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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**

*Seth Tackett, University of Louisiana at Monroe*

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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, Kampylis 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; Kampylis, 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 Phelps 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**

*Wendy Devall, University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

*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.