-course assessment was 28.43. The range of scores was 22-31, with six out of 37 individuals achieving a perfect score. The average score for all participants in the signs and symptoms subsection, was 14.32 out of 16 questions with 11 individuals correctly answering all 16 questions in this subsection. In the misconception subsection, the average score for all participants was 8.46 out of nine questions with 26 individuals correctly answering all questions on this subsection. The average score for all participants in the scenario subsection was 5.65 out of six questions with 24 individuals correctly answering all questions on this subsection.

Table 3*15-week Follow-Up Assessment Correct Responses^a*

Section	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall	21	31	26.35	2.658
Signs and Symptoms	8	16	12.54	2.468
Misconceptions	6	9	8.27	.932
Scenarios	4	6	5.54	.691

^an= 37

Table 3 shows all descriptive statistics of correct responses from the 15-week follow-up assessment. Results relevant to the hypothesis indicate a decrease in mean scores for overall knowledge scores as well as every subsection score on the follow-up assessment as compared to the post-course assessment. The overall average of scores on the entire 15-week follow-up assessment was 26.35, with two out of 37 individuals achieving a perfect score. In the signs and symptoms subsection, the average score for all participants was 12.54. The lowest identified signs and symptoms on the 15-week follow-up assessment were abnormal sense of smell and weakness in neck range of motion. In the misconception subsection, the average score for all participants was 8.27. In the scenario subsection, the average score for all participants was 5.54.

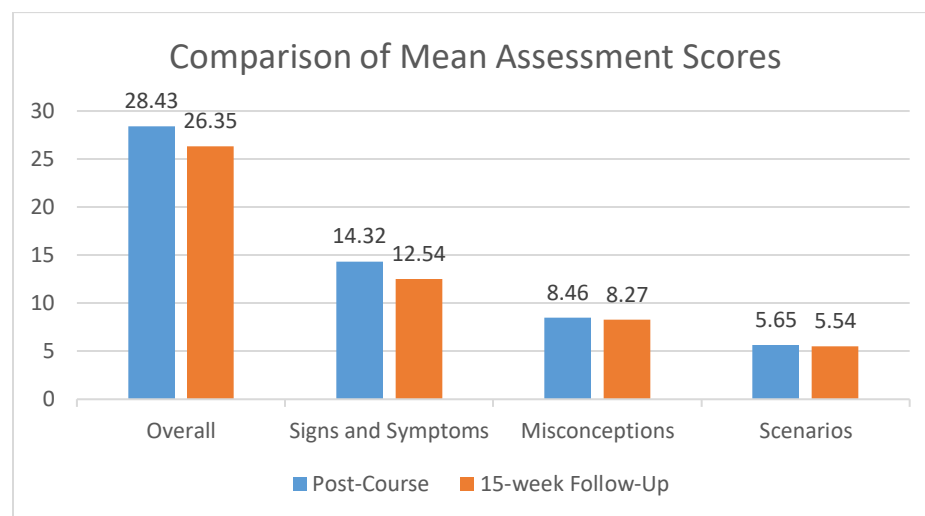
**Figure 1.** Comparison of Mean Assessment Scores

Figure 1 shows a graphical representation comparing mean assessment scores. A 2-tailed paired samples t-test was used to assess the hypothesis through comparison of the overall and three subsection post-course and 15-week follow-up mean scores.

Table 4*Paired Differences between Post-Course and 15-week Follow-Up Scores^a*

Post-Course and Follow-Up Assessment Pairs	Paired Differences						Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	SEM	95% CI of the Difference		t	
				Lower	Upper		
Overall	2.081	2.302	.378	1.314	2.849	5.499	.000*
Signs and Symptoms	1.784	2.162	.355	1.063	2.505	5.019	.000*
Misconceptions	.189	.845	.139	-.092	.471	1.363	.181
Scenarios	.108	.875	.144	-.184	.400	.751	.457

n=37; *p < .05

The hypothesis stated that knowledge retention in high school football coaches would significantly increase following 15 weeks as measured by follow-up assessment scores being greater than or equal to post-course assessment scores. Results pertinent to the hypothesis are shown in Table 4 include the *t* values and corresponding *p* values for changes in the post-course and 15-week follow up scores. Data analysis revealed that football coaches had significantly lower overall scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments than post-course assessments $t(36) = 5.50$, $p = .000$, $d = 0.90$. Additionally, paired samples *t*-tests were performed on the three subsection scores. On the signs and symptoms subsection, the analysis indicated that football coaches had on average significantly lower subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments than post-course assessments $t(36) = 5.50$, $p = .000$, $d = 0.90$. The difference is not only statistically significant, but has a large effect using Cohen's guidelines. On the misconception subsection, the statistical test indicated that football coaches did not have significantly lower subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments than post-course assessments $t(36) = 1.36$, $p = .181$, $d = 0.22$. Similarly, the statistical analysis indicated that football coaches again did not have significantly lower scenario subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments than post-course assessments $t(36) = 0.75$, $p = .457$, $d = 0.12$.

Discussion

Football coaches had significantly lower overall scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments compared to post-course assessments. The paired samples *t*-test supported statistical significance at the 0.05 level (p values < .001). Although Valovich McLeod et al. (2007) and Saunders et al. (2013) used similar assessments to demonstrate a knowledge base in youth coaches and coaching education students respectively, these overall results begin to lay the groundwork that immediate knowledge assessment may not be the most appropriate method to assess whether coaches retain knowledge after an online concussion education program. Furthermore, the inability to retain knowledge is critical because the gap in knowledge retention may lead to the inability to apply the necessary skills during an emergency (Popp & Berry, 2016). Organizations should implement techniques that cue appropriate actions, such as reminder messages or dispersed delivery, to mitigate this lack of knowledge retention.

Signs and Symptoms Knowledge Retention

The high school football coaches in this study had significantly lower signs and symptoms subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments. The paired samples t-test support statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($p < .001$). This subsection indicates the entire significant difference noted in the overall score difference.

These participants were able to retain higher rates on the signs and symptoms of amnesia, blurred vision, confusion, dizziness, headache, nausea, and sleep disturbances compared to previous studies (Saunders et al., 2013; Valovich McLeod et al., 2007). All seven of these signs and symptoms are positive for concussion injuries requiring removal from play. Even though participants incorrectly identified distractors of abnormal sense of smell and weakness in neck range of motion as positive concussion symptoms, it is encouraging that these coaches would err on the side of caution and remove the athletes from play with these symptoms. This information provides some additional support that Louisiana high school football coaches may be beginning to address the societal cultural norm of playing through injury during sports participation. The researcher agrees with the recommendation by Saunders et al. (2013) in supporting the need for continued education to review commonly missed symptoms. This study strengthens recommendations from previous studies that organizations and certified athletic trainers should consistently review signs and symptoms of concussions with coaches throughout the year to enhance knowledge retention and symptom recognition to improve proper management of sport-related concussions (Saunders et al., 2013; Valovich McLeod et al., 2007).

Misconceptions Knowledge Retention

Football coaches did not have significantly lower misconception subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments compared to post-course assessments. The paired samples t-test did not support statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($p = .181$). The most common misconceptions missed on both post-course and the 15-week follow-up assessments centered on the use of proper terminology. Misconception questions 4 and 9 involved use of colloquial terms such as “ding” and “bell ringer”. The researcher corroborates the findings of Saunders et al. (2013) that the use of improper terminology remains an issue among coaches. Elimination of improper terminology was explicitly addressed throughout the online concussion education program. Developers of educational programming must continue to address the importance of using proper terminology when dealing with concussion injuries.

Scenarios Knowledge Retention

Comparable to the misconception results, these football coaches did not have significantly lower scenario subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments compared to post-course assessments. The paired samples t-test did not support statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($p = .457$). The most commonly missed scenario question involved return to play criteria after loss of consciousness (Scenario 4). This question refers to

an outdated standard of care that allowed return to play on the same day of injury. This subsection supports the need to continue to address scenarios regarding the sign of loss of consciousness. Although loss of consciousness is not required to be diagnosed with a concussion, programs must inform coaches to never allow return to play on the same day with any loss of consciousness while also requiring evaluation by a healthcare professional before returning to play. Athletic trainers should consistently review the return to play policy with all coaches throughout the year to assure proper compliance. This study indicates the need to continue to assess long-term outcomes to assure knowledge retention in high school football coaches after online concussion education, akin to the recommendation of Emke, Butler, and Larsen (2016) regarding medical education research.

Observations, Conclusions, and Speculation of Results

The first observation by the researcher is the lack of motivation of the coaches in attendance. Some coaches appeared very disinterested throughout the educational interaction, as they were often seen dividing their attention among cell phone usage, showing signs of tiredness, and holding peer conversations despite being instructed by the researcher to exclusively watch the video. Furthermore, some coaches verbalized their displeasure with the educational program to the researcher stating that they had previously seen this video in prior years. The difficulty in confirming an opportunity to meet with the participants in this study was another observation noted by the researcher. This observation indicates the significant fact that coaches have other duties besides the coaching responsibilities of their sport. Finally, coaches had difficulty correctly answering if they had daily access to a full-time certified athletic trainer at their school. Availability of an athletic trainer may not only assist the coach in recognizing a SRC and removing the athlete from play but also mitigates the conflict of interest the coach may face when making this critical decision.

Implications for Further Research

This study indicates some foundational support that knowledge was not retained in high school football coaches in south Louisiana. Despite these initial findings, many other areas of further research investigating the effectiveness of concussion education programs have been identified. First, it may be beneficial to repeat this study with a larger sample size while also expanding into other parishes to assess whether similar results are obtained. Furthermore, it would be of additional benefit to extend the time between assessments to ascertain whether knowledge degradation occurs in the latter part of the year.

It would be extremely beneficial to expand future research to include additional high school sports, since football is not the only sport where participants are at risks for concussion injuries. Whereas Esquivel, Haque, Keating, Marsh, and Lemos (2013) identified a difference in concussion education among high school sports in Michigan, these researchers recommended education expansion beyond football, specifically into soccer and

hockey. For example, soccer, hockey, and cheerleading are examples of other sports where participants are at high risk for head injuries.

Next, because the Louisiana Youth Concussion Act (2011) covers an age range between 7-18 years of age, future research should be directed toward youth sport coaches as well. In addition to youth coaches, it would be beneficial to assess other cohorts of individuals that are present during sports participation, including athletes, parents, and officials.

The lack of standardization of educational programming by legislative bodies allows developers to educate coaches through a variety of programs. Although the researcher looked at one common online educational resource (*Concussion in Sports*), it would be beneficial to assess varying programs to identify the most effective program for specific audience groups. In addition, it would be beneficial to assess the effectiveness of in-person compared to online education programs to recognize any difference in knowledge retention between delivery methods of programs. Finally, the researcher specifically assessed knowledge of high school football coaches. It may be beneficial to look at other variables beyond knowledge, such as intention to report and societal barriers that may inhibit proper management of these injuries.

Limitations of Study

Several limitations must be considered when interpreting this study's findings. First, the population of this study included a convenience sample of high school football coaches from parishes within south Louisiana. Secondly, the time frame of this study approximates one competitive sports season; whereas, state laws require education on an annual basis. Next, there was an inability to control access to other concussion information resources during the 15-week intermission. Finally, the assessment tool being used to measure knowledge retention has been validated and used previously in many other studies (Faure & Pemberton, 2011; Glang et al., 2010; Guilmette et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2013; Sullivan et al., 2009; Valovich McLeod et al., 2007). Despite these validation studies, the researcher's ability to measure knowledge retention may be limited by the categories addressed within this instrument.

Recommendations and Best Practices

This study indicated significant outcomes for knowledge retention for high school football coaches after online concussion education. Overall knowledge scores along with signs and symptoms knowledge subsection scores were not retained by participants. Based on the significance of these findings, the following recommendations and best practices are indicated to improve knowledge retention of coaches.

- School districts and organizations should be encouraged to take a closer look at the effectiveness of the current concussion educational programming.

- School districts and state associations should strive to increase access to certified athletic trainers at the secondary school level to augment the coach's responsibility of concussion recognition while decreasing the conflict of interest a coach may face in making a return to play decision after concussion injury.
- School boards should increase the frequency of educational courses beyond the minimal standard to enhance knowledge retention.
- Concussion education program developers should integrate appropriate and effective knowledge transfer techniques for coaches, including interactive delivery method and reflection opportunities.
- Developers of educational programming should continue to address the importance of using proper terminology when dealing with concussion injuries.
- The state of Louisiana should benefit from forming a committee to approve concussion education courses that meet the standard set forth by Act 314 (Louisiana Youth Concussion Act).
- School boards should consider in-person training to augment learning that occurs during online courses and provide an opportunity to dispel any misconceptions.
- Educators should implement reminder messages for all individuals throughout the year to act as cues to action.
- Educational programs should be updated on a regular basis to address significant changes in management of SRCs.

Conclusion

Sport-related concussions continue to be a serious epidemic for youth participants. Assuring knowledge retention after online concussion education for high school coaches is challenging but also paramount to address the epidemic with SRCs for youth athletes. This study indicated some foundational support that knowledge was not retained in high school football coaches in south Louisiana. High school football coaches had significantly lower overall knowledge scores as well as signs and symptoms subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessments compared to post-course assessments. Although overall signs and symptoms knowledge was not retained in this study, these participants did a better job as compared to the participants in the Saunders et al. (2013) and Valovich McLeod et al. (2007) studies on maintaining knowledge on positive concussion symptoms. The coaches were able to retain knowledge on the misconception and scenario subsections. This study indicates the need to continue to assess long-term outcomes to assure knowledge retention in high school football coaches after online concussion education.

Schools would benefit from formally evaluating their current educational structure while also addressing the dearth of sports medicine professionals at this level. Knowledge transfer principles must be considered when

developing and evaluating evidence-based concussion education programs for high school coaches. The important and imminent need for effective concussion education to enhance knowledge retention in high school football coaches has clearly been established throughout this study. Time is of the essence when implementing these recommendations for concussion education programs, as the improper management of concussions by coaches puts the health and welfare of each athlete at risk during sports participation.

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Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Literature Review on Issues and Impact

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Abstract

Teacher evaluation systems are associated with teacher quality, accountability, performance observations, and support. These systems are typically comprised of multiple measures including at least observations of teaching and student performance data reflecting teacher impact. Many criticisms of these systems have emerged not necessarily from the measures themselves but from how they are used and the consistency with which the larger system is implemented. Concerns like evaluator training, reliability of results, distinctions between teacher quality and teaching quality, and repercussions of an ambiguous system for individual teachers, just to name a few, are recurring themes in the literature. In all, these systems are purported to foster teacher professional growth; however, ensuring clarity of purpose, sound accountability measures, and formative utility of results is a crucial milestone before the validity of these systems can be recognized.

Keywords: teacher evaluation systems, teacher accountability, teacher observation

Introduction

Since public schools are public institutions, the primary purpose of teacher evaluation systems is to hold educators accountable to the public, which funds their profession (Danielson, 2011). Teacher evaluation systems serve to assess teacher quality and to promote school improvement through professional development (Toch, 2008). They also yield and identify variations in observed teacher qualities in order to identify individuals whose practice could benefit from feedback and professional development opportunities (Hill & Grossman, 2013). However, teacher evaluation systems that differentiate among teachers and teacher qualities need to have valid and reliable results (Danielson, 2011; Shakman et al., 2012).

To consistently and accurately assess and ensure teacher quality through teacher evaluation systems, there must first be a shared definition of *good teaching* among all stakeholders (Danielson, 2011). An effective teacher evaluation system measuring teacher quality goes beyond a generic rubric or checklist and includes classroom observations, student and parent surveys, and student achievement scores (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Toch, 2008). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2013a) emphasized that having an accurate teacher evaluation system ultimately depends on the evaluation method's recognition of the multifaceted components of teaching.

There has been a significant emphasis on incentivizing teacher quality through teacher evaluations systems since teacher quality was identified as the most important factor affecting student achievement (Looney, 2011; Muijs et al., 2014; Papay, 2012). Dating back more than a decade, teacher evaluation systems have become a method of holding teachers accountable to their school leaders, district supervisors, and state governing bodies (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Additionally, teacher evaluation systems have become teacher accountability systems that emphasize improving standardized test scores in order to raise student achievement (Ahn, 2013). Teacher evaluation systems most commonly include the value-added models and standards-based classroom observations, which are both evaluation systems adopted to promote student achievement by focusing on teacher effectiveness (Papay, 2012).

Marshall (2005) argued that these teacher evaluation systems are inefficient and ineffective in achieving their purpose of improving teaching and student learning. This leads to systems that lack credibility with superficial and inconsistent teacher evaluations (Toch, 2008). Ultimately, in order to produce widespread, effective teacher evaluation systems, there must be efforts to understand the results of these measures so that teachers understand the systems' implications and how to impact student learning positively (Papay, 2012).

Teacher Evaluation Relevant to Teacher Quality

Danielson (2011) defined teacher quality as professional credibility that is identified by an evaluation system. Prior to 2001, teacher quality was predominately identified and measured by teacher experience, certification, and education levels. However, since then, several studies have shown few correlations between these factors and teacher effectiveness, new teacher evaluation methods have been adopted that observe and measure teacher performance (Harris et al., 2014; Hinchey, 2010; Stumbo & McWalters, 2011). These new teacher evaluation methods define teacher quality as teaching practices and characteristics that raise student achievement and performance. These evaluation methods attempt to measure teacher effectiveness based on this definition (Kupermintz, 2003).

Ultimately, it is essential that evaluators have a shared understanding of the definition of high-quality teaching and the profession's multifaceted components in order to assess teacher performance accurately (Danielson, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2012) reported that evaluators need to distinguish between teacher quality and teaching quality. Darling-Hammond further specified that teacher quality is the encompassed personal traits and skills that an individual brings to teaching. On the other hand, teaching quality refers to strong instructional practices that enable a range of students to learn. Therefore, teaching quality plays an important role in teacher quality. Looney (2011), on the other hand, argued that there is no widespread, accepted definition of teacher quality; however, Looney did specify that teacher quality can be assessed through sets of measurable standards. Nevertheless, Harris et al. (2014) warned that the choice of evaluation tool guides and affects a teacher's

demonstration of professional skills and qualities that are evaluated with the tool in question. Therefore, it is important to choose an evaluation system with consistent and clear standards that yields reliable results.

Additionally, the focus of evaluation systems should be teacher performance qualities that promote student achievement (Wayne & Young, 2003). Ultimately, teachers will become more successful in raising student achievement when evaluation systems accurately focus on teacher performance and effective characteristics (Hinchey, 2010). However, a consistent need of evaluations is that the evaluation systems must encourage effective teaching methods while retaining highly effective teachers and their practices (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998).

Evaluation Systems as Accountability Measures

Over the past two decades, federal legislation has incentivized states nationwide to raise student achievement through rigorous academic standards, increased student expectations, and assessment-based school accountability programs (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006; Muijs et. al, 2014; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Several states have adopted new, more rigorous curricula and evaluation methods that determine teacher effectiveness. These new teacher evaluation methods have been adopted, though, based on studies that show few correlations between teacher effectiveness and teacher experience, certification, and education levels, which was previously the baseline for determining teacher retention and effectiveness (Harris et al., 2014; Stumbo & McWalters, 2011). New teacher evaluation systems focus on student achievement scores as a determination of teacher effectiveness and as a way for holding teachers accountable to student performance standards. These summative evaluations are preferred for their quality assurance and accountability measures (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). For educators, the results of these accountability measures establish and determine teacher promotion, tenure, dismissal, and compensation (Harris et al., 2014).

As a result of the 2009 Race to the Top (RTTT) program, accountability systems use teacher evaluation methods to influence individual teachers using a short-term reward system (Ahn, 2013; Harris et al., 2014). Ahn (2013) noted that these incentives and accountability policies implemented at the school level by principals may improve performance level and efforts of existing teachers. Ahn argued further that when pay is associated with performance, schools usually see an improvement in student achievement scores. On the other hand, Harris et al. (2014) found that these accountability measures may influence who chooses to enter the teaching profession or deter some altogether from the profession. Nevertheless, high-stakes accountability measures only exacerbate the teachers' stress levels (Danielson, 2007). There is a particular concern for novice teachers who are unfamiliar with the stresses of teaching and who may feel pressure dealing with the new accountability systems (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Like Harris et al. (2014) and Danielson (2007), others raise questions concerning the feasibility and desirability of teacher accountability systems (Sartain et al., 2011).

Sartain et al. (2011) investigated individual teacher responsibilities to annual student learning gains in response to newly implemented accountability systems. Sartain et al. identified that teaching is a collective, rather than solely individual, pursuit and that any policies involving teacher accountability as a reflection of individual student achievement or growth needs to reflect this fact. Since schools are relying more heavily on collaborative teaching, correlating one student's performance to a single teacher is becoming more difficult even though that approach is central to contemporary evaluation systems, thus questioning the accuracy of linking individual student performance scores to individual teachers as well as the equality of these systems. It is inferred that evaluators should apply accountability system's results to the school instead of individual teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

The equality of accountability systems is further questioned when evaluation systems require evaluators to make judgments on teaching practices (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). A common concern with performance evaluations is when novice teachers are compared and measured to the same level of effectiveness by evaluators as veteran teachers. In situations such as this, novice teachers struggle to adjust their teaching practices to align with expectations that may have been established based on effective practices of veteran teachers whose practices had been refined after years of successful teaching (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Additionally, Ahn's (2013) research found that accountability systems impact educators of all levels and experiences, whether it guides their teaching methods during observations or encourages them to teach the test. These accountability measures influence the characteristics of teachers, which further impact the learning environment, student experiences, and student performance, both in the short- and long-term (Harris et al., 2014).

Teacher Observations as Evaluation Measures

Observations were a method used by administrators and supervisors to survey the classroom environment and teacher-child interactions (Reinking, 2015). Historically, teacher performance has been assessed by observation checklists with relatively little concern or association to student achievement and teacher quality (Hill & Grossman, 2013). These forms or surveys included items focused on direct and verbal forms of teaching practices from a set list (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). States have adopted improved instruments to evaluate teacher performance through observations that align with specific guidelines in the federally funded RTTT program in addition to other sources (Reinking, 2015). These new instruments, like Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, yield evaluations conducted by expert evaluators to assess teacher performance and behaviors relative to specific expectations (Stumbo & McWalters, 2011). The new standards-based teacher observations have been found to provide more instructional guidance to teachers and encourage best practices that increase student achievement (Papay, 2012; Stumbo & McWalters, 2011).

Observation tools of the past were implemented as a formative evaluation experience that required an observer to collect descriptive data on predetermined skills and characteristics of a teacher's performance in the classroom (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Therefore, the tools must primarily have clearly defined skills and characteristics that specify levels of performance (Papay, 2012). However, Danielson and McGreal (2000) argued that the forms associated with these evaluation systems do not define the systems. It is the structure of the evaluation process and the professional conversations surrounding the observation that make an effective teacher observation evaluation system. Effective standards-based teacher observation evaluation systems must extend beyond the forms used and include three essential elements: (a) a clear definition of the domain of teaching, incorporating the standards for proficiency in teacher performance; (b) specific methods and procedures assessing aspects of teaching; and (c) trained evaluators who make consistent judgments on observed performances.

Several advantages of standards-based teacher evaluation systems have been documented over the traditional checklist classroom observations. Within these systems, new observation evaluations require the evaluator to cite clear evidence of teaching practices during the observation, allowing for a much richer view of a teacher's instructional practice (Papay, 2012). When teachers demonstrate strong teaching methods measured by classroom observations, their students tend to show higher academic growth regardless of previous performance scores and socioeconomic status (Daley & Kim, 2010; Sartain et al., 2011). In a similar study, students who learned from the most effectively rated teachers from these observation evaluations were found to outperform their peers by as much as one grade level from those who learned from the least effective teachers (Looney, 2011). Furthermore, the teaching standards on which standards-based observation evaluations are based have research-driven data, which links them with student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

However, since the implementation of the teacher observation evaluations, teachers have argued this evaluation is subjective and bias-ridden (Papay, 2012). One of the most prominent concerns among teachers is that evaluators' scores may be influenced by prejudices against the teacher, especially since many of the evaluators are immediate supervisors of the teachers being evaluated (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Papay, 2012). According to Hill and Grossman (2013), any form of inaccuracy in the observation evaluations compromises the diagnostic function of the observations. This will further hinder any opportunities to improve instructional practices and meaningful feedback that is central to teacher observation evaluation systems. Nevertheless, having highly-qualified and well-trained evaluators who have a clear and precise understanding of the standards on the observation evaluation rubric as well as a clear understanding of instructional proficiency eliminates much of the subjective bias (Papay, 2012).

Ho and Kane (2013), who conducted a study on fair and reliable observation systems administered by school personnel with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the Measures for Effective Teaching Project,

found observers rarely used the highest and lowest ratings, which identified teachers as exemplary or unsatisfactory, respectively. Most observers scored teachers in the middle of any given observation tool's rating range. Likewise, participating administrators' scores differentiated more among teachers, with administrators scoring their own personnel .1 point higher than leaders from other schools. Ho and Kane also found that an observer's first impression of a teacher tended to linger and impact other observation evaluations of that same teacher. Based on these findings, it was concluded that having more than one observer raises the reliability of the observation evaluation scores. Further, there was a 60% increase in reliability of an observation evaluation when the observation was conducted in single 15-minute instances instead of observing the full hour. Ultimately, findings suggested a district could monitor the reliability of classroom observations in order to ensure a fair and reliable system for teachers.

Conclusion

The nationwide shift to teacher accountability has led to widespread adoption of standards-based, observation-driven evaluation systems. These systems are based on teaching practices and characteristics that are associated with teacher effectiveness. During these evaluations, teachers receive scores and feedback from school leaders that highlight areas of strength and areas where performance improvement is needed.

Although these systems are purported to yield formative and constructive evaluations that foster teacher performance improvement, educators have criticized these systems for subjectivity and implementations contradictory with improving teacher performance. How the tools and the implementation processes yield accurate assessments of teacher quality remain questioned. These standards-based observation evaluations are praised for having individualized teacher feedback, which leads to reflective discussions and teacher personal growth; however, these systems are, ultimately, accountability tools. Thus, having a genuine discussion on professional growth is difficult when teachers feel this criticism or feedback comes with negative repercussions of accountability. In all, the result is often deemed punitive rather than formative and constructive.

Although the tools used to evaluate teacher performance are, mostly, rubrics with performance criteria and indicators stated, evaluators' interpretations of those criteria and assumptions or preconceptions of a lesson's quality and rigor impact the ratings awarded. These factors have led to questioning the validity and reliability of the standards-based observation results, which are imperative given the accountability outcomes for teachers.

Current standards-based evaluation tools do identify teacher strengths and areas for improvement as well as provide baselines for professional reflection, and such reflection should help improve teacher quality and highlight professional development needs. The value this evaluation process offers reinforces its effectiveness; however, the accountability component that accompanies an evaluation tool distracts from the professional

development and reflection process. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain this process with an emphasis that it is a tool for educators' professional growth and development.

Since marrying accountability with a tool intended to promote professional growth has led to divisiveness, policymakers should reevaluate the purpose and components of teacher evaluation systems. First, clarity in these systems' purpose is needed. Are these systems used to judge performance, foster professional growth, or both? Second, if the intention of these systems is to hold educators accountable, a more well-rounded system comprised of evaluation and accountability components that reflect the multifaceted components of effective teaching is warranted. This would address concerns of fairness, accuracy, and credibility. Finally, to demonstrate that results are used formatively rather than punitively, systems should include reflect the use accountability results through fair evaluation measures to foster teacher quality through professional growth that emphasizes both teaching quality and teacher quality. If the ultimate goal is to have successful teachers and students in all classrooms, teacher evaluation systems must demonstrate not only the capacity to measure success but also to support it.

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A Statistical Analysis of Diversity in the Printz Awards

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates the diversity of the American Library Association's Michael L. Printz Award which is given for outstanding young adult literature titles. The award's website notes that it strives for diversity amongst the award winning or honored titles. This study uses quantitative analysis to determine if the committee's statement is valid along two categories: narrator's gender and narrator's ethnicity/race which served as the variables for the study. The study examined 91 book titles including the 18 award winning books and the 73 honorary titles in order to gain a broader understanding of the gender and racial/ethnic identities of the titles' narrators. Research was conducted using several book-centered websites to determine narrator's identities. The study includes implications for further research for youth literary awards committees, teachers and other educational stakeholders, with several organizations challenging the young adult literary world to diversify its titles, as well as recommendations for future researchers.

Keywords: quantitative analysis, diversity, young adult literature, Printz Award

The Michael L. Printz award is presented annually by the American Library Association's (ALA) Young Adult Library Services (YALS) to authors who write literature for teenagers. The ALA's (2019a) website explains, "the Michael L. Printz Award annually honors the best book written for teens, based entirely on its literary merit each year. In addition, the Printz Committee names up to four honor books, which also represent the best writing in young adult literature" (para. 1). With young adult literature becoming popular with adults as much as young adults, the award has become more recognizable to the public. Prominent authors including John Green, Rainbow Rowell, Terry Pratchett and Angie Thomas have works which have been awarded a Printz Award or have works included as honorary titles. Printz Award-winning authors become well-known, as the award launches many literary careers. These authors are followed by young readers throughout their adolescences and into adulthood (Kitchener, 2017). The works have an impact on their future reading lives and reading habits (Cart, 2008). These books bring to light many social issues that teens experience or that are nonexistent in a young reader's world. Cart (2008) writing for the YALSA states, "Thus, to see oneself in a young adult book is to receive the reassurance that one is not alone after all, not other, not alien, but instead, a viable part of a larger community of beings who share a common humanity" (para. 12). Reading helps readers of all ages realize struggles and possibilities because fiction is often rooted in real-life conflicts and people. The award's Criteria states "We hope

that the award will have a wide *audience* among readers from 12 to 18 but *popularity* is not the criterion for this award, nor is *message*. In accordance with the Library Bill of Rights, *controversy* is not something to avoid, In fact, we want a book that readers will talk about” (ALA, 2019a, para. 1, emphasis in the original). The award focuses on multiple parts of novel that make it great – voice, writing style, characters and theme/s. One major feature of a novel is the narrator, who is the reader’s tour guide in a literary adventure.

Printz Award winning books are trusted by teachers and school stakeholders to be quality literature that will engage students’ reading while also bringing to light important social issues that impact young adults’ worlds. Gaffney (2014) explains, “The 1990s and 2000s were marked by an explosion of YA literature in a variety of genres and subgenres and were characterized by increased diversity of teen protagonists. Forays into difficult topics such as dating violence, cutting, eating disorders, and suicide were accompanied by greater openness to portraying the diversity of teen experience, including lives of gay and lesbian (and later, bisexual and transgendered) teenagers” (Whickens, as quoted in Gaffney, 2014, p. 732). Due to this, Printz awarded books also are often challenged by concerned parents and stakeholders because the works take on current events, social and political issues, and taboo subjects (GLBTQ issues, sex, drugs, and death) that adults want to limit young adults’ exposure to, yet are unwilling to tackle through conversation. Gaffney (2014) notes, “In fact, conservative activists tended not to see YA literature as literature at all but as either propaganda intended to indoctrinate impressionable youth or as pornography designed to titillate them. They also routinely lumped teen and child readers together, emphasized the younger end of recommended age ranges, and argued that teenagers were not ‘young adults’ but children” (p. 732). Thus, these books become a safe place for young readers to safely explore and ponder hard to discuss subjects. Dimmit (2001) point out that the first Printz awards focused on books with topics of rape, juvenile incarceration, friendships, and family issues. Printz award-winning books take on these issues and bring them into the spotlight for students to experience and realize in their own lives.

I am an avid reader and discovered through my wanderings in bookish culture that literary awards are currently being challenged to include more female and non-binary authors, more authors of color, and books with diverse casts of characters. As a classroom teacher, I used book award lists as a source of trusted works to recommend to students. I also included award-winning titles in my classroom library, as my former school’s library was long-overdue for an overhaul. My school’s library included few popular authors or newly released books which students wanted to read and recommend to their friends. America’s classrooms are becoming more diverse; therefore, young adult literature should present young readers with characters of various ethnicities and races experiencing recognizable conflicts and themes. Students should be able to see themselves in the literature that they read. Young adult literature focuses on young characters’ experiences, can create a peer relationship between a character and reader. Young adult readers should be able to relate to a character’s experience but should

also relate to the character himself or herself. One such award that honors multiple adolescents' experiences, the Michael L. Prinz Award promises in its mission statement to include a variety of works that reflect young readers' realities. It promises in its mission that statement to include a variety of works that reflect young readers' realities. Young readers want to encounter characters who resemble them in the works they read. More races, genders, socioeconomic classes, belief systems, and ethnicities should be showcased in titles for adolescent and teen readers. This leads to the research questions for this study:

1. What is the relationship between Printz Award winners/honorary titles and a narrator's gender and ethnicity?
2. Are titles picked for the award equal in the number of male and female narrators?
3. Are ethnicities equally represented?

These questions are important because the award seeks to be representative of teen readers; therefore, one would expect that there are an equal number of Printz books with male narrators as female narrators and from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. As of 2018, there were 18 books who have been awarded the Printz, and 73 named honor books, thus an equal number should be narrated or about teen girls' experiences as teen boys' experiences as well as being from an equal number of race or ethnicities. The Printz Award becomes part of culturally relevant pedagogy proposed by Ladson-Billings (1994) by providing what Style (1988/1996) calls mirrors and windows for students to see themselves in what they read both in and outside the classroom. Bishop (1990) furthers this notion by proposing mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, so that students can see themselves in the curriculum and readings, but also allows for students who have different experiences to realize their classmates' realities, and hopefully, come together through reading. Students can also come together through reading. Cart (2008) notes

Another value of young adult literature its capacity for fostering understanding, empathy, and compassion by offering vividly realized portraits of the lives – exterior and interior – of individuals who are unlike the reader. In this way young adult literature invites its readership to embrace the humanity it shares with those who – if not for the encounter in reading – might forever remain strangers or -worse – irredeemably 'other' (para. 13).

In order for the Printz Award's claim for a diverse representation in the books chosen as honorable and winning titles an equal number of books should be narrated from an equal number of genders, races, and ethnicities.

Literature Review

Theoretical Frameworks

Mirrors and Windows

Developed by Emily Style at the National SEED Project, the concept of mirrors and windows encourages the creation and implementation of a diverse curricula. Style (1988/1996) defines ‘mirrors and windows’ as “If the student is understood as occupying a dwelling of self, education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected” (para. 5). Students must be able to see themselves in what they learn but must also come to understand their classmates’ realities. McElhiney (2000) in writing of multicultural women’s poetry, summarizes Style with “windows into the worldviews of someone from another culture or as mirrors that reflect our own cultures” (p. 42). Style (1988/1996) also notes “we need to acknowledge that this perspective is in line with the ancient liberal arts tradition which pursues multiple perspectives” (p. 3). She reminds readers of the Golden Rule, that “to ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’ takes one’s own sensibilities and projects them through the window onto the other” (pp. 3-4). Style (1988/1996) comments that white males find themselves throughout the curriculum, but “women and men of color, on the other hand, find almost no mirrors of themselves in the house of curriculum; for them it is often all windows” (p. 4). McElhiney (2000) provides a response to this, “In reading multicultural women’s poetry, in addition to paying attention to setting, narrative point of view, symbols, images, and style, we must also look to racial/ethnic traditions, conventions, worldviews, historical events, and sociological conditions affecting the respective women’s writings, as well as our own responses” (p. 41). Just as McElhiney’s women poets challenge themselves to read widely and broadly, so should teachers and students be challenged to read inclusive texts and propose these texts’ inclusion in the curriculum.

Students’ realities are often not reflected in the books they read at school (Flores, Medina, Durand, & Balsingham, 2016, p. 77). Style (1988/1996) explains, “All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experience back to them, upon occasion – thus validating it in the public world of the school. But curriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others – who also need and deserve the public validation of the school curriculum” (p. 4). Students may not find themselves equally or fairly represented in society but should have opportunities to be represented in the curriculum from which they learn. Graff (2017) explains, “Published texts can be considered a way of legitimizing one’s presence in the world. Seeing one’s self or lifestyle reflected in print validates one’s presence, and some might argue, one’s significance, in the world” (p. 14). American society is becoming more diverse and diverse students should be able to see themselves in the works that they read, particularly if they are part of the intended audience.

Several writers and researchers have noted the importance of creating opportunities for creating windows and mirrors for young readers through culturally relevant pedagogy and diversity in school curriculums, encouraging students to read broadly and widely outside their cultural experience (Hickney & Hopenwasser, 2013; Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015; Connors & Rosh, 2015). Graff also notes that young readers who have been exposed to culturally diverse literature may also choose to read culturally diverse titles for pleasure. “Conversely, youth who are not afforded these continual opportunities to access and interact with culturally relevant literature may develop apathy, ambivalence, or animosity toward reading,” which is linked to young people’s reading motivations or lack thereof (Graff, 2017, p. 14). Graff uses the “ethos of reception” to explain the importance of cultural recognition, noting, “Often discussed within the context of immigration, an ‘ethos of reception’ speaks to the shaping of one’s identity by the recognition, misrecognition, or absence of recognition of the self by others, particularly in the dominant culture” (p. 14). Creating opportunities for students to see other cultures in literature meant for them is an important step in making room for diverse experiences in the classroom and the curriculum.

Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

Bishop (1994) frames mirrors and windows into a way of understanding young adult literature through multicultural literacy. She comments, “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American society can find their mirrors” (Bishop, 1994, para. 4). Bishop also states that mirrors and windows as a means of challenging dominant culture as well, noting that young readers from dominant cultures learn from literature with characters from various cultures, ethnicities, and races. Bishop (1994) explains, “Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others” (para. 5). In reading about another young person’s realities and conflicts, young readers learn about themselves. Bishop (1994) continues “They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connection to all other humans” (para. 4). In reading books with characters from various cultures and backgrounds, students who live in homogenous communities are able to see other young people’s lives.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1994) proposal of a culturally relevant pedagogy fits with Style’s (1988/1996) concept of ‘windows and mirrors.’ Ladson-Billing (1994) explains, “however, by situating it in a more critical paradigm, a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy would necessarily propose to do three things – produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who can demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can

both understand and critique the existing social order” (p. 474). Teachers using culturally relevant pedagogy help students realize their own realities and how to empathize with peers in and outside of the classroom. Carter and Darling-Hammond (2016) explain that using culturally relevant pedagogy “teachers find ways to know and value who their students are, and envision and support their potential” (p. 604). Windows and mirrors contributes to a culturally relevant pedagogy because students develop cultural competence through reading about cultures outside of their own experience. Teachers and other educational stakeholders can help bridge cultural gaps by providing and recommending literature with diverse settings, characters, and conflicts which span gender, racial, and ethnic differences. Reading diverse literature, especially literature written for their specific age range, encourages students to understand common conflicts occur across cultures, yet some young people’s internal and external conflicts are also caused by cultures. Understanding cultural conflicts forces students to question their own cultural norms and critically analyze how other young people live, face conflicts, and learn across cultures.

Recently, with the publications of books like *The Hate U Give* and *American Born Chinese*, researchers are encouraging the young literature community to consider how these texts can help young readers see themselves in the texts they read in and out of curriculum reading. Guthrie and Humenick cited in Barry’s (2013) study of urban 8th graders’ reading preferences and perceptions, note that “having award books available that celebrate all of these racial identities would allow students to choose books and choice is a factor known to be important to motivate students to read” (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004 as cited in Barry, 2013, p. 364). Boyd, Causey, and Galda comment that “to educate all children appropriately, teachers need more books that depict diverse lifestyles, opportunities, beliefs, choices, and worldviews in addition to books that focus on the status quo” (p. 380). Teachers play a vital role in helping their students encounter lives existing outside of the school through the literary works they provide young learners inside the classroom. Providing students with multiple perspectives of young peoples who deal with similar conflicts and joys of young adulthood helps them empathize with youth who are not like them. Boyd, Causey, and Galda (2014) provide a large list of culturally diverse literary awards focused toward young readers along with a list of recommended authors and titles (pp. 381-383). Coombs and Mayan (2015) use of diverse young adult literature with S.E. Hinton’s (1968) *The Outsiders* to chronicles how the classic young-adult novel challenged students’ understandings of outsiders. Mayan writes of her own seventh-graders’ reading of the novel as they develop their beliefs about outsiders in their own lives. The authors explain, “She [Mayan] hoped to use literature to help her students consider the perspectives of those on the margins, thus interrogating how it felt to be an ‘outsider’ and how social pressure and expectations can affect their choices and lived experiences” (p. 45). Coombs and Mayan (2015) provide a list of suggested texts exploring “What Does It Mean to be an Outsider” for both whole-class readings and classroom libraries (p. 47), with several titles being Printz award-winning or honorary titles. The recent research in diverse young adult literature’s use in

the classroom, especially with popular and award-winning titles show how culturally relevant pedagogy can positively inspire students to see a myriad of lived experiences in the pages they read.

Representations in Young Adult Literature

Why is diversity important in young adult literature? Adolescence and teenage years are fundamental for budding readers. As many teens grow, their love for reading becomes compromised with budding social lives and schedules packed with extracurricular activities and sports. Reading often falls by the wayside. To better engage teen readers, they must be able to see themselves in the books they read yet also encounter different people, cultures, and communities in the literature they read. Coombs and Mayans (2015) comment “Through sharing our stories and our experiences, we can come to better understand and empathize with those around us even as we undermine stereotypes and learn to recognize elements of the ‘other’ in ourselves” (p. 55). Coombs and Mayans’ article highlights how encouraging students to be social about what they read can help build empathy and understanding within the classroom which may have ripple effects outside the classroom. The Printz Award’s website states “Librarianship focuses on individuals in all their diversity, and that focus is a fundamental value of the Young Adult Library Services Association and its members. Diversity is, thus, honored in the association and in the collections and services that libraries provide to young readers” (ALA, 2019). In recent years, diversity has become an important theme in discussions about young adult literature. Boyd, Causey, and Galda (2014) explain of the state of youth literature “One con is that – although gains have been made – there are *still* not enough books being published that are outside of the white, middle class, heterosexual world” (p. 380, emphasis in the original). noted the Cart (2010) notes of Printz Award winners, “No matter how diverse they may be, what all these titles have in common is richness of character, an attribute that separates literary fiction from popular fiction, in which character often takes a back seat to plot...But story in these books is always in service to character” (p. 29). Stakeholders in the literary world have become more aware of the stories published. The public wants more diverse representation in the works they read including story plots, character ethnicities, and social conflicts. Stakeholders in education have become leaders in this movement, as many teachers want multicultural literature to be a part of their curriculums and libraries.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Printz’s Award winning or honored titles were equal in terms of diversity. Diverse representation is claimed in the Printz Award’s Criteria statement; therefore, an equal number of female and male narrators should be represented in the award-winning or honored titles. Furthermore, an equal number of gender and races or ethnicities should be equally represented in titles chosen as winners or honored titles. Teachers and education stakeholders, like parents, librarians, and administrators look to literary award lists to find well-known and engaging titles for young readers. Award lists uncover books which have important and sometimes challenging social issues which students may encounter in their own lives or in the

future. Students encountering their own experiences, by narrators and characters who resemble them and their struggles and joys, is an important part of a student's reading life. This quantitative study sought to determine if the Printz Award winning and honored titles were equal in narrators' genders and ethnic/racial representation to determine if the Printz Award was as diverse as the students who read the recommended titles. This study examines the 91 Printz Award winning titles and honored titles by researching narrators' gender and race/ethnicity through internet searches via book-centered websites and resources to determine if the award's claim for diversity amongst the chosen titles was valid.

Methods

Data Collection

Initial data for this study were collected from the YASLA's website listing Printz Award winners and honor books. The original hope for this project was to focus solely on the eighteen Printz Award winners and examining the narrators' genders to assess gender equality; however, such a small sample size would not have produced enough data to fairly assess the award's fairness in equally representing male and female narrators. Thus, the Printz honor titles were added to give a fuller understanding of the research question. The variable of ethnicity was added as another means to better understand diversity and representation in young adult literature titles. Ethnicity was determined through the novel's description, an online summary, or a quote from the novel itself. For this study, five ethnic and racial descriptors were considered: White, African American (Black), Hispanic/Latino/a, Asian, or Other/Multicultural. Ethnic groups and race were analyzed together as one variable category for ease of research. Further research studies separating ethnicity and race into separate variables should be done in the future to gain a fuller understanding of racial and ethnic diversity of the listed titles.

The Printz Award winning and honorary titles were entered in an Excel worksheet. Then, an internet search was completed via several webpages, namely www.goodreads.com, a book-centered social network which also acts as a repository for book titles, authors, editions, characters, award lists, and other literary related subjects. Goodreads is quality-controlled by a team of librarians, active users (including readers), who act as the site's editors. The site has working relationships with numerous libraries across the world. Amazon as well as web-engine image searches were also completed to determine characters' ethnicities via a book's cover.

One would hope that Printz Award winning and honored titles would have equal representation of male and female narrators since the award's beginning in 2000. Secondly, one would also expect, given the YASLA's mission for the award to be diverse, with equal representations amongst narrators' races and ethnicities. The null hypotheses of this project is firstly, that there will be equal representation of male and female narrators and secondly, that there will be an equal representations amongst narrators' races and ethnicities.

Data Analysis

A chi-squared procedure was run to determine if a narrator's gender and ethnicity was related to Printz Award winning and honorary titles. According to Laerdes Statistics (2019), the chi squared test has two assumptions. First, the two variables must be measured at the ordinal or nominal level. Both gender and race/ethnicity are nominal variables. Second, the variable should consist of two or more categorical independent groups (para. 2-4). Gender was grouped into male, female, both (multiple narrative perspectives), or none (no gender indicated). (Gender identification along the LGBTQ spectrum was not considered for this study, but should be considered in further research). Ethnicity was grouped as White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or Other/Multicultural. Ethnicity and race are often lumped together in surveys; therefore, they have been included as one variable in this study. These statistical assumptions being met, the data were analyzed.

The following charts and graphs were derived from entering the Excel worksheet into SPSS, running a case summary, frequency distribution, a histogram to check for normality, a Cramer's V, a phi coefficient, a contingency coefficient, and a chi square test. For a detailed list of the original Excel spreadsheet and the coded version, please refer to Results section of the study for charts.

The study's total sample size included 90 titles, with one title excluded. The original data spreadsheet shows that this is normal – at least one of the sample cases (*Heart to Heart*, an honor title from 2002) does not have a narrator. Several titles have “both” voices – either because the title is nonfiction or deals with two characters of the opposite gender (ex: *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith*). The report's full case summary is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Case Summary
Case Processing Summary^a

	Included		Cases Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender	90	98.9%	1	1.1%	91	100.0%
Ethnicity	90	98.9%	1	1.1%	91	100.0%

^a Limited to first 100 cases.

The frequency tables showed that the majority of the narrators represented are white females (at 67% and 45.1% respectively) compared to male narrators at 37.4%. The majority of narrators at 67%, are white.

The chi-square critical value, according to Table C.4 (Hinkle, et al. 2003, p. 639) in *Applied Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* states that $\chi^2_{cv} = 26.027$, which exceeds the significance level at .01 (noted in the correlation table as being correlated). This reflects a weak relationship between race/ethnicity and gender. The study's chi squared tests for this study are in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender Ethnicity Crosstabulations

Gender ^ Race/Ethnicity Crosstabulation								
			Race/Ethnicity					
			White	African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Other/Multicultural	Total
Gender	Female	Count	27	2	1	4	0	34
		% within Gender	79.4%	5.9%	2.9%	11.8%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	44.3%	15.4%	25.0%	44.4%	0.0%	37.8%
		% of Total	30.0%	2.2%	1.1%	4.4%	0.0%	37.8%
		Standardized Residual	.8	-1.3	-.4	.3	-1.1	
	Male	Count	28	8	3	2	0	41
		% within Gender	68.3%	19.5%	7.3%	4.9%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	45.9%	61.5%	75.0%	22.2%	0.0%	45.6%
		% of Total	31.1%	8.9%	3.3%	2.2%	0.0%	45.6%
		Standardized Residual	.0	.9	.9	-1.0	-1.2	
	Both	Count	3	3	0	1	0	7
		% within Gender	42.9%	42.9%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	4.9%	23.1%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	7.8%
		% of Total	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	7.8%
		Standardized Residual	-.8	2.0	-.6	.4	-.5	
	None	Count	3	0	0	2	3	8
		% within Gender	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	100.0%	8.9%
		% of Total	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	3.3%	8.9%
		Standardized Residual	-1.0	-1.1	-.6	1.3	5.3	
	Total	Count	61	13	4	9	3	90
		% within Gender	67.8%	14.4%	4.4%	10.0%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Race/Ethnicity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	67.8%	14.4%	4.4%	10.0%	3.3%	100.0%

The Phi coefficient at .710 is close to 1.0, showing that gender and ethnicity are closely related. The contingency coefficient at .579 also shows that gender and ethnicity are moderately related. Cramer's V shows a .41 association between race/ethnicity and gender, which relates to a weak relationship between the two variables. The study's symmetric measures output is in Table 3.

Table 3: Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.710			.000
	Cramer's V	.410			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.363	.132	3.649	.000 _c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.276	.111	2.692	.008 _c
N of Valid Cases		90			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Results

The study's results show that despite the Printz Award's goal to include diverse books in its award winners, the gender of the majority of winning and honor titles is female, and the ethnicity/race is white. While the American Library Association should be praised for nearly achieving gender equality in its titles, as shown by the frequency table. For the original null hypothesis that of the 90 titles who had an identifiable gendered narrator, an expectation for equal number of male and female narrators is rejected (though the percentage was close at females with 45.1% and males at 37.4%). The second part of the null hypothesis, that there would be an equal number of titles amongst the five identified races and ethnicities, was far from being equal. White narrators dominated the data at 67%, African Americans with 14.3%, Hispanic/Latinos 4.4% and Asians 9.9%; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected as well. The study's results show that more diversity is needed in the Printz Award's award winning and honorary titles in order for equal gender and racial/ethnic representation amongst the title's narrators and characters.

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

This finding that gender inequality and lack of diversity amongst the Printz Award's winners and honorary titles is particularly troublesome, though not unexpected. Equal gender, and racial and ethnic representation is still a goal children's and young adult literature that has not been reached (Boyd, Causey, and Galda, 2014, p. 380). This is particularly problematic as American society and its classrooms become more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Young adult literature, particularly literary prizes, should represent the society from which it derives its characters, conflicts, and themes.

There are several suggestions for future research studies based upon the Printz Award. First, the Printz Award committee should continue to keep diverse protagonists and characters in mind when selecting books to

be considered for this award. Michael Cart (2010) drew attention to this a decade into the award's presence in YAL scholarship. Cart notes,

While I've been praising Printz winners and honor titles for their 'diversity,' how many of them have acknowledged persons of color or those having a different ethnic, cultural, or religious background? The answer, like so many of the Printz books – is a bit complicated Yes, four of the ten Printz winners have recognized such diversity...However of the thirty-seven honor titles, a scant seven include characters of color, and those are limited to African Americans (p. 30).

Second, the committee should also keep in mind including diverse authors. Authors often infuse their own experiences into their works and hearing of different experiences could validate young readers' own experiences during the trials and tribulations of middle and high school years. Lastly, the committee should also include more titles with characters from various gender identities and sexual orientations. Due to time limitations, these identities were not included as part of this study but should be included in future studies. It should be noted that the ALA has a specialized award, the Stonewall Award, dedicated to notable books with LGBTQ themes and characters (American Library Association, 2019b). Including more characters of varying gender, racial, and ethnic identities in the Printz Award winning and honorary titles is what young readers deserve.

The research procedures for this study should be applied to other youth-focused awards schemes to identify gaps in gender equality and diversity. Such a study would bring to light the many voices and experiences which are left in the shadow by the literary world. By bringing the absence of diverse characters into the forefront, education and literary scholarship can push authors, publishers, editors, and other stakeholders to seek and demand more representation for diverse literature.

Efforts are being made to counteract the tendency to err towards the White (often straight) male point of view in storytelling. The We Need Diverse Books campaign began with the aim of bringing a variety of voices and stories into children's and young adult literature. The organization's website explains its mission as "putting more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of all children." Their explanation of diversity reads, "We recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities" ("About WNDB," 2019). The organization pushes influencers in the literary world: authors, publishers, teachers, parents, and readers to diversify their reading experiences and pass it on to others. Youth activist Marley Dias began 1000 Black Girl Books to find and distribute books featuring black girls in youth literature (Dias, 2019). More efforts and support should be given to organizations and grass-roots efforts to diversify young learners' choices in what they read. Diversity is the future and young adult literature should showcase youth in their many forms.

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Mixing It Up: Envisioning the Possibilities for Education in Louisiana
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Can I Do it? Examining the Relationship between Motivation and Self-Efficacy

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The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of high and low intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on self-efficacy. Intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards. Extrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by external rewards. This may include fame, grades, and praise from certain individuals. This study was performed at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Southern Arkansas University after obtaining permission for the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The participants included 310 university students who volunteered to complete a brief demographic and a questionnaire that measured Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, Factors influencing the Choice of Major, Enjoyment of Major, Perceived Employments Opportunities after Graduation, and Fear of Failure. An analysis of variance showed that the impact of Intrinsic Motivation on Self-Efficacy was significant, $F(1, 97) = 9.418$, $p = .003$. Our findings showed a significant impact of Intrinsic Motivation on Self-Efficacy. An analysis of variance showed that the impact of Extrinsic Motivation on Self-Efficacy was significant, $F(1, 79) = 12.052$, $p = .001$. Our findings showed a significant impact of Extrinsic Motivation on Self-Efficacy. Both results show that there

are significant differences in both high and low intrinsic and extrinsic motivation when it pertains to self-efficacy. Possible explanations will be discussed.

Literature Review of Creativity in Elementary Education

Stacie Austin, University of Louisiana at Monroe

The proposed literature review will cover a historical overview of creativity, an explanation of the creative process, constructs of creative pedagogy, and elaboration upon barriers to nurturing creativity in the general education classroom. Barriers may include teacher misconceptions about creativity and traits of creative individuals, environmental dynamics, and socio-economic factors. In addition, the review of literature will cover the Louisiana second grade science and social studies curriculum and determine whether opportunities to nurture creativity, exist within the framework of the curriculum.

Creativity expert Sir Ken Robinson (2006), in a TED talk with over 54 million views, pointedly described how schools kill creativity and pleaded for a change in schooling practices. Evidence supports the statement that teachers do not nurture creativity at the level needed for 21st- century problems (Andliou & Murphy, 2010; Beghetto, 2010a; Robinson, 2001; Sawyer, 2010) and classrooms are generally void of any appearance of fostering creativity (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004). Research reflects that creativity can be undermined and restricted (Beghetto, 2005; Craft, 2001). Niu & Steinberg (2003) suggested that the educational system's focus on standards and high-stakes testing leaves little room for imagination and invention. Au (2007) found that high-stakes tests significantly alter the curriculum to align with the tests by narrowing content through the elimination of untested material and subjects. Au also reported that information is often compartmentalized and taught in isolation. Furthermore, teachers frequently rely on teacher-centered methods, which rarely foster creativity, in order to cover the abundant test content (Au, 2007, 2011).

While creativity was reported to be greatly valued by teachers, (Andliou & Murphy, 2010, Kamylyis et al., 2009; Runco & Johnson, 2002) Cho, Pemberton, and Ray (2017) also reported discrepancies between teachers' claims and actual classroom practices. Evidence supports the statement that creativity is not nurtured in schools and classrooms (Andliou & Murphy, 2010; Beghetto, 2010; Runco & Johnson, 2002, Sawyer, 2010).

Teachers face numerous obstacles in promoting creativity, ranging from lack of knowledge to misconceptions about creativity and the creative process (Ucus, 2017; Robinson, 2017). Multiple studies revealed teacher misconceptions regarding traits of creativity (Beghetto, 2010a; Cho, Pemberton, & Ray, 2014; Kamylyis, 2010; Ucus, 2017). Teacher misconceptions, while multi-faceted, are not the only barriers to nurturing creativity. Cho, Pemberton, and Ray (2014) additionally noted environmental factors such as students' limited choice,

creative suppression, compartmentalization, and high-stakes testing, were factors. The association of negative behaviors with some creative traits revealed a need for explicit methods of fostering creativity while keeping a safe, positive working environment in the classroom (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). Additionally, Anyon (1980, 1981) revealed that a school's socio-economic status may impact whether teachers purposefully foster creativity in students.

Research has proven that creativity is a valuable resource and that creativity scores are slowly declining, beginning in early elementary school. Multiple barriers affect the nurturing of creativity in the classroom. Researchers have noted teacher misconceptions, standardized-testing and restrictive environments, as significant barriers to fostering creativity in the classroom setting. Research also suggested that teachers are the primary determining factor in whether students experience creativity-enhancing practices in the classroom, and recommended that teacher training place a greater emphasis on creative teaching practices, understanding of creative skills, teaching for creativity, and creative learning opportunities.

Financial Literacy

Jené Thomas, Southeastern Louisiana University

In reviewing the financial literacy that is being offered for K-12 education in Louisiana's public schools in using the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, it is important to examine the current policies that support the education of financial literacy. In addition, it is important to consider what is being taught as opposed to what is required to educate students on financial literacy for the future. The Cognitive Dissonance Theory is the most appropriate theory to adopt when examining the students' and teachers' attitudes towards gaining education in financial literacy because it is in shaping and altering their attitudes that will help to minimize the educational gap on the lack of financial literacy in Louisiana's public schools.

Thus, in examining the financial literacy that is being offered in Louisiana's public schools the various elements that comprise of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory include students' attitudes and teachers' attitudes. Using the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, this paper examines and explores the financial literacy for K-12 education that is being offered because it may aid in minimizing the educational gap in what students in Louisiana's public schools are learning as opposed to what the students should be required to learn. Requiring financial literacy to be taught in Louisiana's K-12 education may improve students' knowledge about decisions on spending and savings, it may lead to increasing professional or entrepreneurial opportunities, having a better life satisfaction, and it may contribute to society as a preventative measure to increase savings and minimize debt in America. Through reviewing and exploring the attitudes that students and teachers must have on becoming

educated in financial literacy in Louisiana's public school system, this paper suggests a call to action, which will help to maintain the attitudes necessary to acquire the learning for financial literacy.

Professional School Counselors in Louisiana: Leadership, Perspectives, and ASCA Model Fidelity

Alexis Alexander, Southeastern Louisiana University

Shavon Savoy-Helaire, Southeastern Louisiana University

Jessica Shelton, Southeastern Louisiana University

This proposal examines the role of Professional School Counselors on Louisiana high school campuses. For this presentation, the three specific components of such counseling responsibilities include: leadership, varying perspectives, and the implementation and execution of the American School Counselor Association Model within guidance departments.

Hence, the purpose of this proposal is three-fold: (1) classify the 21st Century leadership roles of counselors in Louisiana schools; (2) identify student, parent, and principal perceptions of professional school counselors in Louisiana schools; and (3) to ascertain if counseling departments that implement the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Model with fidelity have better student success rates in contrast to those who do not.

The rationale for this proposal is as follows: (1) principals may view counselors as leaders in different ways, which may or may not align to the requirements of the job; (2) there is not a sufficient amount of literature regarding parent and student perspectives of counselors; and (3) the ASCA Model is a reference that has highly suggested for counselors nationwide – given that counselors are also mandated also by the regulations of their principals and districts what occurs to students if the model is or is not fully implemented?

The intended audience for this research topic will potentially be the Louisiana Department of Education however school-level administrators – superintendents, principals, and guidance counselors – are the primary benefactors. The results will be important to administrators to recognize the perceptions of other administrators, parents, and students regarding professional school counselors. Equally, this research has the potential to influence hiring standards, procedures, and overall counseling practices in our state.

Moreover, for graduate students who are in School Counseling master-level programs, they can use the results to influence their theoretical framework. For parents and students, they will be able to identify the attributes of a counselor that best align with aiding the student's high school matriculation, in preparation for young adulthood.

Literature reflects the history of counselors, counselors as leaders, the American School Counselor Association Model, and perceptions and expectations of counselors. The primary descriptors for this proposal are Leadership and PK-12 Education.

Influencers of Parental Choice in Homeschooling Approaches

Letitia Walters, Southeastern Louisiana University

This study explored factors that determined parental reasons for choosing to homeschool and motivators that influenced parental choice of approaches in homeschooling their children. John Holt's idea of freedom and individualized education for parental autonomy in choosing to homeschool is the theoretical framework for this study which encompasses both ideology and pedagogy. Ideologies such as school safety, religion, and values are some of the main influencers for choosing to homeschool. In addition, parental understanding of effective or ineffective teaching or pedagogical confidence are other reasons for choosing homeschooling. While these reasons are distinct, the motivations are intertwined with parental autonomy of believing in their right of making decisions fundamentally and free from governmental intervention. A research adapted questionnaire was used for surveying respondents in this study. The survey answered only by one parent that was the primary educator and having at least one year of experience teaching with homeschool approaches. The sample size (n=228) population consisted of homeschooling educators with the majority from the areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Grade level education, average household income, and religious backgrounds were included. Seven homeschooling approaches examined: Classical Education, Cooperative Education, Traditional school at home, computer based, Charlotte Mason, Unschooling, and correspondence and school related umbrella organizations outside of the home. Results of this study included the main three chosen parental reasons for chosen homeschooling are religion and moral instruction, values, and school environment concern and the next most performed homeschooling approaches were classical education, traditional school at home, computer-based schooling, and cooperative schooling. The Pearson correlation was executed and revealed three significant positive relationships and one significant negative relationship between parent reasons for homeschooling and factors that influence choosing the homeschooling approach. Focused implications are noted for homeschooling parents and higher education personnel. More clearly defined homeschooling approaches and technology infusion are future research concepts.

Assessing the Learned Learner When Using a Concept Curriculum in Nursing Education

Dale Norris, Delgado Community College

Expanding nursing curricula has faculties seeking alternatives to educate nurses. The traditional systemic/medical curriculum is being replaced by a conceptual curriculum in hopes of streamlining and making nursing education more efficient. In this regard, the most disadvantaged learner is the learned learner, clearly defined in the text, whose advanced background can be a detriment to nursing education. This report expounds this dilemma. A critical comparison of the concept curriculum to similar curricular efforts in K-12 teaching will provide a context in which to re-frame the pedagogical and assessment needs of the learned learner. Components upon which individual faculties may craft their own curricular design, delivery and assessment to the benefit of the learned learner are proposed. This article extends the concept curriculum discussion in a direction that is otherwise sparsely addressed. New knowledge and awareness can serve as pedagogical and assessment models for the learned learner.

Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers and Literacy Coaches' Literacy Instruction

April Giddens, Northwestern State University

The literacy rate in Louisiana remains lower than the national average. This is especially true at Rosewood Elementary School (pseudonym), a D-rated school on a scale of A-F. The problem is that teachers are unsuccessful in trying to improve students' literacy test scores, despite several targeted efforts to give them tools to make these improvements. The purpose of this study is to explore the literacy practices, beliefs, and professional development of teachers at Rosewood Elementary. The conceptual framework of this study included Clark and Peterson's cognitive process teacher model, which focuses on teachers' thought processes and their behaviors in the classroom and guides the questions about these processes. The key research questions involve 3rd-5th grade teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions of their current professional learning on and support for effective literacy instruction, as well as the literacy coaches' perceptions of teachers' needs and struggles with teaching literacy. This case study includes sequential data collection including a survey, interviews, and classroom observations from 9 purposefully selected literacy teachers in Grades 3-5 and 2 literacy coaches, all from Rosewood Elementary School. Constant comparative data analysis was used for interview and observational data, and descriptive analysis was used for the survey. Findings include both teacher and coach perspectives. Training on classroom management and differentiated instruction was needed. A 4-day professional development was developed to address these needs. Implications for social change with improved literacy instruction include an increase in student literacy rates as well as teachers' self-efficacy in literacy instruction.

Why Students Drop Out of College: Possible Solutions

Ronald Doré, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Bertha Myers, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Recently, I conducted a survey with my freshmen students in my foundation and leadership class, and I asked them for major reasons that students drop out of college and do not complete their degree. I also asked for possible solutions to combat college dropouts. Their responses centered on financial reasons, lack of high school preparedness, lack of study skills, family issues, poor college grades, lack of focus, personal issues, college not for everyone, lack of family support, and other ideas.

In reference to financial woes, students suggested that they should apply for scholarships while in high school, score highly on ACT or SAT, apply for Pell Grants if applicable, work part-time or full time if necessary provided that their academics come first, join armed services if needed, and seek financial counseling at university level. To combat lack of high school preparation, one must work closely with the counselor to schedule challenging courses, schedule courses in high level thinking skills and test-taking skills, and schedule courses that require various writing assignments.

To avoid stress/depression/anxiety, one may speak with the university counselor, speak with a professor whom you feel confident with, and exercise regularly and practice good sleeping habits. For students who face family issues such as divorce, illness, death, the student can seek a support group at the university to discuss any problems. If one is to drop out of the university, he must do so correctly rather than to stop attending classes.

Other issues discussed also included poor grades and lack of focus, personal issues as too much partying, loneliness, dissatisfaction with professors' instruction, etc.

In conclusion, respondents stated that work responsibilities, preparation, focus and support from everyone are all important ingredients for students to remain in college and to become successful. Each student is to work harder to achieve his greatest potential, namely the reality of receiving a great education and a university diploma.

The Role of School Values in Sustaining Educational Change

Maria Lynne Lieux, University of New Orleans

This paper will focus on one school's experience of sustaining one-to-one computing over 20 years. A single, embedded case study focused on educators' experiences of educational change as they adopted, implemented, and sustained an innovation, one-to-one computing, over 20 years. The purpose of the study was to explore the innovativeness, the capacity of a school community to take on change for continuous educational

improvement over time, as it integrated one-to-one computing throughout the school. Through interviews and focus groups with administrators, teachers, students, and graduates, observations of current classroom practices, and archival data, the study provided an understanding of how individuals experience change and how schools sustain change over time.

The review of the literature will concentrate on school culture, leadership, and change literature. Fullan's Change Model, which provided the theoretical framework for the study, suggests that the innovativeness of a school community, its capacity to embrace educational change for improvement, is what allows an innovation, such as one-to-one computing to be sustained. A brief review of the development of one-to-one computing will also be discussed.

Following the review of the literature, the author will discuss some of her findings regarding one's school's capacity to embrace change through the use technology. A key factor that emerged from this study was the importance of the school's educational philosophy or the values it embraces in sustaining change. In implementing and sustaining the one-to-one computing program, participants continuously focused on how the program was congruent with the school's mission and the values that the school sought to impart to students. Other findings included the need for a school culture that is collaborative and encourages risk-taking and collegiality with others beyond the school. The role of leadership at a variety of levels in implementing and sustaining educational change to support the school's mission and in developing a strong school culture which encourages educational change will also be discussed.

Investigation of the Relationship between Principal Authentic Leadership and Teacher Engagement Levels in Southern Louisiana

Tachelle White, Southeastern Louisiana University

Education reform has shifted its focus to effective leadership when looking at student achievement. Educational leaders indirectly affect student achievement through teachers (Gordon, 2013). As a result, leaders must engage teachers. However, little is known about what types of leaders engage teachers. The purpose of this study is to investigate if there is a relationship between principal authentic leadership and teacher engagement levels. In order to determine which principals have an authentic leadership style, principals will complete the Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire. Teachers in the research study will complete the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) as well as the Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire on their leader. The study benefits educational leaders by providing information about leadership styles that increase

teacher engagement levels, thus improving student achievement. This will allow universities, as well as school districts, to tailor their programs to educate and train future leaders.

The main methodological approaches used in the literature that relates to this study use quantitative research design. The majority of the studies used in the literature review involving follower engagement were conducted in the business industry. It is evident that more research needs to be conducted in the educational field. Through this research, data will be analyzed in order to determine if authentic school leaders in southern Louisiana produce engaged teachers. This research study will be conducted in a school district in southern Louisiana. It is quantitative and will use a survey and descriptive and correlational research design methods to answer exploratory research questions. Purposeful sampling will be used to select middle school principals and teachers. The instruments that will be used are: Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) and the Utrecht Workplace Engagement Scale (UWES). Middle school principals will be surveyed on their Authentic Leadership using the ALQ. Teachers will be surveyed on their principal's Authentic Leadership using the ALQ, their Authentic Followership using the ALQ, and their workplace Engagement using the UWES.

Creating Individual and Organizational Readiness for Change: Conceptualization of System Readiness for Change

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Change is inherent in human action and necessarily occurs in a context of human social interactions (Ford & Ford, 1995). Organizations are in a continuous state of change and, to survive, they must develop the ability to continuously change themselves incrementally and, in many cases, in a fundamental manner (Burnes, 2004b). (Choi & Ruona, 2011). However, in reality, many change efforts do not result in their intended aims and do not foster sustained change. In particular, the failures are often attributed to the organization's inability to provide for an effective unfreezing process (Lewin, 1947, 1997b) before attempting a change induction (Kotter, 1995, 1996; Schein, 1987, 1999b). Generally, most organizational change models acknowledge the importance of the unfreezing step through such phases as building momentum, warm-up or defrosting activities, or gaining buy-in to the change effort (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Kotter, 1996; Schein, 1987, 1999a). Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) identified four major themes: change content, change context, change process, and change criterion issues. Changes at the organizational level have often been considered with a macro, systems-oriented focus (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999). However, a number of researchers have also adopted a micro-level perspective on change and have put more emphasis on the role of individuals in implementing changes (Armenakis et al., 1993). According to the researchers, organizations only change and act

through their members, and successful change will persist over the long term only when individuals alter their on-the-job behaviors in appropriate ways (George & Jones, 2001; Porras & Robertson, 1992). Readiness is arguably one of the most important factors involved in employees' initial support for change initiatives (Armenakis et al., 1993; Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 1999). Although the concept of readiness may have been first introduced by Jacobson (1957), the foundation for readiness as a unique construct has been embedded within several theoretical models of the process through which change unfolds. Researchers have tried to outline a set of actions that could be taken by change agents to reduce resistance and move organizations and individuals through these stages. (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007). Readiness for change was defined as a comprehensive attitude that is influenced simultaneously by the content (i.e., what is being changed), the process (i.e., how the change is being implemented), the context (i.e., circumstances under which the change is occurring), and the individuals (i.e., characteristics of those being asked to change) involved. Readiness for change is a multidimensional construct influenced by beliefs among employees. (Holt, Armenakis, et al., 2007).

The purpose of this paper is to share a developing global conceptual framework on creating individual and organizational change through system readiness for change. The paper will delineate organizational and individual change, change components and the process, and interactions of individual and organizational readiness for change. The primary focus of the system perspective is on the development of the ecosystem and utilizes an analogy of a spider web.

Reinventing the School Improvement Plan: Proposing a New Model

Nancy Autin, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Tiffini Brigola, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Why do school leaders and stakeholders often falter in implementing a meticulously designed plan for school improvement? Recent research reveals that a new, simplified improvement model is needed for successful implementation in 21st Century learning environments. This model must be clear in its vision, new in structure, and rich in capacity building. Sustainability is the overarching focus of this continuous improvement model. Supporting collaboration and nurturing reciprocal leadership relationships are among the critical elements in this process. This presentation will provide a fresh look gleaned from the literature on how to push forward in carrying out the goals and action steps of a meaningful improvement plan. The use of Action Research Teams is the stronghold of this new model.

Children's Critical Reflections on Gender and Beauty Through Play as Reader Response

Tori Flint, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Play, as it corresponds to emergent literacy, became heavily researched in the late 20th century (Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 2000). However, there is currently a marked absence of research that focuses on investigating if and how children, of varying ages, specifically use play as a form of reader response, which I term, responsive play. This type of play is used as a means to understand texts, a way to respond to and transact with texts (and with others), as a way to construct meaning, and as a means for creating alternative classroom learning spaces (Leander & Rowe, 2006; Rowe, 1998). This study, conducted in a first grade classroom, analyzed young children's playful responses to literature. The purpose of this research was to develop deep understandings about the affordances of play in response to text and to investigate the ways that children draw from their sociocultural resources and construct meaning as they respond to literature through play. This paper focuses specifically on the findings that highlight the ways in which play can be viewed as a meaningful literacy in the classroom context and on the ways in which the children reflected critically about gender, gender roles, body image, and ideals of beauty as they responded to literature through their responsive play.

For example, as Lucia, Lily, and Daniella read *The Paper Bag Princess* together, the topic of sexiness is discussed as the girls negotiate the characters they want to "be" as they prepare to act out the story:

Lucia: She's a little bit chubby, too. (Pointing to the princess wearing the paper bag)

Daniella: Yah...she's not sexy (Shaking her head side to side).

Lucia: Why did you say that word?

Daniella: (Smiles)

Lucia: I'm the girl. I call the girl. (She chooses to become the princess Cutout)

Daniella: I don't wanna be the girl. You're chubby!

Lucia: Yah...(Shrugs)

Daniella: I wanted to be her, but look, she's skinny (Flips back pages and points to the princess wearing a dress) now she's fat and chubby

(Flips to a page showing her wearing a bag).

When these girls negotiate their roles as they prepare to play in response to the story, they draw from their various experiences in which they have perhaps been enculturated to believe that to be sexy or pretty, a girl must be thin. These types of conversations and character analyses, brought about by meaningful transactions with books and with each other through play, can open doors for critical conversations about gender roles and ideals of beauty in relation to storybook characters within the classroom context.

This paper session will share several examples like the one above and will focus on lively discussion about the ways that play can be utilized in response to children's literature in the classroom context and on discussing the ways in which children are able to explore critical issues such as gender, gender roles, ideals of beauty, and body image through their play in response to literature.

Cultivating Effective Citizens in K-5 Social Studies with Mindfulness-based Strategies

Natalie Keefer, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Introduction

The focus of social studies education at the elementary level is citizenship, social living, and character education (Duplass, 2011). Associated with this focus are mindfulness-based capacities such as self-discipline, academic focus, stress management, emotional regulation, empathy, compassion, and perspective taking (Mindful Schools, 2018). In a social studies methods course, preservice teachers are engaged in weekly mindfulness practices: (1) to facilitate stress-reduction and academic focus in their role as undergraduate college students, and (2) to learn how to incorporate mindfulness practices into the social studies curriculum at elementary grade levels. This presentation of ongoing research will disseminate practices that are most effective for reducing preservice teacher stress and supporting academic focus, and will indicate the types of mindfulness activities preservice teachers report they are most likely to incorporate into a K-5 classroom setting.

Review of Literature

In a secular, K-12 setting mindfulness is a research-based technique taken from the Western bio-medical perspective, specifically the fields of neuroscience and psychology, and used to focus mental concentration on academic success, improve emotional resilience and reduce test-taking anxiety through focused breathing (Greenberg & Harris, 2011). Regardless of the specific mindfulness practice, the goals are similar for practitioners: sharpening attention and concentration, learning to identify and regulate emotions, gaining self-awareness, increased empathy and compassion for the self and others (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Research on mindfulness and teachers indicate that when teachers practice mindfulness they report reduced stress and burnout, greater efficacy and awareness, and emotional resiliency (Flook et al, 2013; Jennings et al., 2013; Jennings et al., 2015). Research indicates K-5 students had improved cognitive performance and greater social-emotional resiliency to stress, improved self-compassion, empathy, and perspective taking (Napoli et al., 2005; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Semple et al., 2015, Zenner et al., 2014). Although there are a plethora of studies on the benefits of mindfulness in K-5 settings, research on mindfulness-based practices in social studies classrooms is absent from the literature. This research seeks to close this gap in knowledge by demonstrating the worthiness

of mindfulness in social studies education, and by explaining the benefits and effective applications of mindfulness for students and teachers in K-5 social studies classrooms.

Method

In this ongoing case study, participants (n=40) are introduced to the benefits of mindfulness, the rationale for incorporating mindfulness into social studies activities, and learn a new mindfulness practice each week during the course of one semester. Data are collected from open-ended questions and a ten-item likert questionnaire. The open-ended questions and questionnaire address content related to the research questions: (1) what mindfulness practices were most effective for reducing preservice social studies teachers' stress and improving academic focus?, and (2) what mindfulness activities are preservice teachers most likely to incorporate into their classrooms?

Findings

Findings indicate mindfulness is an effective strategy for managing preservice teachers' stress and academic focus. Preservice teachers reported that they are willing to use mindfulness strategies in the classroom with additional support and training.

An Experiential Learning Experience: Mentoring a 5th Grade Social Studies Exhibition

Deborah McCarthy, Southeastern Louisiana University

Framework

Qualities of impactful experiential learning have been described by giants in education such as Dewey, Kolb and Friere. Studies have documented the benefits, and various organizations such as the Association for Experiential Education and the National Society for Experiential Education have recommended principles to ensure quality. However, this study gives voice to the participants, allowing them to identify attributes of a productive experiential learning experience.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore factors that teacher candidates in a social studies/science/ELA capstone methods course attributed to successful experiential learning and to ascertain its influence on their feelings towards teaching social studies. The research questions were: 1. What are factors that teacher candidates attribute to successful experiential learning? 2. What is the impact of the experiential learning experience on teacher candidates' feelings toward teaching social studies?

Methodology

In Spring 2017, nineteen senior methods teacher candidates at . . . University, guided small groups of fifth graders in an International Baccalaureate (IB) school through the development of a social studies action project. Seventy students were involved. Weekly mentoring visits occurred from January 25 to April 26 with Exhibition Night on April 27. A case study design was employed. The instruments used to collect data from the 19 teacher candidate participants were weekly reflections, observations, written comments, recommendations and a graphic organizer. A cross-case thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data.

Conclusions

The Social Studies Exhibition Reflection used to collect weekly data included the prompts “What we did,” “What went well,” “What could be changed,” and “How the students reacted.” Some themes that emerged from the reflections under the prompt “What went well,” were group cooperation. Under “What could be changed” off-task behavior emerged. Under “How the students reacted,” 86% of student reactions were positive. Observations by the researcher at the site verified the reflections. The descriptors on the graphic organizer completed by the teacher candidates who attended Exhibition Night were 68% positive. Recommendations emphasized clarity of expectations and training. The End of Mentorship Comments Questionnaire identified benefits, challenges and the impact of the mentorship on teaching social studies. Some benefits were enhancing mentoring skills and observing student growth. Challenges noted were student motivation and outside support. Final comments concerning the impact on teacher candidates’ feelings indicated that 47% experienced no change, 42% became positive and 10% were negative.

Implications

Training, clear expectations, outside support, group cooperation, student interest and accomplishment are possible factors that contribute to successful experiential learning which can promote positive feelings for the participants. Identifying the benefits of the mentorship expressed by the teacher candidates should be a convincing incentive to continue including experiential learning experiences in college courses.

Diversity in the Printz Awards

Anita Dubroc, Louisiana State University

Diversity has become a buzz word in media, literature, and education. Educators want their students to see themselves and others like them in what students view, read, and experience. A major push in modern literary studies is to have a diverse representation for readers. Teachers should expose students to diverse voices and experiences, not merely old or dead white writers. Young adult literature has become a means for students to see

themselves in books. The genre brims with diverse writers, characters, and themes. Many teachers look to awards lists to learn about titles, authors, and trends which would engage the various readers who sit in their classes. The American Library Association's (ALA) Michael L. Printz Award winners and honorees for best young adult literature titles are watched to by teachers, librarians, and avid readers of all ages. The winning books should reflect the diversity of its readers, though this is not always the case. As students become a more diverse and globally aware group, are the books that teachers share with them challenging students through equal representation of genders and ethnicities?

The Michael L. Printz award is presented yearly by the ALA's Young Adult Library Services (YALS) to authors writing works for teens. The ALA's website explaining the award states, "the Michael L. Printz Award annually honors the best book written for teens, based entirely on its literary merit each year. In addition, the Printz Committee names up to four honor books, which also represent the best writing in young adult literature" (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/printz/>). With young adult literature becoming popular with adults as much as young adults, the award has become more recognizable to the public. Authors such as John Green, Rainbow Rowell, Terry Pratchett, and Angie Thomas all have Printz award honorary or winning books. The award focuses on multiple parts of novel that make it great – voice, writing style, characters and theme/s. One major feature of a novel is the narrator, who is the reader's tour guide in a literary adventure. This leads to the research question: what is the relationship between Printz Award winners/honorary titles and a narrator's gender and ethnicity? Titles picked for the award equal in the number of male and female narrators? Are ethnicities equally represented? These are important questions because the award seeks to be representative of teen readers; therefore, one would expect that there are an equal number of Printz books with male narrators as female narrators. As of 2018, there are 18 books who have been awarded the Printz, and 73 named honor books, thus an equal number should be narrated or about teen girls' experiences as teen boys' experiences and being from an equal number of race or ethnicities.

This project researches Printz Award honorees and winners by examining titles' narrators. Narrators' gender identity and race or ethnicity were collected and statistically analyzed through SPSS to determine the frequency of male vs. female narrators and narrators' ethnicities. The project's findings show the possibilities of analyzing other awards for similar frequencies.

Teachers as Leaders: An Autoethnography of Spiritual Leadership in Public Schools

Scott Blanchard, Louisiana State University

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of spiritual leaders in secondary, public educational settings and in the motivation of students. In a YouTube video on intrinsic motivation, Deci (2012) once explained, “Don’t ask how you motivate other people. Ask how you can create the conditions so that people will motivate themselves” (2012). Given this notion, how then, can secondary teachers utilize personal spirituality to mentor and motivate students in public schools without proselytizing?

This autoethnography is an educator’s story of hunting for true purpose, and only finding it when I recognized that serving others was part of my teacher identity. When I changed my lens of trying to self-promote to promoting those around me, I discovered validation. I began this study looking for a way that curriculum and instruction could increase the motivation of students. I was hoping that by finding a subscription-based program and increasing student motivation, test scores would increase, discipline issues in the classroom would decrease, and in turn, teacher motivation and morale would be impacted in a positive way. As I began to research student motivation, life began to fight back. Two students close to me were killed by violent acts in back-to-back summers. Their deaths made me question the importance and effort of putting so much emphasis on curriculum in the classroom, if we were losing good students to anger, hate, and life choices outside of the classroom.

The significance of spiritual leaders and servant leaders in schools can be measured by the impact on the learning environment with faculty and staff. A small but significant body of work—several studies—illustrate this. For example, Banke, Maldonado, Laceu, & Thompson (2005) conducted a phenomenological study on the experiences of school leaders. Similarly, Malone and Fry (2003) found the practice of spiritual leadership could develop in people a sense of calling and membership leading to greater congruence in terms of their shared vision and values, as well as improved individual, team and organizational empowerment.

An overarching question guided this study: Is spiritual leadership, influenced by Christianity, an appropriate form of mentoring-leadership relationships in public secondary schools?

Sub Questions:

1. How does servant leadership and spiritual leadership help create this autonomous learning environment identified by Deci and therefore reduce the number of amotivated students?
2. How can understanding the student as an individual help a teacher confront the issues with motivation when addressing school report cards and state test results?
3. How can spiritual leadership, servant leadership, and mentorship practices address issues within the school such as racial equity, social justice, school bullying, and school morale of both teachers and students?

What Are Some Key Factors and Barriers Experienced Between a New Teacher and a Mentor Teacher Engaged in a Mentoring Program?

Stefanie Sorbet, University of Central Arkansas

The mentoring process could provide the support and guidance necessary for new teachers, further engage veteran teachers in their profession, and improve teacher retention in both parties. Administrators implementing mentoring programs within their schools should be mindful of factors that go into serving as a mentor or a mentee as well as any possible barriers that may emerge from all involved.

The original study from which this data was taken was a mixed methods study analyzing mentoring programs from K-6 public schools within the southeastern Louisiana in 2018. To address any factors and barriers of a mentoring program, the researcher further examined the qualitative responses from two specific open-ended response questions and compared themes within the mentors' and the mentees' responses.

The mentors' open-ended responses to the question which asked what factors go into serving as a mentor or mentee provided 6 themes. The 6 themes that emerged in order of importance to the mentor were: (a) teaching skills, (b) time, (c) patience, (d) dedication, (e) feedback, and (f) reflection. According to the responses, mentors believed that there are teaching skills that one should possess to be a mentor teacher such as organization, strong leadership skills, strong classroom management, open-mindedness, years of experience, patience, knowledge of curriculum, and love of the job. The theme of time was mentioned in 15 responses as a key factor that goes into serving as a mentor.

The mentees' open-ended responses to the question which asked what factors go into serving as a mentor or mentee provided five themes. The five themes in order of importance to the mentee based on how often these themes emerged were: (a) teaching skills, (b) collaboration, (c) communication, (d) feedback and (e) time. The mentors' open-ended responses to the question which asked what barriers they saw while participating in a mentoring program. The mentors identified barriers in their order of importance being (a) time, (b) skills, and (c) communication. The mentors were concerned with time restraints to plan together, support the mentee, and meet with the mentee.

The mentees' open-ended response to the question which asked what barriers they saw while participating in a mentoring program. Mentees identified just two themes of time and feedback. The mentees recognized the theme of time most often.

In conclusion, of the factors and barriers that go into facilitating and implementing a mentoring program, time appeared to be the biggest concern of mentors and mentees. Feedback was also a major concern as well as teaching skills.

A Study of the Characteristics of the FSCS Model in Southeastern LA Title I Elementary Schools

Angelyn Mesman, Southeastern Louisiana University

Mindy Crain-Dorough, Southeastern Louisiana University

Kathleen Campbell, Southeastern Louisiana University

This is a sequential explanatory mixed methods study to discover the existence of the four characteristics of the Full-Service Community School model that was developed from research in three southeastern Louisiana Title I elementary schools. The four characteristics of the FSCS models include: (a) program identification and implementation, (b) on-campus auxiliary services, (c) parent and community engagement activities, and (d) collaboration among stakeholders.

The sequential explanatory mixed methods study was carried out in three phases. Phase I was the pilot phase that involved: (a) an expert review by an expert in the field of community schools, (b) a pilot principal survey, and (c) a pilot principal interview. Phase II of the mixed methods study consisted of the data collected from a principal survey to the Title I elementary principals in one district. From the data analysis, three Title I elementary principals were purposefully selected. In Phase III, three Title I elementary principals participated in interviews, observations, and collections of artifacts. The school personnel participated in focus groups. Data analysis included descriptive statistical analysis for numerical data and qualitative coding analysis for narrative data in search of evidence for the existence of the four characteristics of the FSCS model.

Truth, Justice and Educational Leadership: John Rawls Revisited

Robert Slater, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dorothy Slater, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

This paper addresses two major issues in educational administration/leadership theory and practice. One has to do with research and the generation of knowledge related to educational administration and leadership. The second has to do with the question of justice and the problem of making schools more just places for students to live in and to learn. These two issues have generated two different conversations and groups in the field. Communication between these groups is often sporadic and difficult. This should not and need not be the case. John Rawls' important book, *A Theory of Justice*, can provide points on which the two groups can find much needed commonality.

A Review of Literature on Professional Identity Development in Graduate Education

Ashley Johnston, Southeastern Louisiana University

Today, graduate education prepares students for an advanced level of educational inquiry and training (Walker et al., 2009). Students choose to enroll based on various reasons but ultimately with the goal of advancing their own personal and professional goals. Educational Leadership programs, specifically those at the doctoral level, have a dual-purpose mission in preparing students to engage in academic scholarship, while fostering an environment in which students learn to develop a specialized skillset to become advanced practitioners. Coupled with carrying out this intended mission, programs must also monitor the process of professional identity development among its doctoral students (Colbeck, 2008). In the field of Educational Leadership, students are often joining programs with an already established professional identity, as many choose to continue full-time employment while pursuing advanced education; therefore, these students must resolve or refine any new identities that develop as a result of program engagement, including that of a researcher and practitioner. The purpose of this session is to better understand this phenomenon through a review of existing literature on identity theory in the context of graduate education, encompassing professional identity development among doctoral students and management of multiple professional identities. This review is proposed in an effort to create conversations on how educational leadership programs can better support the needs of their students and provide guidance for future scholarship, with the hope of informing program development and support, mentoring structure and engagement, and student retention initiatives.

An Exploration of Doctoral Student Research Self-Efficacy During the Literature Review Process

Mindy Crain-Dorough, Southeastern Louisiana University

Adam Elder, Southeastern Louisiana University

Ashley Johnston, Southeastern Louisiana University

In this qualitative study, the research self-efficacy experienced during the literature review process was examined for a sample of doctoral students in an educational leadership program. Doctoral students encounter many challenges during the literature review process (Chen, Wang, & Lee, 2016). More information is needed regarding ways to support students in overcoming these challenges. Increasing research self-efficacy is a means by which these challenges can be addressed. Research self-efficacy, a construct derived from Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy construct, can be defined as individual beliefs about one's ability to perform research (Lambie, Hayes, Griffith, Limberg & Mullen, 2014). Increased research self-efficacy has been shown to be related to degree completion (Geisler, 1995).

The data utilized in this study were collected using two focus groups. The first was with new doctoral students in the early stages of the literature review process (those in second semester of the program) and a second was with a cohort several years into the program and therefore further into the literature review process. The focus group protocol included questions about challenges encountered during the literature review process and about solutions that facilitated the process at the individual, group, and program levels.

In a previous work, the authors of this paper synthesized the literature regarding research self-efficacy and categorized the identified research-based strategies for increasing research self-efficacy (Authors, 2018). The categorization had two facets: (1) the four sources of self-efficacy (i.e., mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion, physiological/emotional states) (Bandura, 1977), and (2) the four cognitive areas of functioning (i.e., cognition, motivation, affect, and selection) (Bandura, 1993). In the present study, the focus group data were inductively analyzed initially and then deductively analyzed using this categorization scheme.

The reported results include the challenges that students faced during the literature review process and the factors or experiences that impacted their research self-efficacy, both positively and negatively. Findings indicated that students should start the practice of reviewing literature in their early semesters and that teaching effective literature review practices should be part of the doctoral curriculum. This study has implications for pedagogical and program-level practices in doctoral programs.

A Study of the Contrast between Ed.D. and Ph.D. Dissertations

Kathleen Campbell, Southeastern Louisiana University

Thomas DeVaney, Southeastern Louisiana University

Objectives or Purposes

One of the goals of the educational leadership doctoral degree is to prepare future leaders who will conduct research that will affect policy (Hanna, 2015) by giving the doctoral recipient the “ability to address problems and develop solutions” (Kidwell et al, 2014, p. 14). Furthermore, doctoral degree recipients are in positions to “solve critical problems, expand the boundaries of knowledge, teach future generations, and provide leadership” (Danowitz, Spires, Clark, Faircloth, Fleener, Lee, & McIntyre, 2015, p. 3). Despite the lofty expectations, the arduous process of rigorous coursework, painstaking research, and in-depth analysis and writing, some have criticized the doctoral dissertation process (Archbald, 2008; Boote & Beile, 2005, 2004; Shulman, 2010). Do educational leadership dissertations actually study matters relevant to the field of education? Do they add to the body of knowledge in a beneficial way to education, to the community, to society? The researchers will

analyze Ed.D. and Ph.D. dissertations completed in 2015 for relevance or educational advancement. Thematic analysis will include common as well as distinct themes.

Theoretical Grounding

Boote and Beile (2005) lamented the inadequacy of the literature review in numerous dissertations, asserting that doctoral candidates often are neither trained nor prepared for serious reviews of the literature. Archbald (2008) contested the need for dissertations at all in the case of the Ed.D. practitioner degree. Moreover, Walker et al (2008) criticized educational doctoral programs for their lack of “purpose, vision, and quality” (p. 3).

Critics have compared citations, criteria, and types of dissertations, but not relevance: do they address/solve important issues in education? The purpose of this paper is to analyze recent dissertations for relevance or advancement in education.

Summary of Methodology

Dissertations were identified and retrieved through the Proquest Dissertation and Thesis database. Using guidelines by Krijcie and Morgan (1970), the researchers randomly selected 200 dissertations, including 100 Ed.D and 100 Ph.D. dissertations. This research examined titles, abstracts, statements of purpose, problem statements, and statements of significance to identify common themes in educational leadership dissertations. In addition to the frequency of themes identified within and compared across the types of dissertations, odds ratios were used to identify the relative likelihood of themes in relation to the type of dissertation.

Results and Conclusions

Ph.D. and Ed.D. dissertations were compared for thematic similarities and differences; investigated for relevance; and categorized as academically, practically, or personally significant. Although both had multiple studies of principal leadership, the Ed.D. dissertations focused more on leadership styles, practical problems, and teaching strategies in K12 schools, while Ph.D. dissertations focused more on leadership development and behavior and higher education issues. Odds ratios showed that higher education dissertations were 5.3 times more likely to be conducted within a Ph.D. program while dissertation on principal leadership were equally likely to appear in Ed.D or Ph.D. dissertations (OR = 1.2). The value added to the field of K12 educational practitioners through the attainment of an Ed.D. degree was discussed. Results may be helpful to those making hiring decisions in both K12 and university settings.

Appreciative Inquiry: A Strengths-Based Approach to Qualitative Research

Dana Griggs, Southeastern Louisiana University

Are you beginning a new research study? Would you like to focus on the strengths in organizations instead of identifying a problem to fix? Attend this session to see if Appreciative Inquiry is for you. Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to qualitative research that frames interview questions and investigations in a positive way. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) researchers believe that organizations should focus on their best moments and plan a future of similar successes. It differs from traditional research where a problem is identified to correct. In this session, the researcher details how AI has been used in qualitative research and program evaluation. A newcomer to AI can attend this session and begin his/her journey to using this new approach.

The Relevance of the Leadership Standards

Leslie Jones, University of Holy Cross

The reoccurring concepts embedded throughout the chapters are the work of school leaders is critical in this era; and there is heighten attention on the roles of the leaders as linked to student achievement and school improvement; school culture and climate; and the variables that impact achievement, improvement, culture and climate. The demands on school leaders have significantly changed. About a decade ago, the Southern Educational Regional Board suggested that school leaders impact as much as twenty percent of the achievement in schools. A few years later, the potential impact of school leaders increased to twenty-five percent.

The need for leaders to move student learning and to respond to changes in education and challenges are contributing factors to the development of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). In chapter 1 and in other chapters throughout the book; the links and importance between educational leadership and student learning are made. The standards provide a framework of the knowledge and skills need for school leaders to be prepared for the challenges.

PSEL are professional standards for school leaders which apply to assistant principals and principals with concepts applicable to district level leadership. In this publication: School and District Leadership for 2020, five chapters are included with a description of what is needed for school leaders from a standards-based approach. The objectives for School and District Leaders for 2020 include:

- Reviewing the history of the Interstate School Leader Licensure (ISLLC) Consortium Standards – revised to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the importance of standards for leaders;
- Discussing the shift in the PSEL to a focus on “students;” and
- Discussing the practicalities of PSEL for school leaders.

Five chapters are included in *School and District Leaders for 2020* from a standards-based approach. In Chapter 1: Introduction, an overview of the processes for the development of the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards and Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSEL) is included. To ensure that candidates were and are prepared to meet the demands of leadership, the Chief Council of School Superintendent's Officers (CCSSO) has been an active voice for developing leadership standards since 1996. The first ISLLC standards were adopted in 1998. The adoption of the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) is a collaborative effort of the CCSSO and NPBEA. The 2015 standards include additional standards; and there is a more intense focus on student achievement.

The Supporting Role of Walk-Throughs in the Value-Added Assessment Era: Perceptions from School Administrators

Louis Moore, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The U.S., state, and school districts have been raising academic standards for students and putting forth efforts to hold teachers and school administrators accountable for providing quality education (Ballou, et al., 2004). "There has been substantial interest in recent years in the performance and accountability of teachers and schools, partially due to the No Child Left Behind legislation, which requires states to develop a system of sanctions and rewards to hold districts and schools accountable for academic achievement" (Rubin, et al., 2004, p. 103). According to Hershberg (2005), public education was designed to provide universal basic literacy, to socialize a highly diverse population, and to use standardized tests and the bell-shaped curve to sort out the top one-fifth of students for higher education. In order for public education to evolve and improve, teachers and administrators will need to replace the ability-based notion with an effort-based theory of learning (Hershberg, 2005). As a result of efforts toward this reform, interest grew in using teacher value-added estimates to affect employment and tenure decisions (Ballou, et al., 2012).

Many states have already adopted a value-added measurement system to hold educators accountable. Although there has been improvement in the area of available longitudinal data (Ballou, et al., 2012), there have been concerns such as a lack of clarity of teacher VAM scores, missing data, and unstable VAM estimates. Louisiana is currently a VAM state in terms of measuring the performances of teachers and school administrators. Compass is Louisiana's tool that supports teachers and principals in defining expectations for student learning and monitoring progress throughout the school year (louisianabelieves.com, 2018). Many principals among school districts in Louisiana conduct classroom walk-throughs to ensure that teachers are effective. This study

examines a South Louisiana School District's developed walk-through instrument with the intention to align its criteria with criteria of the Louisiana Compass Observation Instrument. The purpose of the district's walk-through was to help teachers become more effective and as a result earn the best rating possible on Compass Observations. For teachers to be more effective and get the best rating, a strong walk-through process must be implemented. This study was focused on the perspectives of school administrators as to the effectiveness of the District Walk-Through Observation Instrument (DW-TOI) and the walk-through process. Thus, the purpose of this mixed-methods study was to: (1) explore perceptions of school administrators regarding the classroom walk-through process and its effectiveness in getting teachers better prepared for their Louisiana Compass observations; and to (2) analyze school administrators' perceptions on the effectiveness of the District Walk-Through Observation Instrument in preparing teachers for their Louisiana Compass observations. The overarching question for this study was: Does the walk-through instrument and the walk-through process effectively equip teachers and prepare them to meet the requirements of Louisiana Compass?

This study's research questions and hypotheses exploring school administrators' perceptions as to the effectiveness of the district walk-through instrument and the walk-through process will be answered in this paper. Additionally, the major findings from the study will be shared.

Barriers to Implementation of School Policy

Maggi Bienvenu, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Nancy Autin, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The field of educational policies, from local to federal, affecting classroom instruction can be difficult to navigate. This paper identifies several common barriers that make it difficult for school leaders to implement policy, despite consequences for non-compliance. These challenges include lack of funding, inadequate staffing, ineffective communication, and contradictory policies. The author has also included research and experience-based suggestions for overcoming each barrier.

The Little School Board that Couldn't: How Lack of Leadership Caused a School Board Implosion

Linda Fairchild, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Layla Touchet, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

School boards are a large part of Louisiana educational politics. They are considered the governing bodies over school districts. Members of school boards have the autonomy of personnel, budget, and sometimes

academic decisions. School boards have to work together with the superintendent and other central office staff to have an effectively run school district.

But what happens when symbiosis doesn't exist? If there is no leader to mitigate issues between school board members? Burns (1978) describes this as bureaucracy versus leadership. Specifically, "its leadership may lack formal legitimacy and perhaps external credibility and be peculiarly vulnerable to the shifting loyalties and purposes of followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 295). While school boards have presidents and vice-presidents, a block of members can ostensibly offset any voting power the president and vice-president have. When this happens, the community is left with its governing body essentially a lame duck. The decisions become personal and not about the matters affecting the school district.

You're probably wondering how can counseling fit into this equation. Counseling isn't only about the services we provide in how we help people, but also how we conceptualize and understand what is going on. School boards are a gigantic system, so naturally using systems and group theories are beneficial in understanding how that entity is working. "In group systems theory, control and the power structure of a group can be observed through discerning how, and by whom, decisions are made and how group dynamics are directed or influenced. Group power structures can include linear power hierarchies, unclear or dishonest power figures, an organization of group roles, or some combination of these" (Caple and Connors, 2005). According to Yalom (2005), group therapy helps look at and improve interpersonal learning. How we interact with others affects how others interact with us, and this cycle continues system wide. If our school boards are not having the positive and beneficial interpersonal interactions with each other and everyone else in their system, how can we expect other people in the system to interact with them positively and beneficially with others as well?

It is with these two perspectives that the co-authors will view the lens of the school board meetings of a high-performing, rural parish school board. By using not only counseling services to help the board understand their group dynamics, but also teaching them about different style of leadership, can the members be positive, active members?

Employability Skills: Preparing Students for Career Success

Andrea Broussard, South Louisiana Community College

After reviewing evidence on the lack of employment in college graduates and the increasing demands in the workforce for quality employees, it appears that many students lack these skills even after an extensive educational journey. Certain studies, such as Eisner (2010), show the need for college graduates to have this skill set and why higher education needs to facilitate this process. The major goal of this current research is to explore

the importance of these skills, why college students are lacking these important skills, and what steps are taken to increase their acquisition.

Andrews, J. & Higson, H. (2008) defined how there is a clear difference between “soft skills” and “hard business knowledge” in the context of the job field. The Department of Education further states, “Employability skills are general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors. These skills have a number of names—soft skills, workforce readiness skills, career readiness skills—but they all speak to the same set of core skills that employers want.” (<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/>). Other articles provide evidence on the lack of these skills. Key to this study is the evidence provided by Sin, C., & Amaral, A. (2016) and The Chronicle of Higher Education from Dec 2012 on the perception of who is responsible to teach college graduates these skills and why. Evidence shows that colleges and universities are increasingly being tasked to facilitate the acquisition of these skills since students are coming to college without them.

South Louisiana Community College, through their Quality Enhancement Plan, decided to focus on three of the employability skills since these skills relate to the student population. The three skills chosen were communication, critical thinking, and personal qualities. This five-year plan focuses on key assessments using the VALUE Rubrics, (Finley, 2011), and is faculty-driven to produce successful outcomes. VALUE rubrics were chosen for their reliability and validity in measuring these employability skills. A soft launch was initiated in the SFSE (Student in First Year Experience) course in the fall 2018 semester. This course was chosen for the soft launch based on the course content that is taught and the ease of administration of the assessments. Preliminary findings from the faculty indicated areas of success and improvement. Key changes from the findings and feedback from the faculty are currently being implemented as the plan moves forward. Future plans for the spring 2019 semester are to launch the assessments in three key Workforce cohorts, which comprise the technical side of SLCC.

Becoming the GOAT: An Analysis of How Intrinsic Motivation and External Motivators Influence Athletic and Academic Outcomes of Intercollegiate Student Athletes

Michael Rutledge, Southern University and A&M College

As the underlying layers of athletics and universities begin to be more transparent in a globalized and inclusive society, “ways of practice” within every organization, business, entity, institution, and so forth, are now highlighted, critiqued, and analyzed by the public in areas that were not as visible in past years. Given their high visibility and popularity, athletics and academics are greatly valued, and can be windows into, or a reflection of underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions of specific cultures (Cunningham & Welty-Peachy, 2010). The values

of success, competition, achievement, progress, and standards are examples of culturally derived behaviors and attitudes that make athletic departments reflective of the society in which they operate (Edwards, 1973). However, despite the large body of literature on positive connections between athletics and academics, there continues to be a growing concern regarding the overemphasis of athletic participation (Dawkins, Braddock, & Celaya, 2008), especially as it relates to African American males.

Proposal

Participation in intercollegiate athletics has the potential to be a major advantage for African American student athletes; especially at PWI's due to the array of resources and support provided on these campuses. At the same time, however, there is a continuous debate concerning the impact and relationship that athletic participation and academic success have on African American student athletes. Nevertheless, when analyzing the relationship between athletics and academics, the very term "student athlete" implies that an individual must successfully manage the tasks and responsibilities that lead to a direct impact on their future. These impacts can vary from social interactions, obtaining graduate and professional degrees, and financial freedom. Nonetheless, even if it is immediately acknowledged that, in fact, there are several other realms within which a student athlete must also live successfully, the contexts of academic and athletic pursuits often produce various sets of motivations that lead them to grow and achieve endeavors that were not immediately and readily in their outlook.

The purpose of this study is to examine, interpret, and highlight the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence student athletes to excel both athletically and academically. Accordingly, in order to properly explain these factors, CRT is used as a lens in which to view these motivations. The images produced through CRT are highly valued while various perspectives convey a vivid image of the realities within particular cultures.

While these participants expressed their stories, experiences, as well as current situations, several themes emerged to illuminate the motivational factors that have led them to and through graduate school as well as an understanding of how athletic participation transfers into academic pursuits. Intrinsic motivation was highlighted and supported with (a) high academic expectations and (b) high athletic expectations. These insights may prove valuable to players, coaches, teachers, professors at colleges, athletic directors, parents, and others associated with intercollegiate athletics.

Examining Barriers Faced by First Generation College Students and Factors Contributing to Success

Julie Crews, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

First-generation college students, those whose parents or guardians never attended higher education or who entered but did not attain a degree, and students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds are a segment of the college and university student body traditionally marginalized by higher education policies and practices (Walpole, 2007). A student's desire to attend a higher education institution upon completing high school has been found to not only hinge on the social class of the student's family but the educational level of the student's parents as well (Walpole, 2007). The plight of first-generation college students has been documented in countless studies (Ishitani, 2006; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Many first-generation students arrive on college campuses ill prepared for what they are going to experience and could benefit greatly from programs aimed at making their transition from high school to higher education more comfortable (Byrd & McDonald, 2005).

The purpose of this literature review is to explore barriers first-generation college students face when making the decision as to whether to attend college. Further examination will review programs developed to enhance success of first-generation students. Thus, the overarching research question of this review is "What barriers do first-generation college students face when making the decision to attend a community college and what supports are available to ensure success?" Five questions guide this review:

RQ 1: What steps can first-generation college students take to help overcome barriers to attending a higher education institution?

RQ 2: What programs have been developed to assist first-generation college students overcome these barriers?

RQ 3: Are the programs that have been developed to aid first-generation college students achieve success effective?

RQ 4: What are perceptions of TRIO administrators as related to the success of first-generation college students?

RQ 5: What is the level of success of first-generation college students who participate in the TRIO programs in relation to retention and degree completion?

The literature review presents research related to initiatives at the K-12 level including No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top and college level programs and initiatives including the federal program TRIO (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services). The research highlights personal and institutional barriers first-generation college students face upon nearing the end of graduation from high school. The personal

barriers relate to academic preparation, lack of financial support, inability to socially integrate, and heavy work schedules due to their need for financial capital to pay for college, while institutional barriers in higher education institutions including difficulty with coursework, lack of awareness of the college landscape and poor campus support systems for first-generation students. The framework also includes factors contributing to the success of first-generation college students. Community colleges can assist first-generation students by providing faculty mentors to help these students transition to college life and by employing competent administrators and staff to direct federal programs designed to assist first-generation students in overcoming barriers to attaining higher education degrees.

Examining Family and Social Support and Effects on Student Retention Completion at Community Colleges

Christy Montgomery, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Over the years, there has been an increased emphasis on the importance of higher education. It is very difficult to gain employment that provides adequate pay without some form of credential or degree (Chung et al., 1996). In addition to employability, higher education helps individuals to explore different ways of thinking, interact with different cultures and gain a more holistic view of the world around them (Chung et al., 1996). Therefore, teenagers are strongly encouraged to complete high school and go to college to further their education while developing as young adults (Kidwell, 2005). As a result, many students begin to pursue college at an early age.

Some students are excited about the transition to college due to the sense of independence that comes with being a college student and the excitement of being away from home for the first time (Hicks & Heastie, 2008). However, other students have a less favorable experience because of various elements, such as lack of family support, financial struggles, and lack of social engagement. Thus, support is a major component of success during the first year of college.

Family and social support have a heavy impact on student success and completion. Peer influence plays a major role in identity development during the early years of college. Many students graduate from high school feeling pressured to receive a college degree. However, a large number of these students are faced with many obstacles early in their college career, and many of these obstacles derive from issues outside of the college setting. These obstacles include but are not limited to family responsibilities, financial barriers, transportation issues, working while in school, and adequate and affordable childcare. During the first year of college, social support is a key element that affects student retention and success (Thompson, 2008).

The overarching research question for this study seeks to find the types of family and social support college students feel are most needed, beneficial, and impactful toward their college success and degree completion. Therefore the purpose of this study is to: (1) examine family support within the community college setting and how it effects student retention and completion; (2) examine social support within the community college setting and how it effects student retention and completion; (3) evaluate how both forms of support help to promote student success through college retention and completion; and (4) explore community college students' perception of family and social support to ensure colleges are adequately meeting students' support needs. The research questions guiding this study include:

- What support systems do college students believe are most impactful to their college retention and completion?
- What support systems do college students believe are most challenging to their college retention and completion?
- In addition to family and social support systems, what other support systems do college students utilize to enhance college retention and completion?
- What additional support systems could be offered by the college to enhance student retention and completion?

Initial study findings will be shared in the full conference paper.

An Examination of University Sophomore Students' Thriving Factors, Second-Year Experiences, and Student Success Outcomes

Margarita Perez, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Most universities have focused retention efforts on the first year of college; however, just as many students leave college between the second year and the third year (Berker, He, & Forest, 2002; Lipka 2006). Over the last 85 years, researchers have studied why students leave college, why they stay in college, and the experiences that impact those decisions. These findings have led to a transformation of the first-year experience for new students around the country. Since the 2000s, research has shifted to focus on the experiences and needs of sophomore students. The research has explored sophomore retention, the sophomore slump, sophomore experiences, sophomore development, and sophomore initiatives on college campuses.

The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) the level of thriving among sophomore students; (2) what sophomore students are experiencing during their second year of college including the frequency of those

experiences and how they report their level of satisfaction with their experiences; (3) the relationship between sophomore students' perceptions of Thriving Factors and students' reported experiences; (4) the relationship between students' perceptions of student success outcomes in relation to intent to graduate; (5) which Thriving Factors account for the greatest amount of impact on student success outcomes; and 6) which sophomore experiences account for the greatest amount of impact on student success outcomes. The overarching question for this study was: What is the relationship or impact of Thriving Factors, experiences, and success outcomes during the sophomore year of college.

Therefore, this study explored the Thriving Factors of engaged learning, social connectedness, academic determination, positive perspective, and diverse citizenship; student experiences, including faculty-student interaction, satisfaction, student involvement, psychological sense of community; and student success outcomes, including tuition worth, college fit, happiness, intent to re-enroll, and intent to graduate. "Thriving provides a broader definition of student success which focuses on academic success, but also recognizes the importance of relationships, perspectives, and psychological well-being for the students, which allows students to gain the maximum benefit from their college experience (Schreiner, 2010b). It is believed that understanding what sophomores are experiencing during their second year of college will help universities create environments and conditions that foster academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development, along with high satisfaction and high completion rates. The series of primary research questions were utilized within the study. The questions, data collection, and analyses will be presented in the full paper. This study identified four major research findings (findings and conclusions will be delineated within the full paper):

- Major finding 1. Based on analyses of research, many sophomores are experiencing what is described as the sophomore slump.
- Major finding 2. Of all the Thriving Factors and student experiences, academic determination has the strongest relationship with satisfaction.
- Major finding 3. Of all the Thriving Factors, engaged learning makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes.
- Major finding 4. Of all the student experiences, psychological sense of community makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining student success outcomes.

Other Duties as Assigned: Roles, Responsibilities, and Contributions of Professional Support Personnel in Higher Education

Jami Rush, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Professional support personnel, the full-time, non-instructional, non-supervisory staff in higher education, play an integral role in the day-to-day functions that work to advance the mission of an institution. Consisting of positions such as admissions counselors, financial aid counselors, academic advisors, librarians, grant specialists, data analysts, payroll clerks, purchasing officers, and residential life coordinators, they are immersed in the policies and procedures of their institution and are often the “frontline personnel whom students initially face when entering the college or university system” (Rosser, 2000, p. 8). Their unique positions within higher education allow them to “significantly affect the tone, manner, and style of the entire institution, and their daily performance levels can determine the quality of relationships with faculty, students, and the public they serve” (Rosser, 2000, p. 7).

Professional support personnel assist with achieving institutional goals through a myriad of programs, services, and functions and the tasks and responsibilities necessary to meet those goals often fall under the “other duties as assigned” section of their job description. The role ambiguity which stems from “other duties as assigned” increases the probability of employees hesitating to make decisions, being dissatisfied with their role, experiencing anxiety, distorting reality, and ultimately performing less effectively. An unclear status along with stress from time constraints, limited resources, excessive bureaucratic paperwork, and negative interactions with students and colleagues over the policies they must enforce but had no part in creating results in role conflict and ambiguity which can negatively impact job performance and an employee’s contribution to their organization. Employee contribution is characterized as behavior that is “essential for a functioning organization” (Katz, 1962, p. 131). In order to contribute to an organization, an individual must exhibit positive work performance through behaviors required and expected for the purposes of one’s position as well as “innovative and spontaneous behaviors that are not specified by job requirements but that facilitate organizational effectiveness” (Katz, 1962, p. 131). These behaviors that are not explicitly stated through a job description or training, but which promote the objectives and goals of an organization are commonly referred to as organizational citizenship behaviors. Employees participate in organizational citizenship behaviors when they are engaged in their job; often used to predict work engagement, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, proposes that when combined, challenging job demands and job resources have the “strongest positive impact on work engagement” (A. Bakker et al., 2014, p. 401). Therefore, understanding the relationship between job demands, job resources, and work engagement

among professional support personnel can assist in making sense of how they perceive their roles and responsibilities.

A proposed study to explore the lived experiences and the perceived roles, responsibilities, and contributions of professional support personnel in higher education seeks to answer the overarching question, What are professional support personnel in higher education's perceptions of their roles, responsibilities, and contributions within their institutions? In order to create a well-informed study, literature on professional support personnel, organizational citizenship behaviors, and work engagement will be explored.

An Examination of Work-Family Balance in Higher Education

Brittney Baptiste Williams, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

There are over four million people employed at higher education institutions across the U.S. (HigherEd Jobs, 2018). With 77% in 4-year colleges/universities, 18% in community colleges, three percent in technical/trade schools, and two percent in business-management-computer trade schools, these employees represent less than three percent of all jobs in America (HigherEd Jobs, 2018). Although this is a small percentage, there is major dissatisfaction with workplace because of an imbalance with the home and work lives (Ryan & Peters, 2015). Women in academia, compared to men, were reported working longer hours (more than 48 hours a week), being unhappy with their work-family balance, and being unable to cope with the pressure and stress of their jobs (Ryan & Peters, 2015).

Much of the literature on work-family balance in higher education has focused on faculty at traditional four-year universities. This supports the need for current research to focus on staff across different academic communities such as two-year institutions and/or trade schools. In order for universities to contribute toward employees achieving effectiveness, research must illustrate what the challenges and benefits are to work-family balance in the workplace.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore work-family balance in higher education. More specifically, this literature review will examine (1) theoretical concepts associated with work-family balance, (2) professional and personal characteristics that shape work-family balance, and (3) current state of work-family balance in higher education. This study will focus on answering three primary questions: (1) what types of family friendly policies exist in two year colleges to aid the professional-personal balance of educational professionals? (2) what primary strategies do community college leaders utilize to aid the professional-personal balance of educational

professionals? (3) what are the commonalities and differences in circumstances as identified by community college leaders that influence professional-personal balance of educational professionals?

Work-family integration is multifaceted; the relationship between work-family balance and individual health is complex (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). Moreover, balance is important to the workplace as it influences attitudes of the organizational members and the perceptions of their employers (Scholarios & Marks, 2004). Research has also shown a link between occupational level and challenging work-family balance, specifically those in higher occupational levels, such as management and leadership, who struggled more with work-life balance (Hill et al., 2001). In addition, those individuals with higher statuses in the organization experience more multitasking of work and family roles (Schieman & Young, 2014). Playing multiple roles combined with organization and community pressures may also influence perceived work-family balance and satisfaction (Khairunneezam, Siti Suriani, & Nadirah, 2017). Family obligations may contribute to the pressure of increased work demands (O'Meara & Campbell, 2011). Issues with work-family balance are especially true for academics who are parents (Drago & Colbeck, 2003; Mason & Goulden, 2002; Mason et al., 2005) or primary caregivers. Drago et al. (2006) noted individuals in primary caregiving roles experienced reduced job promotions, reduced rates of pay, and unfavorable judgments from coworkers.

An Examination of Multicultural Competence of Student Affairs Professionals in Community Colleges

Darica Simon, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Diversity and equity in higher education present a myriad of challenges and opportunities for colleges and universities today. Over the past several years, with the passage of the GRAD Act, there has been a shift in Louisiana for underprepared students to begin their academic career at community colleges (Smith, 2015). Community colleges are the primary pathways to higher education and a brighter future for both traditional and nontraditional students who are largely from underrepresented populations. While community college students are increasingly racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse, the hiring of diverse faculty and student support personnel has not kept pace with the changing student body (Talbot, 1992). The educational value of a diverse student body and its positive effects on student outcomes has been documented in the literature (Chang & Denson, 2006; Colbeck, Bjorklund, & Parente, 2001).

Numerous studies have focused on determining an institution's climate diversity because of the benefits of inclusive and welcoming campuses for students (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Guerin et al., 2002). It is imperative for community colleges to assess their climate for diversity and multicultural cultural competence of both faculty and

student support personnel to ensure that their increasingly diverse populations are successful. Many factors affect retention and completion rates of racially and ethnically diverse students including levels of multicultural competency of college administrators and faculty hired to serve students (Pope, Reynolds, & Muller, 2004). Pope et al. (2004) define multicultural competence as “the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different [or similar] from self in meaningful, relevant, [ethical,] and productive ways” (p. 13).

Research shows that hiring of diverse faculty and staff does not mirror the increasingly diverse student population in higher education institutions (Bumphus & Roueche, 2007; Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003; Talbot, 1992; Woodard & Komives, 1990). Similarly, Vaughan purports (as cited by Bradley, 2011) “that the representation of community college administrators of color has not increased at the same rate of community college students of color” (p. 11) and that this lack of diversity has an impact on student outcomes. Jackson and O’Callagan (2009) state that diverse community college personnel impact students of color attrition rates and employee satisfaction. The importance of hiring diverse community college personnel as Jackson and Phelp explain (as cited by Bradley, 2011) “administrators have the responsibility of serving as mentors to faculty and students, contributing to the development of institutional policies, and defining and improving campus climate” (p. 12). Because of this lack of diversity, it is imperative to examine the multicultural competence of community college professionals.

The purpose of this research study was to understand the multicultural competence of community student affairs professionals. A series of primary research questions were used to examine the variables relating to community college student affairs professionals and their multicultural competencies. The study’s preliminary findings will be shared in the paper.

Towards Fostering a Safe Learning Environment on College Campuses: Perceptions of Campus Concealed Carry

Paul Guidry, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Richard Fossey, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Campus safety and administrators who help to maintain safety continuously work to ensure appropriate policies and procedures enforce laws and institutional standards that both protect campus stakeholders, as well as the infrastructure (NCCPS, 2018). Besides communicating policies, campus safety personnel must also collaborate with faculty and students to ensure assistance is available to address various issues that arise in a campus setting, such as mental health, sex harassment, violence, alcohol, and guns (CAS, 2012).

Recently, legislative mandates have focused on the issue of firearms on campus. With nearly 12 states allowing for campus carry, the concern for an increase of firearms centers on an increase in crime if listening to the critics (Webster, 2016). However, proponents of such mandates counter by claiming an increase of guns means a decrease in violence (SSC, 2012). Beginning in 2004, Utah became the first to adopt campus carry mandates allowing students and faculty the right to carry firearms on campus (NASPA, 2016). While additional states have followed suite, many institutions with newly mandated laws are still allowed to restrict when and where students and faculty can carry.

To bolster safety on campus, legislators and activist have successfully argued and passed mandates in nearly a dozen states allowing for campus carry by students, faculty, and staff. The motivation behind such mandates is to assist campus security in deterring or combating an active shooter (SCC, 2012). Furthermore, proponents of campus concealed carry claim campus safety personnel or police are insufficient to combat an active shooter once the event unfolds (SCC, 2012). On the other hand, many campus stakeholders feel more guns on campus could provide scenarios for more crime (Gavran, 2015).

As the campus carry debate continues, so will the need for higher education institutions to implement safety policies and procedures that ensure all parties visiting or attending a college or university feel protected from acts of crime and violence (Krisberg, 2017). Furthermore, institutions must also evaluate the broader issues associated with campus carry mandates, which include services for mental health, alcohol, and sexual violence (Krisberg, 2017).

This paper will present a comprehensive review of the literature focusing on several major areas including: (1) historical, (2), campus crime and violence, (3) campus carry laws (4) crime Prevention and safety planning, (5) theoretical perspective, (6) Jeanne Clery Act, and (7) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). According to current literature, the premise behind such campus carry laws affords a citizen the right to legally possess a firearm on college or university grounds (Jaschik, 2018).

The overarching question guiding the forthcoming study is, Would a campus carry law make college campuses safer? Three guiding questions lead the examination of the literature: (1) What is the perception of campus safety from community college administrators, faculty, and students? (2) Do administrators, faculty, and students' views differ on allowing people to legally carry concealed handguns on campus? (3) Would being legally permitted to carry a concealed handgun on campus by administrators, faculty, and students affect their views of campus safety?

Impact of U.S. DOE's 2011 Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Assault on Louisiana Community Technical Colleges

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Richard Fossey, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Since its inception, Title IX has played an important role on college campuses. Title IX is the law that not only allows greater access to education, but also protects colleges from sexual assault and violence. The Dear Colleague Letter of 2011, developed to provide guidance regarding Title IX implementation, was compiled utilizing different research studies. This research told a story of rampant sexual assaults being perpetrated on college campuses (James, 2016) and Title IX advocates worked to create safe learning environments for everyone. The conceptual framework supports the need for Title IX and the protections it provides. This legislation began with Educational Amendments Act of 1972 and provided opportunities for individuals to attend college that were previously denied. Throughout its evolution, Title IX has changed to create a more inclusive environment. As Title IX grew to include sexual discrimination and assault, institutions had to adapt to the guidance provided by the Office of Civil Rights.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011 on the implementation of Title IX at community and technical colleges in Louisiana. This examination included reviews of (1) sexual harassment and discrimination policies from Louisiana community and technical colleges; (2) response to the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011; and (3) the response of Louisiana community and technical colleges to the withdrawal of the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011.

The research was designed using two data sources. A comprehensive review of 12 sexual harassment or discrimination policies was performed. The policies were examined and categorized according to themes and codes were developed to determine important elements. Next, six of the 12 Title IX Coordinators in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) were interviewed; transcripts were analyzed to ascertain Title IX Coordinators' practical knowledge regarding policies relating to sexual harassment and the implementation of those policies. Data were further analyzed to determine if the policies were in line with the information gained from the Title IX Coordinators. The overarching question guiding this study was: What were the consequences of the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011 issued by the Office of Civil Rights on Louisiana community and technical colleges? Three research questions guided the study:

- To what extent do Louisiana community and technical colleges' policies concerning sexual discrimination and sexual harassment comply with the U.S. Department of Education's 2011 Dear Colleague Letter as interpreted by Atixa?

- How did Louisiana community and technical colleges respond to the Department of Education's 2011 Dear Colleague Letter?
- How did Louisiana community and technical colleges respond to the U.S. Department of Education's withdrawal of the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter in 2017?

The study's major findings include: (1) policies were inadequate when compared to the Atixa checklist; (2) Title IX Coordinators supported the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter; (3) preponderance of the evidence standard was not identified by most colleges; and (4) in the view of the study participants, the Dear Colleague Letter of 2011 had a positive impact in relation to Title IX issues.

Rerouting the School to Prison Pipeline: Improving African American Males' Educational Experiences

Keicia Hawkins, Northwestern State University

It has been more than sixty years since the historic case, "Brown v. Board of Education", which dealt with the injustice of unequal educational systems. While progress has been made in addressing the educational inequalities and inequities of the 1950s, inequalities in public education are still evident in "disproportionality" or the disproportionate number of minority students who are removed from school by zero tolerance policies (Reyes, 2006).

Since the inception of the Gun Free Schools Act in 1994, zero tolerance policies have affected African American students more than any other group of students. Zero tolerance policies are policies that punish all disciplinary offenses, no matter how minor, severely. The creation of zero tolerance policies seems to have been a key force in the evolution of the discipline gap between various student groups. When school discipline data is reviewed annually, there is an increase in the number of minority students who are being referred to the office for disciplinary infractions and also in the number of minority students being suspended and expelled from school.

Zero tolerance policies are not aiding in school improvement, they are harming students because of the "prison track" that has been developed as a result (Sanchez & Sandler, 2001). Sanchez and Sandler (2001) describe the "prison track" as a series of practices that channel and/or place students in the juvenile justice system. They believe that zero tolerance policies have helped to create a climate in schools which has helped to expand the prison track by increasingly placing police officers on school campuses or calling them to school campuses for minor disciplinary incidents that would not normally have been perceived as warranting police involvement (Sanchez & Sandler, 2001).

Why are black students more likely to be suspended or put on probation than white students? One of the findings in the literature reviewed was that "cultural mismatch" may play a role in disproportionality. In other

words, perhaps black students are disproportionately suspended, expelled or put on probation because they have white teachers who feel inadequately prepared to meet the needs of disadvantaged students and the behaviors exhibited in the classroom appear to be especially challenging for them, and these behaviors are intensified due to cultural gaps and misunderstandings (Skiba et al., 2006).

What are the educational experiences of African American males who have been suspended or expelled from public school settings?

- What do African American males perceive as barriers to their success in traditional educational settings?
- How do these students describe their relationships with their teachers and administrators?
- To what degree do African American males perceive the roles of race, and racism in their educational experiences?

The Effects of a Character Education Program on Student Behavior

Kristina Zachary, Northwestern State University

The purpose of this study was to analyze whether a character education program had a positive impact on students' behaviors in a middle school setting by comparing discipline records before and after the character education program was put in place. Procedures included the execution of a survey to gather perceptions of character education by those closest to students- parents, teachers, and administrators. After the implementation of character education initiatives, student behavioral data was compared to the prior semester. Because of the overall positive perceptions of parents, teachers, and administrators at Alexandria Country Day School regarding a character education program, implementation of the program impacted the student behavior in a positive way by a recorded decrease in negative student behavioral data. The final conclusions that can be gained from this study are that because of an intentional character program, which was implemented in this middle school setting, students' positive behavior increased and negative behavior decreased. In the end, as teachers and leaders act as change agents, they can truly impact the overall school environment in powerful ways.

Does Teacher Certification Matter? Impact Self Efficacy, Teacher Efficacy, and Collective Efficacy on Classroom Management

Christy Hornsby, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

"Education is the greatest natural resource that our country possesses, and nearly every person would agree that educating children is one of our nation's highest priorities" (Moffett & Davis, 2014, p. 17). Research

consistently suggests that among the educational variables that can influence student achievement, quality of teaching is the most important (Good, Grouws, & Ebmeier, 1983; Nye, Konstantipoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). In the time of high stakes testing that has resulted from the No Child Left Behind Act (US Department of Education, <http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/p.1>), all teachers, regardless of how they were prepared to teach, must be qualified to meet individual students' social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs. Research shows teacher self-efficacy influences teacher effectiveness especially in a teacher's first year, (Flores, Desjean-Perrotta, & Steinmetz, 2004; Ludlow, 2010) and teacher self-efficacy levels have a direct relationship to student performance (Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Wayne & Youngs, 2003).

When observing certified teachers, consideration of certification route, traditional or alternative, should be noted. Effectiveness of alternative certification programs remains debatable. Darling-Hammond (2000) examined research published over the past 30 years that suggests fully-prepared and certified teachers are generally more effective, better rated, and more successful with students than teachers who have not had proper preparation and education. Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2000) concluded that teachers admitted with less than full preparation tend to be less satisfied with their training and have greater difficulties planning curriculum, teaching, managing the classroom, and diagnosing students' needs.

The purpose of this review is to examine classroom management self-efficacy levels among traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers. This literature review explores research related to (a) teacher training, both traditional and alternative certification, (b) dimensions of effective teachers with emphasis on classroom management, and (c) teacher self-efficacy regarding classroom management. Thus, the overarching research question is, "What is the impact of self-efficacy of traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers in relation to classroom management?" The following guiding questions are considered:

- What are advantages and disadvantages of becoming a traditionally certified teacher compared to becoming an alternatively certified teacher?
- What are the primary dimensions of teacher effectiveness?
- What are the primary factors of effective classroom management?
- What is the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and effective teachers?
- What is the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and traditionally certified teachers?
- What is the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and alternatively certified teachers?

This literature review presents research focused on: (1) history of teacher education and certification; (2) different routes to teacher certification, characteristics of traditional certification and alternative certification; (3) primary dimensions of teacher effectiveness with emphasis on classroom management; (4) theories of efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and collective efficacy related to a certification routes; (5) and the relationship between

teacher self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers and classroom management. The literature review is guided by a conceptual framework which offers a model supporting relationships between certification path, dimensions of teacher effectiveness, and teacher self-efficacy among traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers with regards to classroom management.

An Evaluation of a Program for Overage Students in Urban Middle Schools

Alisa Ross, Southern University and A&M College

This paper will address one urban school district's solution to decreasing the large number of students, ages 14 to 17, who were retained in Grades 6 to 8 for more than 2 years during the 2012-2013 school year. A goal of the program was to prepare the students to score at the proficient level on the state-mandated test in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The purpose of the research study was to identify effective instructional strategies for a program created for overage students based on feedback from teachers who worked with the program. There were six key themes the researcher analyzed in the paper that directly related to the program: retention, small class size, parental involvement, motivation, overage programs in the United States, and outcome-based evaluation.

The researcher analyzed: (a) End-of-the-Year Reports; (b) Grades 6, 7, and 8 high-stakes test results; and (c) teacher surveys. The results of the study, implications, limitations to the study, and recommendations for future research will be explored.

The Affective Domain: What Is It and Why Does it Matter?

Frank Del Favero, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Robert Slater, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

American education and American educational leadership is currently driven by concern for student achievement. The subjects of most concern are science, mathematics, reading and social studies. Attention is primarily focused on the cognitive domain and its development. Much less attention is given to the development of the affective domain. Indeed, understanding of what the affective domain is appears to be minimal. Nonetheless, progress in the development of the cognitive domain much depends on complimentary development of the affective. Student achievement in the U.S. will continue to lag behind that of other developed countries until we begin to pay more attention to the affective domain and its development.

Differentiated Instructional Strategies for 2E Students in a Gifted World Geography Class

Maggi Bienvenu, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Toby Daspit, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The result of two combined projects, this presentation looks at two twice-exceptional children as case studies for inclusion in a 9th-grade gifted world geography class. The two boys are “A,” whose exceptionality is autism, and “X,” who has ADHD and is dyslexic. They were in elementary school at the time of their interviews, so this is a thought experiment of projects that would need to be added to supplement an actual observed gifted class to engage these specific students. The activities were created and evaluated using the Parallel Curriculum Model (PCM) and offers suggestions for implementing as universal design for learning.

Inclusion vs. Education: Are All Teachers Prepared to Teach All Groups of Students?

Reneisha Singleton, Southeastern Louisiana University

Being an educator requires one to be flexible. Whether it is rearranging a lesson when students are having trouble or changing the structure of the lesson to include small groups, being flexible is a requirement of an educator. This holds true even more so when it comes to the students that are being taught. Educators teach a variety of students who come from a variety of backgrounds. When choosing education as a profession as an undergraduate student in college, it is imperative that undergraduate students are prepared to teach a variety of students, including those students who have disabilities. It appears that more and more school districts are moving in the direction of inclusion, and with this move, all teachers need to be prepared to teach all students, including those who may or may not be functioning on grade level. For all teachers to be prepared to teach all students, post-secondary institutions have to offer more in-depth classes geared towards teaching students with disabilities. Undergraduate students majoring in Special Education already receive quite an extensive number of courses related to Special Education, as those students should due to their declared major. But, what about those students who are majoring in Pre-School, Elementary, Middle, or High School Education? Are they receiving an adequate of classes or training when it comes to teaching students with disabilities?

The purpose of this Persuasive Paper is to inform the necessary stakeholders that undergraduate students majoring in education need to have an adequate amount of training and/or classes related to students in Special Education. By making this happen, those students will be better prepared to teach all the students in their future classrooms. Thus, creating a classroom that will allow all students to learn and guaranteeing that all students will receive a free, appropriate education in the public-school systems.

A Professional Learning Model and Questionnaire to Foster Culturally Competent Practices in Teachers of ELLs

Linda Fairchild, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Mitzi Trahan, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

ELL students are rapidly becoming a larger section of the population (Payan & Nettles, 2008). One way ELL students are at a disadvantage in general education classrooms is due to their teachers' lack of (or improper) training and professional development for serving ELL students. Teachers of students identified as ELL or LEP need professional learning to ensure the students' access to the general curriculum. Once the teachers have job-embedded professional learning, the ELL students can begin to achieve social and academic goals in line with their peers. Having a professional learning program that encompasses social and emotional needs could help mitigate the friction. If teachers of ELLs do not understand the very students they teach, the outcome for both will be negative. Teachers of ELLs must also be cognizant of the unique struggles, both academic and social, of their students to be effective (Rodriguez, 2013; Vescio, et al., 2009).

This study aimed to blend the theories of second language acquisition, critical consciousness, and the framework of hope into a professional learning session that allows teachers to become culturally competent. The Second Language Acquisition and Cultural Competency Practices Questionnaire is a questionnaire that will be used to collect data in order to help answer the research questions of the study. The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the professional learning session and aligns with the topics of the research questions.

Elementary Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Education and Early Intervention: Teacher Perceptions of the Current Autism Supports

Veronica Johnson, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Amanda Mayeaux, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge and skills of teachers, both regular education and special education, in the elementary setting pertaining to effectively teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The study is designed 1) to understand teacher knowledge concerning effective intervention strategies for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2) to measure the level of skill and implementation of the intervention in elementary classrooms, and 3) understand the interconnections between regular and special education teachers in working mutually to create strategic interventions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Examining Cultural Proficiency Growth through Assessing Diversity Attitudes and Self-Efficacy Among Teacher and Leadership Candidates

Keicia Hawkins, Northwestern State University

David Fuller, Northwestern State University

This proposal is to share information on new research in progress by two professors at Northwestern State University. This study seeks to examine the cultural proficiency of pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, new teachers working in career and technical programs through Jump Start initiatives and pre-service school leaders in a teacher education and educational leadership program. The study will be conducted at Northwestern State University, a regional University of Louisiana System campus that serves several rural Louisiana Parishes in the north central portion of the state as well as many other areas in Louisiana that are both urban and suburban, in traditional and online degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The study will investigate whether our students are culturally proficient to work effectively with diverse P-12 students. This initial presentation will address the need to prepare teachers and school leaders to effectively work with diverse P-12 students. A future presentation will address the main research question: “What is the impact of diversity-focused courses on candidates' professional and personal beliefs about diversity?”

Methodology

The Professional Beliefs about Diversity / Personal Beliefs about Diversity Scale (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001) is a 40-item Likert scale survey of both professional and personal attitudes and beliefs about cultural diversity issues in education. (See handout.) The survey will be administered at the beginning and end of the semester in one diversity-focused class per program (pre-service elementary teachers, pre-service secondary teachers, in-service/new teachers working in career and technical programs, and pre-service school leaders.) The courses used for the study will be courses taught by the researchers. Researchers, during class, will invite candidates to take the online survey. Researchers will also survey students on self-efficacy.

Evaluating the Implementation of Professional Learning Communities Over Time

Matthew Monceaux, Ascension Parish Schools

Mindy Crain-Dorough, Southeastern Louisiana University

Evan Mense, Southeastern Louisiana University

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have become a popular reform initiative for schools looking to increase student achievement. School district officials can find it difficult to implement and sustain Professional Learning Communities as some teachers are not accustomed to the levels of collaboration with peers involved. If

implemented and carried out with fidelity, PLCs can lead to strong improvements in student achievement as well as teacher effectiveness (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

In this study, the researcher intended to determine if teachers and school level administrators in a school district in southern Louisiana were adapting to the PLC model by monitoring their perceptions of PLC function over time. The purpose of this study was to assess teacher and school level administrator's perceptions of PLC implementation and compare it to previous perception data from an earlier study. This important data created longitudinal data showing the implementation of PLCs in this district over time. In addition, four interviews with key district leaders were conducted to determine the implementation plan at the district level. This information was combined to help the researcher make determinations regarding this district's implementation efforts.

Ultimately, the researcher found no difference in the perceptions of teachers from the first study regarding PLC implementation to the second administration of the Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised (PLCA-R) survey four years later. The major conclusion reached by the researcher regarding this finding is that people progress in their understanding of PLCs while working in them. Educators grow from a procedural understanding to a conceptual understanding of PLCs which causes them to be more critical of the PLC work in their schools, thus influencing survey results. The researcher identified key themes through the interviews with key district leaders that are detailed in Chapter Five. All of this valuable information allowed the researcher to evaluate district initiatives to sustain and improve PLC efforts, determine the effectiveness of district-wide implementation efforts over time, and provide feedback to others implementing PLCs district-wide.

Ongoing, Job-Embedded Professional Development: Does it Grow Teachers and Students?

Victoria Tesfay, Northwestern State University

Keicia Hawkins, Northwestern State University

The purpose of this study was to determine what impact, if any, professional learning communities—or cluster meetings, as they are called in the TAP program—are successful in increasing student achievement and teacher effectiveness. In this case study, qualitative data from eight teachers and 138 students was analyzed.

In this study, teachers administered a skills-based pretest to students before teachers participated in a cluster cycle focused around increasing student achievement on that particular skill. Teachers attended weekly cluster meetings, which were planned and led by the school leadership team. These meetings focused on both student learning and teaching best practices. At the end of the cycle, the teachers administered the posttest to determine student growth. This growth, along with teacher evaluation scores, was used as the basis for determining the effectiveness of the TAP cluster meetings.

Once the data was gathered, descriptive statistics and a paired t-test were used to determine if there was a statistical difference between student pretest and posttest scores. There was a difference of 22.32 points between the pretest and the posttest. There was a significant difference in the scores of the pretest ($M=42.2609$, $SD=28.7832$) and the posttest ($M=68.5797$, $SD=25.6786$) conditions; $t(137)=-7.9561$, $p = 0.9787E-13$. These results suggest that the cluster skill cycle positively affected student learning on the focus skill. When the teacher's fall evaluation scores were compared to the spring evaluation scores, the paired t-test did not identify a significant difference.

Possible explanations for the student increase on skills-based assessments can be attributed the PLC-type structure and protocols of TAP cluster meetings. Like PLCs, TAP cluster meetings focused on student learning and outcomes. The content of cluster meetings was also strategically planned by the master teachers, who provided follow-up and support to teachers in their classrooms. Factors that could have affected the lack of statistical growth for teachers include lack of teacher motivation and the fact that spring evaluations were not announced. Teachers could have scored lower on the spring evaluations due to a lack of planning and other student factors rather than a regression in teacher skill.

The Significance of Using Collaborative Leadership Practices for Successful RtI Implementation

Malacha Harris, Northwestern State University

Keicia Hawkins, Northwestern State University

This study investigated the collaborative efforts of a leadership team on the implementation of RTI influenced by transformational leadership approaches, the support systems and plans set in place to ensure teacher and student capability in effective implementation, and the percentage of student growth in reading in an elementary setting. Several instruments were used to study the impact of transformational leadership practices on the leadership team implementation for RTI in reading. The instruments used for assessment in this study were Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next, a technology-based MobyMax reading benchmark test, pre and post leadership team questionnaires to survey the stakeholders, and RTI walkthrough observation reports. Data were collected and analyzed to study the progress of students at Jena Elementary School in two consecutive school years. Surveys for stakeholder input and walkthrough observation reports were analyzed to determine if there was adequate support for effective implementation. Informal data were also gathered and analyzed including the notes from monthly leadership team meetings and feedback reports from the RTI leadership mentors. The notes from the meetings and feedback from mentors were useful in monitoring the transformational support systems of the leadership team and motivation of the stakeholders. All instruments were

useful in determining the significance of transformational leadership approaches to the effectiveness of the RTI leadership team. The results of data collection and analysis of this study provided the demonstration of characteristics that resulted from a transformational leadership approach. Jena Elementary School demonstrated a raise in teacher preparedness, motivation, and student growth resulting from support and higher levels of successful collaboration and effective RTI implementation. Recommendations and possible implications for future research include partnering with other schools in the parish and acquiring support from the district. The overall buy-in from stakeholders specifically require the support and involvement from the district and superintendent and could be difficult to establish; however, successful implementation requires schools and districts working together to achieve effective collaboration that is needed for RTI.

Play: An Educational Foundation for Early Learners

Catherine Orgeron, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Amanda Mayeaux, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this literature review is to understand how teacher training impacts the teacher's understanding of play as an intervention tool for behavior with young learners. In much of the literature play is discussed as an important social-emotional and academic skills builder for early learners. This study seeks to examine how teachers' understanding is linked to the denial of play as an intervention. Currently, many interventions are most often "academic" in nature and are not the most age appropriate for the child. The scope of this study will look at play as it effects young learners' development. The study will examine the impact of play on young learners, ages four to six, specifically because they are the most effected by the loss of play in their academic beginning by using play as a Rtl intervention. The impact of play within education for this age group is well documented within the literature. The review focuses on the impact play has upon students who are found to have academic and/or behavioral delays and are provided with interventions in order to aid them with their delays.

Voice of Thought: Online Shared Reflective Practices in an Elementary English Language Arts Classroom

Jane Noble, Louisiana State University

This paper describes one teacher's action research approach aimed at increasing technology-based opportunities for student-teacher dialogic reflection as it may incite opportunity for expression and empowerment in an elementary ELA classroom. Student responses to open-ended prompts posted in Google Classroom were

regularly collected using one-to-one Chromebooks spanning an eight-month period. As student-teacher shared reflection practices became routine, changes in response style illustrated students' increasing ability to explicitly communicate thoughts, interact openly with the teacher both digitally and in person, and seemingly engage authentically in self-reflection on contextually varying experiences. The resulting capability to build instructional and social relationships with all students, including those initially reluctant to participate in discussions, was significant from a teacher's standpoint. Over time, qualitative themes implied that the classroom culture – both in person and online - valued opportunity for student voice as a source of identity and empowerment.

In classrooms where teachers engage in dialogic teaching practices, students and teachers collaborate to exchange and evaluate ideas in the learning process (Alexander, 2008; Bakhtin, 1984; Burbules, 1993). Duke and Block (2012) emphasize, “it appears that teachers make more difference than programs in developing reading comprehension” p. 67). Teachers engage in conversations with students that individualize feedback, scaffold reflection, and help build self-efficacy (Bandura, 2008).

In upper grade elementary literacy classrooms these practices are less likely to reflect such authentic social interactions that help students understand the forms and functions of language as a tool for engaging critically and socially in a literate society (Alexander, 2008; Burbules, 1993; Shor & Freire, 1987). Upper elementary teachers often encounter time constraints, pressures to prepare for rigorous standardized tests, and large classroom sizes, which limit engagement in meaningful daily constructive learning and teacher-student rapport-building activities. Teale et al. (2007) argue for “rethinking programs so that they systematically attend to helping children develop comprehension and writing skills” (Teale et al. 2007, p. 347). How do elementary literacy teachers incorporate strategies to guide comprehension and critical thinking skills when curricula in place do not incorporate sufficient time for the dialogue, reflection, and social interaction necessary? I reason here that this requires teachers to incorporate more holistic, student-focused approaches to instruction.

A new dynamic evolves with the increase of one-to-one accessibility to technology in the classrooms as students and teachers integrate web-based tools into their practices. By incorporating web-based platforms for dialogic interaction, teachers and students communicate quickly without physical location limitations, allowing teachers another venue for conversing with students to prompt and scaffold reflective thought.

Although implementing new strategies for encouraging technology-enabled dialogic teaching and reflecting in the elementary literacy classroom could impact teacher and student experience and achievement, we do not yet know how or if such online dialogue impacts the authenticity of student-teacher relationships, the levels of students' confidence and self-efficacy as readers and writers, or what the critical reflection process looks like. Accordingly, this article aims to describe students' experiences and to uncover the potential patterns that emerge when using technology for dialogic reflection in traditional elementary literacy classrooms.

Interactive Assessments: Using Interactive Games to Assess Students

Tonya Rose, Southern University and A&M College

Interactive assessments are formative and summative assessments that keep students engaged and promotes the notion that learning can be fun. Data collected from these assessments are in real time and can inform teachers of students' strengths and weaknesses immediately. Interactive assessment's data can be used at school data meetings and during professional learning community (PLC) meetings. The advantages of interactive assessments are that they are highly interactive, customizable, and offer results in real time. Not all interactive assessments require students to have access to technology. These assessments require little to no paper, are accessible anywhere, and can be administered in and out of the classroom setting. Using interactive assessments allows teachers and students to break away from normal testing strategies and use an engaging strategy to measure student outcomes.

Data from the interactive assessments are accessible through an online portal and can be used to track students' progression. This data can be interpreted during data meeting, parent/teacher conferences, and PLC meetings. It can be used to show progression towards a given standard and also can be used to predict students' outcomes in summative assessments.

Interactive assessments are new and innovative ways to guide teachers through unit plans and track students' progression. The use of interactive assessments creates a fun learning environment for students which can in turn foster positive attitudes towards school and course subjects.

Influence of Mixed Reality Learning Environments in Higher Education STEM Using Augmented and Virtual Reality

David Lafargue, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Mixed Reality is a technology quickly advancing and becoming more readily available to the average consumer. Continually improving availability of Mixed Reality technology is due to advancements with software platforms and integration of miniaturized hardware for mobile devices. Mixed Reality is becoming more available for use within higher education, but limited data are available supporting the relevance and effectiveness of this technology for helping students to learn.

The intent of this research study was an exploration of the influences of Mixed Reality learning within a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) higher education program when learning within a Mixed Reality Learning Environment (MRLE). Mixed Reality Self-efficacy, student engagement, and student

motivation were used as part of the Mixed Reality Self-efficacy, Engagement, and Motivation (MRSEM) survey. The MRSEM survey captured demographic information but primarily focused on the variables of self-efficacy, engagement and motivation of post-secondary STEM students within a MRLE.

The purpose of this paper is to share findings from a research study designed to examine Mixed Reality Learning Environments (MRLE) in higher education STEM programs in relation to: (1) the impact on student self-efficacy, engagement and motivation; (2) student acceptance of Mixed Reality technology by demographic makeup of participants; (3) identifying effective Mixed Reality strategies to develop a model of best practices. The overarching question guiding this study was, How does the use of Mixed Reality technology influence STEM related learning in relation to self-efficacy, engagement and motivation among students in a MRLE?

This study was a result from the literature of schools having partial components of self-efficacy, student engagement and student motivation pertaining to learning. However, gaps throughout literature were discovered with the considerations of the constructs specific to this study. This is especially the case when exploring best practices of newer technology, such as augmented and virtual reality, in STEM related higher education programs. This study was a quantitative study using the Mixed Reality Self-efficacy Engagement and Motivation survey to determine the impact of learning platforms created to demonstrate industrial applications specific to the associated program curriculum.

The following primary research questions guided this study:

- What is the relationship between student self-efficacy and student motivation within a Mixed Reality Learning Environment?
- What relationships exist among self-efficacy, engagement, and motivation within a Mixed Reality Learning Environment?

The results from this study provided data indicating how gender influences student acceptance of Mixed Reality, significant relationships among student engagement and student motivation when using Mixed Reality along with observed mobile device usage. These findings can provide administrators with useful information needed to target specific population groups to effectively integrate this new technology. Incorporating Mixed Reality as a learning resource is an approach if done correctly can reap benefits for all stakeholders involved.

Symposium: Using Guided Project-Based Learning in Graduate Courses

Organizer: Adam Elder, Southeastern Louisiana University

Cathy Gambel, Southeastern Louisiana University

Reneisha Singleton, Southeastern Louisiana University

Lisette Manuel, Southeastern Louisiana University

Margaret Westmoreland, Southeastern Louisiana University

This symposium will introduce core principles of guided project-based learning as a pedagogical approach and discuss an example of how it was introduced into the curriculum for a doctoral level introductory statistics course. The focus will be on the projects that were used as assessments in the course. The student panelists will each share their projects, and the symposium will conclude with reflections from both the students and the instructors about the pros and cons of this approach, lessons learned, and recommendations for future implementation in graduate courses.

Science for Social Justice: Using Biology to Teach the Hidden Curriculum

Blake Touchet, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

This paper is a review of the literature addressing the use of science lessons, units, and curricula to teach social justice. By making social justice a central part of biology courses, educators can simultaneously carry out the dual purposes of increasing student engagement in the content while drawing attention to important cultural issues facing the students. Although there are many gaps in the literature surrounding this newly emerging approach to social justice education, some success has been documented when using the scientific understanding of evolution and population genetics to dispel racism, developmental and molecular biology to unravel sex and gender misconceptions, and epidemiology to destigmatize diseases such as HIV. Overtly connecting these topics with social justice issues and coupling them with pedagogical techniques such as case studies, classroom discussion, and scientific argumentation allows students to engage in thoughtful, reflective classroom activities in which they learn both content and empathy, overturn misconceptions, and position themselves to be enlightened voices and voters in the future. It can also be argued that to not take advantage of these “teachable moments” would be a severe disservice to the students in particular and society in general. An opportunity is missed to teach students about the Nature of Science in an interesting way that appeals to them and to help foster tolerance and understanding of the diverse populations in which they live.

Student Factors Impacting the Success in Post-Secondary Biology

Amanda Mayeaux, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Jami Rush, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Student success in the introductory level biology is a so-called gatekeeper course to degrees in STEM programs. While discussions often point to revolve student efforts or lack of quality teaching, this study seeks to examine often neglected factors including students' pre-college science coursework, types of high schools attended, college entrance exam scores and dual enrollment coursework. The purpose is to understand why some students are better prepared for the rigor of college coursework than others.

Analysis of EUREKA Math Curriculum from Learning Progression Perspective

Min-Joung Kim, Louisiana State University

David Eller, Louisiana State University

Laurie Richard, Louisiana State University

The recent national efforts to reform math education have centered around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; 2010). Intended to overcome “a mile wide and an inch deep” math standard, CCSS instead emphasizes research-based learning progressions of mathematical strands (CCSSI, 2010; Clements, Fuson, & Sarama, 2017; Lobato & Walters, 2017). With this shift to learning progressions, attention is now being given to engaging students in “successively more sophisticated ways of thinking about an idea that follow one another as students learn” (Wilson & Bertenthal, 2005, p. 3). Naturally, this shift has resulted in the development of numerous math programs that purport to be aligned to CCSS and support the development of learning progressions. And with this influx of mathematical instructional materials, it seems necessary to examine them for their ability to address such key shifts as those required by CCSS.

The success of implementing CCSS depends on many variables such as administrative support, professional development, instructional programs, and the overall curriculum. In particular, programs and their instructional materials are critical tools because they guide teachers' everyday math instruction (Ball & Cohen, 1996). Therefore, the focus of this study is evaluating how a math program incorporates learning progression perspective in the design of mathematical tasks, word problems, and assessments across the elementary grades. And for the purpose of this study, the EUREKA Math K-5 program (Great Minds, 2018) will be analyzed based on it being adopted by and implemented in 54 school districts in Louisiana.

In traditional textbooks, word problems are considered as application problems that students are asked to apply mathematical concepts at the end of units. In contrast, researchers have found that students develop concrete

and solid understanding of math concepts when they learn these concepts by doing word problems (Carpenter et al., 2015). This perspective is reflected in CCSS. In particular, an Operations and Algebraic Thinking standard states, “Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem (1. OA.A.1)” (CCSSI, 2010). CCSS differentiate addition and subtraction word problems into 12 categories based on the structures of the problems (See Table 1 on CCSS). There exists a learning progression among these 12 problem types. For example, “Taking From Result Unknown ($5-2=?$)” is an easier problem type than “Adding to Start Unknown ($?+3=5$)” because students can solve “Taking From Result Unknown” problems as they model problems by using objects or drawings.

Based on the background, this study asks the following research questions: (1) How do word problems in Eureka Math cover different types of word problems as suggested in CCSS? and (2) Does the way Eureka Math sequence problem types follow the learning progression of word problems?

Two of the researchers identified word problems in Grade 1 and Grade 2 curriculums that specify 1. OA and 2. OA as focal standards. Then, they independently coded word problems using the problem types (Table 1, p. 88, CCSSI, 2010). The disagreements were resolved by the two researchers. When the disagreement was not resolved, the first author participated in the discussion.

The analysis found that Put Together/Take Apart Problems are presented with the highest proportion (44% for Grade 1 & 29% for Grade 2). In particular, the difficulty of the Put Together/Take Apart Addend Unknown problem type is a middle level, and it has the highest frequency out of 12 problem types in Grade 1. Considering that Grade 1 is just introduced to word problems and emerging readers, it might be too difficult for young children. It is interpreted that Eureka Math employs Put Together/Take Apart problems to teach a flexible strategy (e.g., tape diagram). However, this does not correspond to the learning progression of word problems (Carpenter et al., 2015). Along with other findings, we will discuss implications for teacher professional development in the paper.

Increasing Teachers’ Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Mathematics through Professional Learning

Markita Grant, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Over the years, there has been much controversy over how to improve K-12 public school education in the United States, with an even bigger debate over how to better support educators (Khan, 2013). Policy makers have overwhelming data to support reasons for focusing on these debates, while educators in the trenches have

strong feelings about levels of support received. More specific to purposes of this research, mathematics teachers and professional mathematicians have continuously held the other responsible for the lack of high math achievement in school (Mervis, 2006). These arguments and debates have persisted over the years despite the fact that math achievement in the United States has continuously been poor when compared to international counterparts.

Because of the tumultuous history of changes in mathematics education over the years, Ball, Lubienski, and Mewborn (2001) discuss how researchers are now focusing on the mathematical understandings that teachers need in order to teach mathematics effectively. Ball, Lubienski, and Mewborn (2001) cite six main problems as the reasons for the lack of stability in mathematics achievement in the United States:

- (1) teachers overwhelm students with many different skills, formulas, and algorithms, without allowing students to truly understand why these constructs truly work;
- (2) varying perspectives on mathematics pedagogy;
- (3) pressures of standardized testing relevant in society;
- (4) lack of sufficient textbook examples adequately developing concepts;
- (5) ineffective teacher education and professional development; and
- (6) a need for stronger, more targeted professional development for in-service teachers to develop their mathematical knowledge,

as evidenced by the weak mathematical knowledge demonstrated by teachers in the United States. Because of these factors, there has been an increasing amount of research conducted on the mathematical knowledge teachers should have in order to be effective mathematics teachers (Copur-Gencturk, 2015).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin's (1995) compelling statement that "The vision of practice that underlies the nation's reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before" (p. 597) is the statement that guides this research.

The purpose of this study is to understand what effective professional learning would look like and how it would impact teacher effectiveness related to mathematical knowledge for teaching. What are mathematics teachers' perceptions about their content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and the professional learning opportunities within their schools and how all of those factors contribute to increased student achievement? This is the essential question this study proposes to answer. The overarching goal of this research study is to explore the impact that professional learning has on teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in mathematics in one Louisiana school district. The conceptual model of these relationships may serve to inform teacher professional development efforts, support effective professional learning, and

contribute to improved student performance as a result of improved teacher capacity through effective professional learning.

Therefore, the overarching research question is, What impact does professional learning have on teachers' mathematical content knowledge and student achievement in mathematics?

The Effect of an Online Concussion Education Program on Knowledge Retention for High School Football Coaches

John Boudreax, University of Louisiana at Monroe

Sport-related concussions continue to be a serious epidemic for youth participants, as approximately 1.6 million to 3.8 million occur each year (Bagley et al., 2012; Langlois, Rutland-Brown, & Wald, 2006; Mitchko et al., 2007). Concussion legislation, adopted throughout the United States between 2009 and 2014, contains a preseason education provision (Lowrey, 2015; Register-Mihalik, Baugh, Kroshus, Kerr, & Valovich McLeod, 2017). Detection and management of concussion injuries may be improved through enrichment of educational modules and improvement of communication. Knowledge transfer principles must be considered when developing and evaluating evidence-based concussion education programs for high school coaches. A pathway to improper management, created by improper reporting by athletes, lack of injury recognition by coaches, and lack of access to athletic training services, must be mitigated through effective concussion educational initiatives. Organizations can influence prevention of harm from sport-related concussions through effective concussion education for coaches (Register-Mihalik et al., 2017). Effectiveness of implemented mandatory education in Louisiana becomes a significant issue, since Louisiana does not have any provision in the current law to mandate the evaluation of educational effectiveness. The purposes of this study are to investigate the effect of an online concussion education program, Concussion in Sports, on the knowledge retention among high school football coaches over a 15-week follow up period as well as to determine whether any variables can successfully predict knowledge retention.

A quasi-experimental repeated measure design was used to measure knowledge retention over time for high school football coaches from Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis Parishes in Louisiana. The main outcome measure in this study included coaches' knowledge retention in the follow up period. The assessments consisted of 31 questions divided into three distinct subsections: signs and symptoms recognition, common concussion misconceptions, and scenario-based questions. A 2-tailed dependent samples t-test was conducted to test knowledge retention, while a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to assess which coaching characteristics and school attributes affect knowledge retention.

High school football coaches had significantly lower overall scores as well as signs and symptoms subsection scores on the 15-week follow-up assessment compared to post-course assessment, but the participants did not have significantly lower misconception or scenario subsection scores. Coaching role and personal concussion history did predict overall assessment scores; whereas, coaching role also influenced signs and symptoms subsection scores. Coaches' age, experience, or level of education did not significantly influence knowledge retention for overall or any subsection scores. Finally, neither access to an athletic trainer or school size significantly predicted knowledge retention.

The important and imminent need for effective concussion education in high school football coaches has clearly been established throughout this study. This study provides some foundational support that knowledge was not retained in high school football coaches in south Louisiana. This study confirms the need to continue to assess long-term outcomes to assure knowledge retention in high school football coaches after online concussion education. School districts should be encouraged to take a closer look at the effectiveness of the current concussion educational programming used in their region.

Professional Learning Communities: Facilitator's Guide for Recruiting and Hiring

Jené Thomas, Southeastern Louisiana University

The intersection of race and gender discrimination impacts teaching and educational leadership within the disparities of recruiting, hiring, and the retention of Black female educators. The problem is that students' needs are not being met when minority teachers; particularly Black females are often subjected to inequitable opportunities. According to Boser (2011) only 70% of Black teachers are satisfied with the way their school operates because it fails to meet the needs for faculty of color. As a result, this leaves many students of color without educational leaders to understand their learning needs. The purpose of this facilitator's guide is to address and implement the shared values and vision within it to reflect the nation's growing diverse population. Education must compliment this reality, not contradict it (Gay, 2018). Therefore, this Professional Learning Community Facilitator's Guide is intended for all educational leaders; principals, central school administrators, school districts, and state superintendents because effective recruiting and hiring must happen in every channel of education.

The Revolving Door of Teacher Turnover: Examining School Culture, Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, Teacher Retention

Laura Norman, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dianne Olivier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The profession of teaching is filled with various challenges, and teachers have been tested for centuries resulting in a phenomenon known as teacher turnover. Researchers have validated the importance of improving teacher retention. School improvement is a constant desire in most school systems. In return, policy makers and state board members are in a continuous state of change, attempting to develop higher test scores, attain higher school scores, and to prepare students for their impending college and career paths. Districts are finding improvement to be a more difficult task due to a high rate of teachers leaving the profession in large numbers (Centerview, 2007). To remedy this issue, extensive research has been conducted on teacher retention and retention programs.

This study discusses elements that are overlooked by countless educational leaders: school culture, self-efficacy, locus of control, and how these constructs influence teacher retention. The teacher's ability to find stability in school culture, self-efficacy, and a balanced locus of control is crucial to his or her ability to remain in the profession and in turn, influence the growth of student and school achievement. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the influence school culture, teacher self-efficacy, and locus of control on teacher retention, thus informing the overarching research question: Does school culture, teacher self-efficacy, and locus of control influence teacher retention? In examining these constructs, the review seeks to (a) determine the historical evolution and current status of teacher retention; (b) influence of school culture on teacher retention; (c) influence of self-efficacy on teacher retention; and (d) influence of locus of control on teacher retention. In addressing the primary research question, each construct is explored and examined in relation to teacher retention through the following guiding questions:

- What is the historical evolution and current status of teacher retention?
- Does school culture influence teacher retention?
- Does self-efficacy influence teacher retention?
- Does locus of control influence teacher retention?

An elevation in teacher turnover has developed as an effect of various teacher challenges within the profession. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) explain that 40-50% of teachers leave the profession for various reasons within the first five years. Therefore, in recognizing this problem, it is important to consider possible solutions. The paper will delineate support for the framework through a comprehensive review of the major construct: (a) school culture representing individuals within the organization in relation to norms, values, traditions and rituals,

and tacit assumptions (Stokes, 2016); (b) self-efficacy and Bandura's (1977) four major sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological factors); and (c) locus of control defined by Rotter (1966) as the existence of internal versus external control. The examination of this research may give insight and serve as a major step in halting the revolving door of teacher turnover and replacing it with teacher retention, thus contributing to new possibilities for the future of education.

The Relationship Between the Use of Active Learning in Instruction and Student Achievement: A National Study Using NAEP Data

Sherry Julian-Robinson, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Robert Slater, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the use of active learning in classroom instruction and student achievement, and to ascertain whether this relationship mediates classroom discipline problems. Is it the case that the more a teacher utilizes active learning strategies in the classroom, the more her students will learn, and the correlation between active learning and achievement is due in part to the effects of active learning on discipline problems?

"Active learning," formally known as Experiential Education (Dewey 1938), uses real objects to support multiple modes of communication, linking visual learning to what is being said and discussed (Lee, Penfield, & Maerten-Rivera, 2009). For example, this mode of learning might have students using digital devices, educational games, collaborating in small groups, and engaging in project-based learning. At some point, each student or group should be able to demonstrate what they have learned through the activities. The demonstration of what they have learned can itself take various forms, from a poster, virtual presentation, or creation of a digital product. Active learning is often thought of as a component of a classroom management strategy. Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), Assertive Discipline, and Logical Consequences are three well-known classroom management strategies that have active learning as one of their components. However, PBIS uses the strategy more often.

A large part of teachers' actions involved the management of the classroom (Marzano, 2003; Marzano & Marzano, 2003), and among the various management models available to them is Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). Furthermore, active learning is a central strategy in the PBIS model. In examining the relationship between the use of active learning in instruction and student achievement, this study is, in effect, also a study of the efficacy of PBIS.

A study that involved an examination of the effectiveness of PBIS, or at least one of its most important strategies, is useful because scholars report that nearly a third of novice teachers leave the field before their third

year of service because of the challenge of dealing with student misbehavior (Ingeroll, 2002). Student misbehavior is a challenge that classroom management strategies, such as PBIS, are intended to address so that students might be more successful in the classroom (Ingeroll & Smith, 2003). Researchers note that classroom management models, of which active learning is a part, can improve teacher classroom management and plays a part in teacher decisions to stay in the teaching profession (Dewey, 1938; Edwards, 1997; Horner, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003; Sugai, 2008).

Engaging with College Writing in High School: A Mixed Methods Investigation of Students' Perceptions

Erin Scott-Stewart, Southern University and A&M College

Background

Decades of research involving self-efficacy for writing (SEW) suggests that for dual enrollment (DE) composition students to be adequately prepared for writing beyond high school, they must have many opportunities to write various expository and argumentative texts, receive high quality positive and constructive feedback from instructors and peers, observe others who are similar to themselves succeeding at similar writing tasks, and be able to gauge and respond to their own emotional and physiological states during writing tasks (Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 1997; Martinez, Kock, Cass, Knock, & Cass, 2011; Pajares, 2003; Merce Prat-Sala & Redford, 2012; Sanders-Reio, Alexander, Reio, & Newman, 2014). In the current college composition landscape, there are multiple pathways available for students to meet college writing requirements, including DE, Advanced Placement (AP), university courses, and ACT/SAT exemptions. However, there is a dearth research that examines students' perceptions of their writing ability and their writing experiences in relation to these various pathways, and most of those investigations are qualitative, focusing on small samples of undergraduates (Hansen, Jackson, McInelly, & Eggett, 2015). To gain a more complete understanding of how students experience college writing in different pathways, it is imperative that more research focuses on students' perceptions of those experiences; that those investigations incorporate larger, quantitative samples; and that within studies quantitative results and qualitative findings be interpreted together.

Methodology

With a pragmatic mixed methods approach, this study used a quantitative survey and one-on-one semi-structured interviews to investigate students' self-reported levels of writing self-efficacy and to explore which aspects of their DE composition experiences informed the students' sense of SEW. Statistical analysis of the quantitative survey results allowed the researcher to examine relationships among (1) SEW, (2) the credit

pathways students choose to earn university writing credit (i.e. DE, Advanced Placement, university courses, and ACT/SAT exemptions), and (3) preexisting student characteristics (i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, and parents' education). For dual enrollment (DE) participants, the following aspects of the participants' writing experiences were also investigated using qualitative analysis of responses to open-ended survey items and one-on-one interviews: motivation, outcomes, feedback, curriculum, and impact.

Results, Findings, and Conclusions

In an effort to improve writing and general academic outcomes for students, this study advances the knowledge about DE composition studies in relation to other composition credit pathways, specifically with regard to writing self-efficacy and writing curriculum. Key findings from the quantitative analyses include inconsistencies between curriculum in DE courses versus curriculum in AP and university writing courses. These curricular differences, which are further supported by the qualitative findings, are related to the type and number of writing assignments and feedback received from instructors and peers. Taken together, the quantitative results and qualitative findings support the existing self-efficacy research. Although limited by participants' self-selection, the findings suggest that most participants view their DE writing experiences as helpful in preparing them for subsequent college writing; however, program administrators and instructors must communicate and collaborate to ensure appropriate content and adequate rigor are available to all students who opt into the DE writing pathway.

Foucauldian Dynamics in Writing Curriculum

Ashley Watson, Louisiana State University

Purpose

The purpose of my study was to examine the way writing culture develops in a fifth grade English Language arts classroom. Over the last five years in Louisiana, testing requirements have changed. There has been a ripple effect for classrooms that impacts administration, teachers, and students in public schools. More research is needed to determine changes in classroom cultures. My study examined the development of writing culture and student perceptions of writing in a Louisiana public school classroom. To understand how to help students navigate the current educational environment, we must understand how standardized testing and educational reform impacts the culture of the classroom and student perceptions of learning.

Theoretical Framework and Method

I used the lens of Foucauldian power dynamics to examine the power relationships in the writing curriculum. Foucault (1980) believed that our society was full of hidden power dynamics. The methodology of my study was ethnographic case study research. I held the position of both teacher and researcher in the classroom. Stake (1995) asserts, "The intention of research is to inform, to sophisticate, to assist the increase of competence and maturity, to socialize, and to liberate." (p. 92). I adopted both an emic and etic perspective in my classroom. Teachers are part of their classroom environment and culture, but we are by nature outsiders in the world of student culture.

The research took place during the 2017-2018 school year at Southeast Elementary School (pseudonym) in Southeastern Louisiana. Data collection included: student interviews, teacher anecdotal notes, lesson plans, teacher journal, intervention plans, journals, student writing samples, faculty meeting memorandums, and curriculum documents. I used triangulation of data, coding, and member checking to help determine themes and answer the research questions.

Results and Conclusions

After collecting and reading through the data, I used first and second cycle coding methods to analyze and break down the data. (Saldana, 2016) I then categorized the codes into themes. The three themes identified were: Power and Control in the Writing Culture, Student Resistance and Challenges, Dissonance in Student Perceptions of Writing.

Scientific Scholarly Significance

My study sits at the intersection of research on student efficacy and teacher efficacy in writing and supports the work of multiple researchers. Research shows teacher efficacy requires that teachers believe in the curriculum they are teaching, feel confident as writers, and work at a school with a common definition of literacy. For students to be successful, they need a school-wide vision and commitment to literacy, to develop the intrinsic motivation to write, self-directed working time, student choice, giving some control back the learners, and open-ended assignments. (Gambrell, Dromsky, & Mazzoni, 2000; Gardner, 2012; Grainger, Goouch, and Lambrith, 2005; Liner and Butler, 2000; Routman, 1996; Wood & Dickinson, 2000; Wood & Nichols, 2000). More research needs to be done on the impact of increased standardized testing on classroom instruction and culture. There is room for additional research in both quantitative and qualitative areas in order to give a fuller picture of how students are being impacted.

Symposium: Reflections on Teaching and Learning Data-Driven Decision-Making Using Simulated Conference Experiences

Organizers: Mindy Crain-Dorough & Adam Elder, Southeastern Louisiana University

Candace Binning, Southeastern Louisiana University

Patrick Daniel, Southeastern Louisiana University

Brooke Jones, Southeastern Louisiana University

Kelly Naquin, Southeastern Louisiana University

Rochelle Pederson, Southeastern Louisiana University

This symposium features an instructional technique used in a master's level research methods course on data-driven decision-making (DDDM). This technique, a simulated conference experience, was an in-class activity and major project in that students prepared for the activity over the course of the semester. Students chose a topic in the area of DDDM to research in the literature with instructor guidance and support. They each prepared a poster presentation for the conference, as well as prepared to participate in a roundtable discussion. The three-hour, in-class conference was structured to effectively utilize the time in order to allow each student to present multiple times. The instructor provided feedback to students on strengths and weaknesses of presentation skills.

In this symposium two instructors, who have used this conference experience in the DDDM course for multiple semesters, explain the rationale, benefits, and logistics for this experience. The rationale for using this experience was to make learning foreign and complex concepts (research methods in this case) less intimidating, more manageable, and most importantly, more relevant. Student learning increased through application of research concepts, developing and delivering presentation materials, learning from peers, and making connections between various presentation topics. The benefits include improving presentation skills, gaining experience in reviewing literature, and facilitating growth in data leadership. Logistical issues include facilitating student preparation and organizing and conducting the in-class conference.

Students, who have taken the DDDM course, will be included in the symposium to share their perceptions about and outcomes of the experience (e.g., how they incorporated learned DDDM information into their professional settings). In addition, these students will share their poster presentations from the in-class conference experience.

The information from this symposium would have implications for those who teach research methods, as well as any subject area. In addition, useful information regarding DDDM will be shared by the participating students.