

LERA 2021 ANNUAL MEETING CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**Louisiana Education Research Association
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Technology and its Utility for Research for Educational Leaders

Leslie Jones, *University of Holy Cross*

The focus of this presentation was the role of technology pertinent to the work of school principals and the implications of school principals engaging in and applying research in their work. The paper begins with an overview of the critical roles of school principals and the impact principals have on educational outcomes. The importance of how technology has been and is being integrated into this work was also presented. The use of technology in action research and academically oriented research on school principals was discussed, along with educational data mining and learning analytics.

Ethical Leadership as a Predictor of Principals' Inclusion and Social Justice Attitudes

Jeremy Bell, *University of Louisiana Monroe*

The purpose of this exploratory quantitative study was to investigate how ethical leadership in principals predicts their inclusion attitudes and social justice attitudes. This study also sought to investigate how a principal's social justice attitude, social justice subjective norms, and social justice perceived behaviors predict their intentions. Multiple instruments were used to survey 225 principals in the United States. Results indicated that Ethical Leadership is a positive predictor of principals with a positive attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities.

Creating Community: A Content Analysis of Three Homeschooling Co-Op's Websites

Alicia Whidden, *Louisiana State University*

Once considered a fringe movement, homeschooling has been thrust into the national spotlight due to the pandemic. Even prior to COVID-19, over 3% of the nation's children were homeschooled (Wang, Rathbun, & Musu, 2019). Though researchers have been trying to keep up with the demand for homeschool research, there are still many gaps. One area that has not been explored is content analysis and homeschooling. Therefore, this research examined three homeschooling websites from across the country in order to explore their content. The following three homeschooling co-operative websites were used in the analysis: EPIC, a secular co-op in Louisiana, Raising Arrows, a Christian co-op in Iowa, and Muslim Homeschoolers, a co-op located in New Jersey.

Part of the reason that homeschooling is so complicated to study is because it encompasses many variations and the three websites were chosen precisely because they represented some of these differences. Therefore, our three examples were taken from three of the main regions of the United States, the South, Northeast, and the Midwest. Analysis was done by first examining the three websites' discursive content using documents provided by the Smithsonian Institute. Notes were taken and observations were noted. Then any images and/or videos were analyzed using a corresponding Smithsonian document. Normal qualitative practices were engaged in the first round of analysis.

Mission statements along with other discursive language, images, and videos of each website hold a wealth of information that could be organized into two general themes: as a recruiting tool to find like-minded individuals and as a way to broadcast the cooperative's educational focus. For each of these websites, we find that education is, in part, based on community and the philosophical focus of the parents. Community can be formed from the inclusion of other like-minded individuals or the exclusion of others. These websites are used to try to draw additional members to their community. The purpose of education, whether to be socially progressive or to help develop God-given gifts, is mirrored in the educational focus of the cooperatives including the activities and structure.

Homeschooling is an open structure that allows individuals to create a model they feel fits their family's needs. These three cooperatives were created as a reflection of parental philosophy and to find like-minded individuals. However, different these three groups are, they are united in

a similar quest: to find a community of compatible individuals and families and to create (based off of their cultural and philosophical notions) the best education for their children.

Nurturing Creativity-Second Grade Teachers Perspectives and Practices

Stacie Austin, *University of Louisiana Monroe*

The research presented was findings from last year's Outstanding Graduate Paper Award. The researcher constructed this descriptive case study with the intention of determining second grade educators' perceptions of creativity, and to provide insight into how creativity is nurtured in general education classrooms while identifying barriers to nurturing creativity. Using Eisner's (2017) framework of educational connoisseurship and criticism, the researcher provided a rich description, interpretation, and evaluation of experiences among eight teacher participants from two school sites in the same Louisiana district. Data collection included interviews, observations, and teacher-created artifacts.

Evidence from the observations showed varied levels of nurturing creativity among participants. Although all of the teachers in the study claimed to value creativity, they did not all practice pedagogy that specifically nurtured creativity. The findings were similar to other studies where teachers believed creativity to be highly valuable (Andiliou & Murphy, 2010, Kampylis, 2010; Runco & Johnson, 2002), but discrepancies were reported between teachers' assertions and actual classroom practices (Cho, Pemberton, & Ray, 2010). Barriers to nurturing creativity within the classroom were similar to the findings of the literature review: high-stakes testing, time-constraints, compartmentalization, and primarily associating creativity with the arts (Beghetto, 2015; Cho et al., 2017; Craft, 2005; Eisner, 2002; Muirhead, 2011).

Evidence seemed to support the statement that curriculum did not dictate whether creativity was nurtured in the classrooms and that the teacher plays a significant role in determining whether creativity is fostered in the classroom; therefore, the researcher suggests an intentional focus on developing teacher understanding of creativity, the creative process, and creative pedagogy. The researcher suggests that building teacher knowledge about the creative process, with methodology for action, would support creative pedagogy in all subjects and be beneficial in 21st century education.

Black Women Navigating Barriers in Higher Education Administration at PWIs

Rachel Sam and Roslin Growe, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

The purpose of this presentation was to amplify stories from Black women serving in higher education administrative roles at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). Nineteen Black women holding doctoral degrees who served in an executive role at a PWI were interviewed to hear their lived experiences navigating barriers. The Underground Railroad concept for Black women in higher education administration uses Black feminist theory, path-goal leadership theory, and critical race feminism to understand how Black women navigate the ivory tower. Emergent themes of successful pathways for Black women within higher education administration were identified using a qualitative methodology of narrative inquiry. From their stories, narratives tell the attitudes, behaviors, and support systems Black women utilize to overcome barriers and experiences in higher education administration.

This research study was conducted during the summer of 2020 in the middle of a pandemic. We had a unique look into the world of these leaders as the participants, Black women executives of PWIs, were in discussion with their institutions whether they should open their colleges and universities for the Fall 2020. The ontoepistemological views of this presentation will be through the lens of a current mid-level professional at a PWI who is 1) a light skinned, Creole Black Feminist hoping to gain entrance into executive level leadership of higher education and 2) a full professor at a PWI who is a brown skinned, Black feminist researcher. This session's conceptual framework was guided by Black Feminist Thought, Critical Race Feminism, and Path-Goal Leadership Theory.

The planned activities for the session included presentation of the findings from the study, including with a cathartic discussion about COVID-19 experiences, being a Black woman at a PWI, and overcoming barriers in the ivory tower. The presenter welcomed the audience to dissect and reflect on their experiences navigating their own Underground Railroad in higher education at PWIs. The takeaways for the session attendees was discussion of current literature on Black women in higher ed, findings from a recent study of Black women's lived experiences, implications for Black women in higher education administration and student affairs, faculty, and staff in educational leadership, in addition to future recommendations for studies and practical advice such as combined skills and cross training, institutions; increased support of minority student and staff; affinity groups through DEI, not Human Resources; professional development sponsorship;

networking and collaboration opportunities on and off campus; seeking out diverse mentors in knowledge and identity; future contribution to the literature in minority studies concerning other identities within multicultural feminism in higher education; and lastly, future research on lived experiences of Black women at HBCUs and Black men in higher education administration at PWIs or HBCUs.

Getting to Graduation: Equity in General Education

Nina McCune, *Baton Rouge Community College*

African American students at Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), a Title III Predominantly-Black Institution, earn fewer passing grades and complete fewer general education courses than white students according to institutionally generated, racially disaggregated grade performance and course completion data. In AY 2019-2020, a zero-cost, faculty-driven Equity Institute was deployed to operationalize pedagogical and retention equity strategies in general education courses; steady improvements toward equity outcomes have been realized. Participants will discover how to practically implement an Equity Institute within general education courses, consider critical theoretical framework supporting pedagogical and retention strategies, and will learn how to assess improvements in equity outcomes within and across general education courses.

An Examination of the Louisiana Testing Accountability System: Recommendations for Equitable Changes that Impact Traditionally Marginalized Students and Schools

John Hatcher, Joseph Brown, Alexis Alexander, and Shavon Savoy-Helaire,
Southeastern Louisiana University

State-mandated tests are a critical component of the Louisiana Testing Accountability System for all public schools and students in grades K-12. In this study, our research team examined the Louisiana Testing Accountability system to identify disparities in academic achievement that exist among traditionally marginalized student groups, as well as, the impact of grading on School Performance Scores (SPS). An integrative literature review has been employed to examine representative literature on state-mandated tests to include the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) 2025, English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT), and the American College Test (ACT). Our research team then recommends equitable changes to the Louisiana Testing Accountability system.

Equity without Freedom: Johns Rawls and the Just School

Robert Slater, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

While there has been a good deal of work on social justice in the educational leadership literature, most of the attention has been focused on equality and equity. The main task of school leadership for social justice, with this approach, is demarginalization. This approach is consistent with theories of justice, particularly John Rawls' theory. But while the social justice movement's focus on demarginalization and equity helps make schools more just, it ignores freedom, the other core component of Rawls' theory of justice. The value of Rawls' theory is that it reminds us that just schools not only have to promote equity but also freedom.

The Impact of a Teacher Sensitivity Intervention on Child Attachment Behaviors

Jeanette Bankston and Cynthia DiCarlo, *Louisiana State University*

Previous research indicates that improved teacher sensitivity is related to improved teacher child interactions, which serve as the basis for child attachment, and are associated with positive outcomes for young children (Ahnert, 2016; Hartz & Williford, 2015). The purpose of this study was to determine if teachers could be taught to increase their use of sensitivity behaviors, as identified by the CLASS tool (La Paro, et al., 2012), and if an increase in teacher sensitivity behaviors would impact child attachment behaviors. Participants were teachers of toddlers at a laboratory preschool in the Southern United States. A multiple baseline design across teachers was used. The Teacher Sensitivity Training Intervention consisted of a 15-minute video self-reflection session in which teachers used the CLASS criterion (La Paro, et al., 2012) for teacher sensitivity to evaluate their performance. Data were collected daily during Morning Meeting and Music and Movement routines in 30s intervals for a period of 10 minutes. Overall, results indicated that the Teacher Sensitivity Training Intervention was effective in improving teacher sensitivity behaviors and increasing child attachment behaviors. Results of the study supported previous research which suggests that when teachers are more aware of sensitivity criteria, they are more likely to increase their sensitivity behaviors. When teachers are more sensitive to the needs of young children, children exhibit more attachment behaviors.

A Study Of Perceived Principal Instructional Leadership and Its Relationship to Student Achievement in Private High Schools

Jessica Shelton, *The Dunham School*

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate whether or not a relationship existed between the principal's instructional leadership behavior and college readiness as measured by ACT scores in Catholic and private schools in South Louisiana. The study surveyed both teacher and principal perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors through the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). This survey was sent to participating school principals to complete in the Greater Baton Rouge, Greater New Orleans and Greater Lafayette regions. Once principals completed their survey, the principals then sent out the teacher survey to their faculty. The data was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, a dependent t-test, and a logistic regression.

The results indicated that female principals felt they actively participated in instructional leadership more often than their male counterparts did. Teachers also perceived their female principals actively participated in instructional leadership more often than the teachers of male principals did. While the principals and teachers seemed to agree that female principals were perceived to more actively engage in principal instructional leadership, other statistically significant differences were found between the perceptions of principals and their teachers. Finally, the research indicated that Catholic and private schools with male principals were 76% less likely to have ACT scores that were higher than the national average of ACT scores of private schools. This study may offer educational leaders insight on how instructional leadership may relate to college readiness as demonstrated by ACT scores.

Exploring Experiences of Academic Success in the Third Year of a Physical Therapist Program

Thuha Hoang, *Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans*

Substantial physical therapist student population growth and program rigor have raised concerns for the academic success of all students. While multiple studies have shown that academic variables such as undergraduate or program GPA to be a consistent predictor of academic success, there has been minimal exploration on the experiences of academic success in the final year of a program. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how recent graduates experienced academic success during the third year of a physical therapist program.

This was the final phase of a three-phase study. Using a phenomenological research design, a purposeful sampling of 11 recent graduates of one physical therapist program was conducted. For the third phase of this study, data from semi-structured interviews, program documents, student files, and demographic questionnaires were used to explore the experiences of the graduates. Data were analyzed by a two-cycle coding method to create categories and themes, within and across cases.

Across the data, there were similar personal, academic, and professional experiences that represented academic success during the third year. Six recurring themes emerged: coursework, support, strategies, career influence, challenges, and identity. The findings suggested that academic success reflected a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon that emerges from the participants' abilities to navigate complex personal, academic, and professional environments. Experiences that link classroom content to clinical practice and career development and goals shaped the participants' proactive learning approach, emotional intelligence, reflective practice, competence, and professional identity. These results can be used to inform physical therapist program on third-year experiences that facilitate academic success and prepare students into clinical practice.

Language in Educational Contexts

Natalie Keefer and Michelle Haj-Broussard, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Language is a value-laden hallmark of culture, as a symbol of ethnicity, race, immigrant status, social class, gender, and political beliefs. Language can be used as a weapon to wield power over oppressed people, as an instrument for resistance, or as a tool to empower people with words of inspiration. As such, how language is used and perceived in educational contexts, and the messages that language communicates, have implicit and explicit consequences for educators, students, and communities. How language is used to frame the process of education at the national, local, and state levels reveals socio-political sentiments about schooling and communities involved in the process of schooling. Additionally, whether or not students have access to second language learning opportunities in bilingual or immersion programs is heavily implicated in national, state, and local politics.

In this presentation, the researchers disseminated and synthesized scholarship on language and education contexts from a special journal issue project with numerous co-contributors from

universities around the United States. The presenters provided an interpretive overview of the articles in our special issue and offer an explanation of their relevance for understanding the complex nature of contemporary education. The purpose of this project was to provide a space for scholars to disseminate theory and research about the influence of language in educational contexts. Therefore, we curated articles that address topics related to how language serves as a defining or decisive factor in education and schooling. Salient topics include critical analysis of discourse, linguistic landscapes, Natural Semantic Metalanguage, language ideology, politics and educational funding, funds of knowledge/identity, and definitional caveats related to language learning pedagogies in divergent contexts.

Faculty's Perceptions on the Various Delivery Methods of Instruction

Joanne Hood, YuChun Chen, and Dustin Hebert, *Louisiana Tech University*

According to Allen and Seaman (2010), 73% of higher education institutes offer online courses and programs. Growth in online degree offerings provides students with the option to attend classes and earn degrees without geographical restrictions. Compared to the traditional face-to-face delivery, hybrid and online courses also provide students with the ability to pace themselves with the content while caring for other family and personal matters. The purpose of this project was to examine faculty's perceptions of the various methods of delivery in order to provide feedback and recommendations for other faculty members to help ensure quality instruction and student learning occurs.

A four-section survey modeled after Shantakumari and Sajith's (2015) work solicited data about learning process, learning content, ease of use, and demographic information. Respondents were asked to rank their preference among the three delivery methods (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid and online) in the 24 statements in the first three sections. They were also asked to identify their age, gender, academic area, and experience in teaching a course in any of the delivery methods. A total of 40 faculty who have taught graduate courses at a regional university in the southeastern United States completed the survey.

Principal component analysis with Varimax (orthogonal) rotation and Kaiser Normalization on the 24 items yielded four factors, explaining 73.8% of the variance. Two items were removed due to disqualification. The remaining 22 items were factor analyzed again, which produced the following three factors learning experience (40.4% of the variance), self-efficacy as

a learner/instructor (21.1% of the variance), and ease of use (12.3% of the variance). The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the entire survey and for each factor indicated an overall reliability above .94 and most of the factors above .80. In addition, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on each factor to determine if there was a difference in each delivery method. A significant difference was found in the learning experience, where the faculty preferred face-to-face delivery, followed by hybrid and then online. Significant differences were also found in self-efficacy as a learner/instructor and ease of use; in both factors, the faculty indicated preference in face-to-face delivery over both hybrid and online methods, which were not significantly different from each other.

In this study, we found that faculty preferred face-to-face delivery method for their courses when delivering instruction. One concern often vocalized is not all faculty possessed the skills necessary to transfer their courses from face-to-face to hybrid or online. As the restrictions associated with the coronavirus continue to be in place, faculty may need to become better equipped to teach utilizing the other two methods of delivery.

This study was limited to the small sample size generated from faculty at one university who teach and have taught graduate courses. This study could be replicated with other faculty at additional universities in different regions of the country in order to see the similarities and differences.

Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions of Virtual Reading Field Work Interventions During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Latasha Holt, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

The COVID-19 pandemic has created barriers with face-to-face, in-person educational gatherings in the pre-k-12 setting. In addition to the pre-k-12 group, the limited allowance of traditional school gatherings has also challenged higher education programs designed to support pre-service teachers. With the disruption of educational norms, teacher prep courses, like many other disciplines, leaned on the use of online platforms to host socially distanced class meetings. In these teacher education courses, often a field work experience is in place to connect theory and practice. During the recent pandemic, reading courses with a required field work portion also utilized virtual meeting platforms to reach goals since the traditional, in-person elementary reading classroom partnerships were not possible. This presentation shared findings from a recent study conducted to better understand how pre-service teachers perceived the virtual field work tasks they

completed with students for a reading intervention project during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings include pros and cons of using technology-based reading interventions to work with students in need. Also, the role of parental involvement and issues with access was discussed. This presentation informed our educational community and helped us unite by better understanding these experiences. Sharing successes and challenges can lead to better support for classroom teachers, administrators, pre-service teachers, students, and families we are serving during these unprecedented times.

Differentiating Instruction in the Classroom

April Giddens, Michelle Brunsen, and Jessica Church, *Northwestern State University*

Research has proven that when teachers differentiate instruction, it increases the likelihood of success for students with higher abilities and those that struggle. Differentiated instruction is responsive teaching. Our students learn differently, therefore we must teach in ways that work best for our students. Understanding differentiation instruction and meeting every students' needs is essential in effective teaching.

For this session, we analyzed classroom-based scenarios that included students with diverse learning styles. Group discussions identified the students' needs and how to best meet them. In the discussions, we considered how to best implement effective instructional strategies that could lead to student success. Recognizing the struggles that teachers face with implementing these instructional strategies will also be reviewed.

It is essential for teachers to recognize the benefits of differentiating their instruction each day. Although it is challenging, implementing this type of instruction allows students to take ownership over their learning and can increase academic success.

COVID-19 Stories: A Narrative Synthesis And Implications For Building Healthy Teaching/Learning Communities

Thomas Benz, Huy Nguyen, Kim Skinner, and Lillie Connor-Flores, *Louisiana State University*

Stories about people's lives and their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic have been recently chronicled and surfaced across printed newspapers, online social platforms, and educationally speaking, academic writings from university students and professors. We as education practitioners understand the power of such stories or narratives as a source of sociocultural and political insights especially when they are carefully and collectively examined

within the contexts they have been arisen from. Committed to the shared understanding, our research was born out of two purposes: (1) By synthesizing narratives from three samples (LSU graduate students, faculty members holding/held U.S. higher education positions, and selected individuals from all walks of life), we found and compared narrative patterns that arose from each sample and across the three subsamples, (2) from the narrative production across three subsamples, we drew out common themes for our next discussion about the ethics of care. Noddings (2013) reminds us that humans realize their vitality via entering into the relationship with the Other. The neglect of relationality in human activity made the pandemic possible in the first place. As we later argued, the need to be attentive to (non-)human welfare via Noddings' concept of engrossment becomes "remedy" for the pandemic problem. To be clear, engrossment is not a one-way street that passes down from the "one-caring" to the "cared-for"; it is only completed by the recognition of receptivity and reciprocity between two parties. The trio (engrossment-receptivity-reciprocity) makes the act of caring genuine and helps us drive home implications for educational and living practices.

Attitudes Toward Homelessness: Impact on Students

Kerri Tobin, *Louisiana State University*

This paper reported findings from survey and interview research on public knowledge about and attitudes toward homelessness. Survey results indicated that the gender and age of respondents correlated with beliefs that people experience homelessness as a result of personal failings rather than societal inequities, but find no relationship between the size of respondents' hometowns and their attitudes toward this vulnerable population. Interview data revealed that people commonly associate homelessness with panhandling, and their discomfort with being approached for money makes them feel wary of the whole population. Awareness of child and family homelessness is low -- most respondents consider homelessness solely a problem of single adults. Combining this empirical evidence with existing research and theory on the needs and experiences of homeless children in K-12 education, the paper discussed potential impacts of these attitudes on the realization of the still-elusive goals of the 1987 McKinney-Vento Assistance Act for public school students.

Effect of Fine Motor Intervention on Handwriting Skills in Kindergarten

Denise Shillingsburg, *Louisiana State University*

This study evaluated the effect of fine motor skills intervention on handwriting performance. The goal of the study was to determine how fine motor skills can be developed to improve handwriting for kindergarten students. A sample of three students were provided with fine motor activities during center time in a kindergarten classroom. The students were observed with the activity for 10 minutes. Handwriting samples were collected during Writers Workshop to determine the number of letters and shapes students wrote or drew. A multiple baseline design was used to measure the effect of the fine motor activity on handwriting performance. Results showed an increase in the number of correct letter formation and correct shape formation in student writing. The findings emphasize the importance of developing fine motor skills in early childhood to ensure students can perform everyday tasks.

Error Analysis: Changing Pre-Service Teacher Grading Behaviors

Katherine Pettrey, *Louisiana State University*

Mathematical error analysis is the process of analyzing student math work at the item level. By determining exactly where a student goes awry, interventions can be targeted to a specific skill, preserving student and teacher time and effort. The Error Analysis Intervention (EAI) was designed to guide educators through the process of evaluating student work. The objective of this research was to determine if there were changes in pre-service teacher grading behaviors when presented with the EAI. A multiple-baseline across participants' design was used to evaluate the changes in grading behaviors of three pre-service teachers from a four-year university. Nine target behaviors associated with grading that can detect misconceptions or omissions were evaluated during this study. All three participants showed increases in the observed number of target behaviors. The EAI is an easy to use reference for math teachers and interventionists that can effectively and quickly identify student misconceptions, optimizing time and effort in the classroom.

Higher Education in the Face of a Predicted Mental Health Tidal Wave: COVID-19

Keicia Hawkins, Michelle Morris, Patrice Moulton, Michael Moulton, and Billie Myers
Northwestern State University

Scholars and mental health experts have been warning of a mental health wave that is headed for our colleges due to Covid-19 (Dennon, 2020; Minahan, 2020; Muratori & Haynes, 2020; Staglin, & Labocki, 2020). There has been no denying that mental health issues were on the rise and a major concern for college-age students prior to the pandemic and therefore there have been major concerns regarding the lasting effects of the anxiety and loss during this time. However, it is also important to acknowledge the construct of resilience when considering the information that has been shared. The pandemic has been certainly putting students to the test. In this study, 969 college students completed demographic surveys along with surveys on anxiety and resilience during the early weeks of transition to the “new norm” of pandemic life.

Is it possible that uncertainty, emotional feelings, and anxiety have been what resilience has looked like during these unprecedented times? Is it possible that even with a multitude of anxiety producing changes, and a serious number of events that are out of students’ control, that many students have been, in fact, feeling higher levels of anxiety, while also utilizing higher levels of resourcefulness to cope? Is it possible that by purposefully determining messages and actions for a resilient community and support for success that higher education might have side-stepped the massive tidal wave that was predicted?

University Peer Social Attitudes Towards People With and Without Disabilities

Allie Boquet, *Louisiana State University*

The inclusive movement in special education has placed students with disabilities in general education classrooms with their non-disabled peers (Young, 1997). Social attitudes of non-disabled peers impact the opportunities for students with disabilities within the inclusive environment, beginning in grade school and continuing into the post-secondary educational environment. As students with disabilities complete educational experiences, peers become co-workers. Hence, positive peer social attitudes are essential for students with disabilities to obtain and maintain paid meaningful workforce experiences free from prejudice and bias. The purpose of the inclusion movement was to increase the opportunities for students with disabilities (Young, 1997). However, as Michael Oliver asserts, "the special educational system perpetuates the

misguided assumption that disabled people are somehow inadequate, and thus legitimates discrimination in all other areas of their lives." (Oliver, 1983, p. 64)

This study examined the impact of peer social attitudes towards students with disabilities on a university campus. Additionally, this study sought to provide supportive evidence to the social model of disability (Oliver, 1983). Outcomes were described on how social attitudes determine higher-education experiences, and therefore workforce prospects for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, there is no research on the topic of social attitudes towards peers with disabilities in the last ten years in the K-12 environment. Additionally, there is no peer-reviewed research in higher-education environments for social attitudes towards students with disabilities.

The Effects of COVID-19 and Hybrid Course Delivery Methods on Student Perceptions of Learning

Greg Bouck and Katrina Jordan, *Northwestern State University*

"COVID-19 dramatically impacted the higher education learning landscape in 2020. These factors continue to impact teaching and learning in 2021. In this presentation, we discussed how students and instructors have had to adapt to new media and communication modalities as well as the students' perceptions of how those changes impacted their learning.

In Spring of 2021, the researchers surveyed students from hybrid courses delivered in spring 2020 through spring 2021. In a survey conducted by the NSU administration at the end of the spring 2020 semester, students indicated that they need to have face-to-face instruction at least for some of their classes. Additionally, 65% of the students surveyed expressed their worry that they would not be able to have a "normal semester" moving forward. The researchers recognized the importance of providing a learning experience that seemed normal and connected students to what they viewed as a safe, academically stimulating experience. According to Tinto (1999), research points to two types of support that promote retention, namely academic and social support. The retention of these students is linked to their ability to connect with a university both socially and academically; therefore, it seems important that universities continue to find ways to engage students in an actual classroom.

Many universities found that using a Hyflex or hybrid model of course delivery both reduced the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while also providing some face-to-face classroom experiences. While this model seemed to be a win-win for the students, it catapulted instructors into a realm of course delivery for which they may or may not have been adequately prepared.

Likewise, while our students are, in general, digital natives, they may also have not possessed the technological expertise needed for the online portion of their hybrid classes. In fact, on the survey conducted by the university, 44% indicated that they were concerned about difficulties with online study in general. This study sought to find out what students perceived as the pros and cons of a hybrid model as well as their perceptions of how well the courses actually met both their social and academic needs.

Grant Aid by Institution Type: Public Versus Private Assistance in Louisiana

Victoria Lloyd, *Louisiana State University*

In this study I used IPEDs data to compare the mean (average) amount of federal, state, and institutional grant aid awarded to undergraduate students in Louisiana public and private institutions to determine if there is a difference in grant aid awarded based on sector (public versus private). The result of the \$13,425.24 more in grant aid awarded per student in the year 2019 shows that private schools are viable and potentially affordable options for low-income and first-generation students despite public perceptions. The results of this study supported the need for broader and more direct access to information about college applications, enrollment, and attendance as lack of information is commonly referenced as one of the largest barriers to college access (Castleman et al., 2015).

Teacher Support of Students' Social-Emotional Well Being during COVID-19 Shutdown

Suzanne Harris, *Louisiana Association of Educators*

Kathleen Campbell, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

After the sudden shutdown of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were faced with the task of providing online instruction for their students. However, as the shutdown wore on, it became apparent that caring for the social and emotional needs of students was also necessary. The support principals provide for teachers helps teachers to adapt to the changing circumstances and to provide social-emotional support to their students in uncertain times.

A pandemic of this scope has not happened in over 100 years, so there is a dearth of research about school leadership responses to natural disasters (Fletcher & Nicholas, 2015). Nevertheless, some parallels can be drawn from available information and applied to the current situation. The purpose of the present study was to determine how teachers supported their students' social-emotional needs during the shutdown.

Teachers are impacted by the uncertainty as is the rest of the community. A study of language arts teachers impacted by Hurricane Katrina found that teachers had to deal with their own trauma as they dealt with the behavioral issues brought on by the traumatic experiences of their students (I had to teach hard, 2010). Furthermore, teacher needs vary according to how they are personally impacted. After the Christchurch earthquake, teachers reported that they needed not only principal support and ideas on self-care but also information about supporting their students and families (Dean, 2011). Another study indicated that teachers at a trauma-informed school in a community impacted by fire were better able to manage their own trauma and were also ready to implement trauma-informed practices to help their students deal with the disaster (Berger, Carroll, Maybery, & Harrison, 2018).

Subjects were PK-12 Louisiana public school teachers. This mixed-methods study was comprised of a 1-4 Likert survey with an open-ended comment for each question. Sections of the survey included questions about teachers' perceptions of how they supported the social-emotional needs of their students in areas such as communication with families, communication with students about their feelings, etc. Mean responses were displayed as descriptive statistics and open-ended responses will be used as supporting evidence. Data were disaggregated by geographic regions in Louisiana.

Results indicated that teachers were genuinely concerned about their student emotional well-being even though many of them needed emotional support. One conclusion is that teachers need and want professional development for supporting social emotional needs of students.

Mentor Teacher Motivations for Implementing a Co-teaching Approach

Channing Parfait, *Louisiana State University*

Placement practices used by many universities haphazardly assume that experienced teachers can take on the role of teacher educators during their time as mentors to student teachers (Wexler, 2019). It is important to consider whether experiences gleaned from mentor teachers and the models of student teaching adopted by university programs truly prepare pre-service teachers for the challenges they will face in the classroom. Co-teaching can serve as a professional development model for pre-service and experienced teachers to ensure that both parties have the opportunity to engage with purposeful learning from one another.

This research utilized a single case study design to focus on understanding the perceptions of two elementary mentor teachers who traditionally partner with the student teaching program of one Louisiana-based university teacher preparation provider. While the university program suggests the use of co-teaching practices, it is not required by mentors and mentees. This case explores the motivations of mentor teachers who embrace co-teaching and those who are still hesitant to implement co-teaching. There are three themes that emerged from this research that speak to the characteristics and motivations for co-teaching between mentors and student teachers: teachers as learners, building trust, and embracing flexibility. Substantiating new meaning about the efficacy of co-teaching as a form of professional development for mentors and student teachers can transform the culminating experience of teacher preparation programs.

Effects of a Multicomponent Phonics-based Intervention on Fluent Word Decoding

Ellen Daugherty, *Louisiana State University*

Based on the current research on the science of reading, “learning to read is the work of deliberately practicing how to quickly connect the letters on the page to the sounds we hear each day” (Goldstein, 2020, p.1). The purpose of this study was to implement a phonics-based intervention in order to increase students’ ability to decode unknown consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. The goal was to have students accelerate their understanding of letter sounds and how they blend together to create words. This ability would help them become more independent readers. When readers are able to read fluently, comprehension is aided and the task of reading becomes less laborious and thus, more enjoyable. Over a period of one month, the investigator, (the literacy teacher), implemented a 10-minute multicomponent phonics-based intervention daily during the regularly scheduled RTI lessons with 3 first grade students. The students engaged in multiple activities that were designed after four different interventions described by Wagner et al. (2017) which focused on hearing and decoding consonant and short vowel sounds. All three students made immediate accelerated gains as soon as the intervention was implemented and sustained these gains throughout treatment. These findings suggest that using a multicomponent phonics-based intervention in conjunction with other instructional practices that are all tailored to individual students’ needs would help more students function without struggle in their classrooms.

A Qualitative Examination of Professional and Personal Balance in Higher Education: Fostering a Work-Family Culture

Brittney Williams and Dianne F. Olivier, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Broers (2005) (as cited in Noor, 2011) explained balancing one's professional and personal life may impact an individual's job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Individuals in academia are happier working in environments that aid their balancing of personal and professional lives (Noor, 2011). Studies on the connection between work-family balance and job satisfaction of higher education professionals (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Gerson, 2004; Lester, 2013, 2015; Lester & Sallee, 2009) have hinted at improvements in an organization's work-life balance would lead to increased productivity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016).

Research has also shown a link between occupational level and challenging work-family balance, specifically individuals 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). Balancing multiple roles, combined with organization and community pressures, may also influence perceived work-family balance and satisfaction (Khairunneezam, Siti Suriani, & Nadirah, 2017). Issues with work-family balance are especially true for academics who are parents (Drago & Colbeck, 2003; Mason & Goulden, 2004; Mason et al., 2013) or primary caregivers.

The purpose of this study was to explore work-family balance in higher education. The overarching research question for this inquiry was: How are the boundaries of work-family balance shaped in higher education? 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 perceptions of their employers (Scholarios & Marks, 2004).

This research study utilized a qualitative research method including one-to-one semi-structured open-ended interview and document analyses to "uncover understanding that improves practice" (Smythe & Giddings, 2007, p. 39). More specifically, the researcher utilized a phenomenological research design to describe how participants experience a certain phenomenon through their involvements, feelings, and responses to a particular situation (Creswell, 2013). Utilizing the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b) and the Four Burner

Theory (Clear, 2016; Gillebeau, 2010; Richardson, n.d.; Sedaris, 2009) as a foundation, this study was guided by three primary questions as the research explored: (1) How do higher education institutions utilize policies to foster family-friendly cultures? (2) What are the lived experiences of middle managers in higher education in implementing strategies to achieve professional and personal balance? And (3) What are the lived experiences of middle managers in higher education in balancing their professional and personal lives? The sample population for this study included mid-level leaders/managers who were employed by the Louisiana Community College and Technical College System (LCTCS) - one representative from each system institution. Workplace policies were also collected from LCTCS (state level) and all 12 reporting institutions (local level).

Major findings related to this work-family balance study and a resulting theoretical-conceptual framework was shared, as well as implications for theory, leadership, practice, and future research.

Quantitative Study of Schools as Learning Organizations: Examination of PLCs, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Collective Efficacy

Shonna Guillory-Anderson and Dianne F. Olivier, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was one of the first legislative policies passed to address closing the achievement gap often seen in students of different races, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and students living in poverty (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Almost two decades have passed since the enactment of NCLB, but schools and school districts across the United States continue to struggle with closing the achievement gap, especially high poverty schools (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2018b). Adoption of more rigorous school accountability policies and standards, such as the Common Core State Standards, means teachers are now charged with implementing new curriculums aligned to these standards (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). Students living in poverty are often assigned teachers who are not prepared to deliver new curriculums while at the same time, closing the content knowledge gaps of students who enter the classroom behind several grade levels (Almy & Theokas, 2010; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2005; Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013). Conventional wisdom has it that if students in high poverty schools are assigned teachers who are less qualified to teach core content, then these teachers will also lack skills necessary to deal with the many social and psychological issues often seen in students living in poverty. Can creating schools as learning organizations be key to training

teachers and closing the achievement gap? Is the use of job embedded professional development programs an avenue to helping schools become learning organizations?

While there is research evidence of achievement gaps (Reardon, 2011), there is little agreement on effective solutions to reach the goal of closing the gaps. Some solutions considered include providing students with effective teachers (Borg, Borg, & Stranahan, 2012), increasing teacher self-efficacy (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010), and eliminating teachers teaching in isolation by implementing professional development in the form of professional learning communities (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Professional learning communities have been shown to positively impact teacher self-efficacy (Bruce et al., 2010), and teacher self-efficacy has been linked to student achievement (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012).

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine teacher perceptions in relationship to professional learning community dimensions, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of collective efficacy and to explore the relationships among these variables. The two primary research questions guiding this study were, What relationships exist among the constructs of professional learning communities, teacher self-efficacy, and collective efficacy? and How do these relationships manifest within various school structures including: (1) elementary, middle, and high levels of school; (2) TAP and Non-TAP schools; and (3) high poverty and low poverty schools? The teacher participants in this study included K-12 teachers representing a large metropolitan school district. Results from the data analyses was shared, as well as major study findings and implications for theory, practice, leadership, and future research.

Promises Made, Promises Kept? A Program Evaluation of Louisiana's Charter School Evaluation Instruments

Jonathan Loveall, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

The legislation authorizing's Louisiana's Charter School Demonstration Program indicated that the overriding consideration in the implementation of charter schools in Louisiana should be the best interests of what legislators described as "at-risk pupils." How these priorities are implemented in practice is outlined in the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bulletin 126. Bulletin 126 describes certain instruments to guide and evaluate the implementation of this priority. In order, then, to determine if Louisiana has achieved its legislative priorities in the implementation of charter schools, it is necessary to examine the efficacy of these

instruments that are used to evaluate state- and locally-authorized charter schools in the state of Louisiana through formative program evaluation.

Ultimately the purpose of formative program evaluation is to maximize the possibility of what Bernhardt (2000) describes as “meaningful change in...practice.” In order to achieve this type of change and considering the existing body of literature, a framework for formative program evaluation must include five key elements: (a) a consideration of the perspective of the researcher/evaluator (Yarbrough et al., 2010), (b) a methodological lens that is consistent with the change objectives (Baglieri et al., 2011), (c) use of appropriate standards of program evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2010), (d) consideration and synthesis of multiple measures of data (Bernhardt, 1998), and (e) clearly understood outcome goals (Bernhardt, 2000). In the specific case of this particular formative program evaluation, the researcher acknowledges his own participation in and success within more narrowly defined neoliberal paradigms of public education accountability and recognizes the limitations of such paradigms within just and democratic societies. Because of this, and particularly because the outcome goals of this research are specifically related to the best interests of disabled people, it is necessary to utilize a methodological lens that prioritizes the perspectives of disabled people (Baglieri et al., 2011). Continuing to consider this context, it is still necessary to operationalize such a perspective into an actual process of data collection and analysis. The program evaluation standards from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation provide such a process (Yarbrough et al., 2010). This process, however, is insufficient if the researcher does not adequately engage with multiple measures of data (demographic, perceptions, process, and student learning) as suggested by Bernhardt (1998). Put together, these pieces constitute a model of formative program evaluation most likely to facilitate the desired outcome goal, which in this particular case is that the best interests of disabled children is the overriding consideration of the Charter School Performance Compact and its local equivalents.

The methodology will a formative program evaluation of the Louisiana Department of Education's Charter School Performance Compact and the associated Charter School annual review for state-authorized charter schools, along with its local equivalents for locally-authorized charter schools. This study is research-in-progress for a dissertation.

Do They Feel Ready? Self-Efficacy of Career and Technical Education High School Students

Jayda Spillers and Myra Lovett, *University of Louisiana Monroe*

This non-experimental, quantitative study used a correlational research design to determine if a significant, positive relationship existed between students' completion of a series of CTE courses and earning industry-recognized credentials and sense of self-efficacy toward employment pursuits. This research was framed within Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics using the Pearson's r for correlational results. A weak, positive correlation was found in students' course-taking with IRCs and the self-efficacy variables of perseverance and performance. An unanticipated finding from the self-efficacy scale found all students exhibited high mean scores across the individual questions. Findings were supported by the literature on the self-efficacy domain of mastery experience in relation to school environment and contextual teaching and learning experiences.

Special Education Disproportionality

Donna Ramsey and Nan Adams, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

Although the Individual Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) mandated states to collect and analyze data to determine if special education disproportionality is occurring within the local education agencies (LEAs), students of color have continued to be disproportionately represented in special education programs. Historical trend data revealed that Louisiana public schools have experienced persistent challenges in addressing disproportional representation of Black students in special education. Despite variations in the way the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) defines special education disproportionality, statistical data has continued to reveal detrimental effects on Black students. A review of the LDOE's Significant Disproportionality, Coordinated Early Intervening Report (CEIS) revealed that Black students were overrepresented under the identification category of intellectual disabilities. Additionally, the CEIS report disclosed that Black students were more likely to receive disciplinary actions than any other group of students in special education.

Six public school districts located in North and South Louisiana participated in this study. Both large and small districts located in rural, suburban, and urban areas of Louisiana participated in this study. Individual interviews were conducted with seven leaders of special education programs. A total of 40 general education teachers participated in one of seven focus groups conducted by the researcher. The purpose of this study was to examine contributors of

disproportionality and explore remedies used to reduce the overrepresentation of Black students in special education. Although this study investigated factors that contributed to overrepresentation, it sought to find strategies used in public school districts to reduce special education disproportionality.

A parallel-sequential exploratory design was used in this study. In Phase 1, the researcher conducted 13 interviews and focus group sessions. Individual interviews were conducted with directors of special education. Focus groups were held with general education teachers of K-8 students. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual interviews and focus groups were conducted with the participants. Findings from the qualitative data were analyzed and used to develop a survey instrument. Hence, the quantitative survey questions were formulated based on the findings from Phase 1. Pilot testing of the survey was performed using the participants from the focus groups. During Phase 2, the survey was administered to a larger sample of teachers within the public education school setting. Approximately 120 teachers completed the survey.

Findings from this study revealed that the overrepresentation of Black students in special education is a microcosm of the racial disparities facing society. Decisions made at the state-level affects continuity at the district and school-level. Hence, leadership discontinuity underlies the continuity in education. Educators explicitly support the concept of education equality. However, implicit bias and unconscious beliefs hindered their abilities to make unbiased decisions about Black students. Moreover, prejudicial beliefs interfered with educators' ability to develop positive relationships with Black students and their parents.

Review of an Action Research Study of Stakeholder Perceptions of Customer Service in Public Schools

Gretchen Williams, *University of Holy Cross New Orleans*

Imagine a quilt, with various patterns and shapes, carefully stitched together. As your eyes trace the intricacies of the quilt, you notice that the binding, or edging that holds the quilt together has a ravel (Funk, 2014). If that ravel is the main thread woven throughout the quilt, when pulled that quilt could easily be dismantled. Now imagine that same quilt is symbolic of a school, and the binding thread represents customer service at the school. If that thread is pulled, does it cause the unraveling of integral pieces of the school, namely the parent/school relationship, student achievement, and school leadership as they pertain to customer service? This proposal provided

an opportunity to review an action research study that explored the perceptions of customer service received and rendered during the registration process in a public-school setting.

Customer service is often associated with consumer-facing companies or, according to McMillan's dictionary, companies that deal directly with people who buy or sell products or services. However, when mentioned in relation to schools, the customer service component is often overlooked. According to Dawkins (Farooqui, 2015, as cited in Dawkins, 2019) the effective engagement with stakeholders is vital to building successful relationships with school personnel. Customer relationships with school personnel and parents, according to Solomon (2015), varies from the traditional understanding of trying to serve customers to being the catalyst to increase parental engagement during everyday encounters.

A real-life example of an everyday encounter that encompasses customer service in schools is that of registering students. A pseudonym, fictitious school district, and school were used in this study to protect the identity of the stakeholders including, but not limited to, the registrars and the parents. The job of registrars at schools in Green County School District was to provide positive customer service during the registration process. School registrars were tasked with registering students on a daily basis. When families perceived they were refused enrollment in public schools that required registration, an unnecessary hardship may have been placed on the parents, students, and leaders. Soutullo, Smith-Bonahue, Sanders-Smith and Navia (2016) contend that when successfully initiated, school-family relationships are linked to positive experiences. Positive experiences can impact parent engagement, student achievement, and school leadership, which contribute to a positive school culture.

Whether the first encounter between parents and school personnel is positive or negative, this initial experience could shape a parent's perception of the school's culture. According to Marschhausen (2017), "Every experience shapes a student's day. Every encounter shapes a parent's feeling about our organization" (p. 72). In essence, positive academic experiences for students have been, in part, contingent upon the perception of parents regarding the customer service they experience.

This proposal reviewed a qualitative action research study that explored the perceptions of two groups of stakeholders: school registration staff and parents attempting to register their child/children, and the findings of that study. The goal of this action research study was to discern

whether a gap existed between stakeholders and what actions could be taken to mitigate those gaps.

Positivity Focus: A History Of Sports As a Vehicle for Healing Inequalities

Rodney Blackman and Morgan Adams, *Grambling State University*

Sociological research identified sport as a “microcosm of society” and revealed several ways that sports can be characterized as a reasonably accurate reflection of American society. Some examples of this include demonstrative features of sport including its high degree of competitiveness, an emphasis on materialism, the pervasiveness of racism, and the recognition that sport is not a sanctuary, and deviance can be found all throughout sport (Eitzen, 2012, as cited in Eitzen, 2015).

Sociologists have also offered explanations regarding the inherent value of these characteristics. While these reports may intend to be unbiased and evidence driven, part of the veracity of these findings is that at times, the unsavory accounts tend to dominate the collective societal consciousness. Not surprisingly then, the media has frequently peppered its headlines with stories from sports. This has appeared either as scandalous accounts that grab for viewer attention or, as heartfelt anecdotes used to temper heavy doses of tragedy, turmoil, dispute, and disagreement (Eitzen, 2015).

Increasingly, a central theme of research and media productions has been centered around problems perpetuated by the divisive presence of inequalities in America. Among the inequalities most often addressed have been gender pay gaps, health disparities, wealth inequality, residential segregation, and racial discrimination (Desmond (2016); Kozol, 1991; Stanford University, 2011).

Sport has also been identified as a societal change agent – a potential force for good in the midst of conflict and controversy (Eitzen, 2015), whereby athletes, personally, through individualized effort, and the games themselves, collectively, could be useful for healing the pain associated with societal inequality. Up to this point, a lack of research in this area, and a cogent compilation of actions associated with this phenomenon, have appeared. Accordingly, it was the aim of this study to identify, record, and categorize occasions of positive impact on society brought about by the vehicle of sport over the past 50 years. Through use of the Delphi Technique, applied to document and media production analysis, the results of this study demonstrated the power of sports for healing and restoring societal inequities.

On the Sidelines: Learning Coach Roles In Online Charter Schools

Lillie Connor-Flores, *Louisiana State University*

Online learning through virtual schools, often referred to as cyber charter schools, online schools, or online charters (used interchangeably throughout), have been gaining traction over the past two decades as an option for students and parents seeking alternative learning choices. Cyber charter schools have been characterized by the school's remote structure—students and teachers working in different locations with the internet and learning programs having been the bridge between the two. Many cyber charter schools have offered "standards-aligned curriculums, employ[ed] certified teachers and require[d] students to take proctored state standardized tests," giving students a comparable experience with more control and flexibility over learning than their public school counterparts (Revenaugh, 2006, p. 61).

Despite higher attrition rates and lack of accountability due to the non-standard structure of cyber charter schools, enrollment has steadily increased since their inception nearly two decades ago (Borup & Stevens, 2015; Mann & Baker, 2019). The current research on online learning has focused mainly on structures and policy within online schools. Middle schools and elementary schools have seen increased enrollment in cyber charter schools, but the research has not yet focused on the younger groups. Additionally, research into fully-online cyber charter schools has been limited to blended-learning or supplementary online courses, which have been dominant in the literature. Research in the last five years that has focused specifically on cyber charter schools (e.g., Hasler & Leong, 2014; Borup & Stevens, 2015; Mann & Baker, 2019; Beck et al., 2016; Beck et al., 2017; Mann et al., 2018) often produced inconclusive or contradictory results. Researchers have not been sure about what works best in online schools and why parents chose schools that do not perform, and other options. Further, there is little-to-no exploration of parental role, nor perceptions of online schools' curriculum and instructional practices, though parents have often been responsible for acting as teachers. Little has been discussed at all regarding the curriculum or instructional practice within peer-reviewed research.

This paper sought to explore the role of parents in online schools and to respond to the following questions: In what ways can learning coach involvement promote middle school student success in online schools? How do learning coaches in online schools enact their roles as secondary instructors in middle school ELA courses? How can clearly-defined learning coach roles support

student success in online schools? As these schools often underperform but are still widely chosen by parents, understanding how parents act as secondary instructors for students has been essential in supporting improvements in online school structures. The researcher worked at an online charter school in the south-east United States, focusing on middle school parents registered as the Learning Coach for their student(s). The researcher interviewed parents, teachers, and school personnel and conducted observations of communication and meetings to understand productive middle school student support. Additionally, as many schools explored online learning options in the wake of the COVID crisis and other events, establishing ways to support student learning in online environments has been invaluable for academic success.

Bridging the Gap: Lessons Learned in Building Research Self-Efficacy Outside of Research Coursework

Ashley Wicker, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

Doctoral students often receive extensive education in developing one's capacity as a researcher, especially through the intentional design of research coursework in doctoral programs. However, students may feel inadequate in their ability to carry out research (i.e., the dissertation) as they work to develop a brand-new skillset, or they may feel conflicted as they are reconciling this new researcher identity with a previously established professional identity. This professional identity often takes priority since it is typically aligned with a student's values and goals, and likely has contributed to professional growth and satisfaction. The internal conflict of managing and/or reconciling multiple identities, especially when having to prioritize tasks and/or responsibilities, can lead to a decrease in student satisfaction, delay in program advancement, or even student attrition, if not adequately supported.

Doctoral programs, specifically those that are practitioner-based, have an opportunity to build a bridge between student identities – one that supports students in managing multiple identities and developing their confidence to contribute to their field through new research. It also provides opportunities to align educational goals and outcomes with personal and professional ones. Through pedagogical strategies that connect what students are learning and what they do on a daily basis, or plan to do through the lens of a dissertation study, students can experience a seamless progression throughout their tenure in a doctoral program, and faculty can develop more ways to collaborate with one another, thus, creating a cohesive doctoral experience.

This session explored ways faculty could support doctoral students' research self-efficacy by discussing the impact and observations of course redesign on an introductory leadership course in an Educational Leadership doctoral program and by sharing the lessons learned throughout the process. Through intentional design, the course bridged the gap between theory and practice, which allowed students to establish vital connections early in the program. The earlier faculty make content connections in doctoral programs, the earlier students connect with their field through new development of research skills, which could ultimately increase their confidence in carrying out research-related tasks, such as a dissertation.

Praxis as a Barrier to Teacher Certification: Perspectives of HBCU Teacher Candidates

Erin Scott-Stewart and Emily Jackson-Osagie, *Southern University and A&M College*

In the U.S., 15% of K-12 students have been African American, but only 7% of teachers have been Black (NCES, 2019). Those percentages were typically 43% and 22%, respectively, in Louisiana (Jones, 2018). One barrier to teacher certification has been the Praxis licensure exams, which black preservice teachers have passed at significantly lower rates than their white counterparts. This single case study sought to better understand black preservice teachers' perceptions of their K-12 learning experiences and how those experiences impacted their teacher certification effects. The researchers sought to utilize the findings to improve outcomes for preservice teachers at an HBCU in Louisiana. Focus group transcripts were analyzed using a general qualitative "data analysis spiral" (Creswell, 2013, p. 182). Findings pointed to K-12 learning gaps, general test anxiety, and disjointed advising processes. The researchers discussed ideas for improvement in higher education - including tutoring; practices tests; Praxis workshops; and earlier advising - and implications for K-12 education.

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on College Students' Mental Health: A Systematic Review

Ismatara Reena, Shankari Mondal Dipti, and Cindy Parenteau,
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

In December 2019, a rapidly-spreading infectious disease with flu-like symptoms was found in Wuhan, China, was later named as COVID-19. This "new" virus caused more serious illnesses than the flu and affected a larger scale population. As of January 17, 2021, the virus had infected more than 95 million people and killed more than 2 million people across 191 countries

and territories. As of this study, more than 52.5 million people had recovered. To control the spread of infection, the countries around the world adopted isolation strategies. Over the weeks, the situation changed lifestyles drastically as the prevention strategies of COVID-19 such as lockdown, social separation, and mandatory mask protections, started to directly affect people's lives, economic status, and social or mental condition.

Myriads of studies were conducted on general population, health care workers, medical and other college students, and found that COVID-19 significantly increased mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, increased stress, and so on. College students have been one of the most vulnerable groups with the risk of having mental distress. They have faced challenges while adapting to a new lifestyle, which included working from home, social distancing, worrying of job loss, online learning, and the fear of this wide-spread virus. A survey on U.S. college students indicated that 30% - 50% students were diagnosed or treated for at least one psychiatric disorder in the previous 12 months.

Therefore, this article provided a systematic review and analysis of different literatures and provided results on the prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression, and other form of psychological distress in college students during COVID-19 pandemic.

The PRISMA 2009 flow diagram was used to conduct a systemic search on PubMed, Medline, and PsycInfo from inception to the 8th of November, 2020. The terms used were "COVID-19", "mental health", "depression" or "anxiety", and "undergraduate" or "college students." The inclusion criteria were cross-sectional study design, using standardized and validated scales, which assessed the mental health status of college students. A total of 1,063 publications were identified through initial search; then 1037 were removed for not meeting the inclusion criteria. Twenty-six studies were used for the review of data analysis. A data extraction form was used to include relevant data like country of the population studied, prevalence of symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), psychological distress, stress, and/or associated risk factors. The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS), adapted for cross-sectional studies, was used for assessing the risk of bias within the included studies, and was carried out by two independent researchers.

The systemic review identified a higher level of depression (7.7% to 46.92%), a prevalence of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) (2.7% to 30.8%) or anxiety (15.5 % to 71%), and increased stress (13% to 51%). Also, the COVID –19 pandemic had more mental health impact on

female students than male students. The COVID –19 pandemic has significantly increased the mental health condition such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and so on. Mitigating the hazardous effect of COVID – 19 on students’ mental health should be a public health priority.

The impact of the COVID - 19 pandemic on International Students' Mental Health

Ismatara Reena, Nirmal Chandra Gope, and Shankari Mondal Dipti,

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Edward Hebert, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

In December 2019, a rapidly-spreading infectious disease causing pneumonia-like symptoms was found in Wuhan, China, then later named as COVID-19. As of January 17, 2021, the virus had infected more than 95 million people and killed more than 2 million across 191 countries and territories. At the point of this study, more than 52.5 million people had recovered. The emergence of mental health problems is extremely imminent during any pandemic. COVID-19 imposed even a bigger threat of a mental health crisis due to its rapidly-spreading nature and high mortality rate. Many studies involving the general population have reported psychological impacts of COVID -19 on mental health.

A myriad of studies conducted on the general population and specific groups of people such as health care workers or college students, have found that COVID-19 significantly increased mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, increased stress level, and poor mental health conditions. International students have been one of the most vulnerable groups for the risk of mental distress. A survey conducted by the American College Health Association on U.S. college students indicated that 30% - 50% students were diagnosed or treated for at least one psychiatric disorder in the last 12 months. However, international students’ mental health conditions during COVID-19 had not been studied widely, though they represented about 5.5% of all US university students in year 2019. The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of COVID-19 on international students' mental health and the severity of anxiety, depression, and the current state of stress at three universities in Louisiana and Texas.

An online survey was conducted among international students recruited from three universities via email. The survey divided into four sections: demographic questions and three standardized scales (Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7, the Patient Health Questionnaire, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory) to measure anxiety, depression, and the state and trait of anxiety.

Data were collected from 170 international students: 48.8% were female and 51.2% male. The undergraduate students were 40% of respondents, and graduate students were 56.41%. The remaining 3.59% reported as "other." A majority of the students were between 18- and 25-years-old. More than 75% students did not live with their family and 24.1% students reported family member(s) diagnosed with COVID-19. About 10% of the students had been diagnosed with COVID-19. More than 15% students already reported mental health illness before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 37.93% of them never sought professional help from a doctor or counselor.

Mean GAD 7 for the male students was 0.95 and for the female students was 1.18. The difference between male and female GAD 7 scores was statistically significant (with $\alpha=0.10$). The mean PHQ 9 for male students was 0.84 and for females was 0.85, though the difference was not statistically significant. About one-third of the students reported normal anxiety by GAD7 and one-third of the students reported minimal anxiety by PHQ9. The mean level of depression for a research institution was 0.78, whereas the mean level for the other two institutions (non-research) was 0.89. However, the mean anxiety level ranged from 0.98 to 1.2 in all three institutions.

Theme Time Radio Hour Currere: Five Variations on Autobiographical Educational Research

Toby Daspit, Brandon Bonner, Velma Leonard, and Michelle McCoy,
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

From 2006 to 2009, Bob Dylan released over 100 episodes of his "Theme Time Radio Hour," an approximately hour-long satellite radio show with Dylan playing disc jockey and "included both the most well-known and ultra-rare musical testimonies to the assorted concepts to form a thematic narrative through our collective consciousness." (<https://www.themetimeradio.com>) Each episode explored a particular theme (e.g., weather, mothers, baseball, coffee) through not only the songs Dylan chose, but the narrative he wrapped around each song selection, offering a glimpse into not only the influences on Dylan's music, but a secret, often alternative, history of the United States itself.

Five educational researchers (a professor and four curriculum leadership doctoral students) viewed Dylan's Theme Time Radio Hour as an expression of William Pinar's (1975) autobiographical research method of currere, which seeks to understand the influence our educational experiences have had on our complex identities. Furthermore, Pinar (2019) contends that the method of currere, which consists of four stages (regressive, progressive, analytical, and

synthetical) can be utilized to understand larger historical questions such as “the problem that is the present,” particularly in understanding curricular/educational history (p. v). Therefore, this research moved beyond simply documenting individual narratives as a way of understanding curriculum and entered the “complicated conversation” (Pinar et al., 1995) of general curriculum studies.

This presentation weaved together five “Theme Time Radio Hour” variations on “currere,” prompting understanding of the complex nature of each researcher’s unique positioning in curriculum leadership studies as well as a collective commentary on “the problem that is the present.” This was an ongoing research project and was multimedia and interdisciplinary.

Hindsight 2020: What We Learned About Assessment during a Pandemic

Susan Kahn, *Northwestern State University*

Tarrah Davis, *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

The rapid transition to online teaching led to creativity and innovation for a number of pedagogical shifts in methods of teaching, but fewer shifts in assessment practices, even though assessment has been a critical part of teaching and learning. In this presentation, the researchers highlighted novel approaches to rethinking assessment to enhance instruction during a pandemic based on survey data collected from member institutions of the University of Louisiana system. Data was collected and analyzed for reporting after the conference.

The Effect of Implementation Intentions on Student Distractions During Virtual Learning

Sarah Bryant and Susan Kahn, *Northwestern State University*

Virtual classroom learning has been on the rise. These courses are more accessible and cost-effective. Organizations have been trying to reach more learners when and where it is convenient for them. However, as students entered virtual classrooms, they have been faced with new and challenging distractions they must learn to manage. Implementation intentions have been shown to help moderate behavior for nearly two decades. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation intentions on limiting distraction events during virtual learning. The dependent variables in the study, distraction events and transfer of learning, were measured by number of distraction events as observed using online learning software and a post-course survey. An experimental design was used for this study to test the research hypothesis that learners who applied goal-affirming implementation intentions would exhibit a reduced number of

distraction events during a virtual training event, as compared to learners who did not set implementation intentions. Additionally, those who set goal-affirming implementation intentions might have an increase in knowledge gain from the control group.

Cluster sampling was used when selecting study participants. One manager trainee program of 19 participants was randomly selected to participate in the study. The researcher randomly assigned 11 participants to the experimental group and eight participants to the control group. The researcher assumed the students' baseline distraction tendencies were equivalent. Participants attended a four-hour virtual training event on leadership behaviors. After viewing the course objectives, participants in the control group were asked to restate the objectives in their own words. Participants in the experimental group were asked to restate the course objectives in their own words and set the implementation, "If I get distracted, then I will refocus on the instructor."

During the course, participant distractions were captured and tallied by an unbiased third party. After the course, participants were asked to complete a six-question survey gaging transfer of learning and participants' perception of distraction and virtual classrooms. The data was analyzed using a frequency distribution and mean comparison. The results of the study showed participants in the experimental group did not experience fewer distraction events nor have higher levels of transfer of learning. As a result, the study hypothesis was not accepted.

Toward an Advanced System of Accountability for Improved Student Learning Outcomes: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Test-Based Accountability In Louisiana

Susan Kahn, *Northwestern State University*

The nature of federal and state policies regarding accountability testing has narrowed the taught curriculum to content tested, thereby changing what is officially valued as "student learning." The over-emphasis on standardized test scores has narrowed the curriculum to content that is tested (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Baker, 2008; Herman, 2008; Koretz & Hamilton, 2003; Linn, 2000). In Louisiana, test-based accountability has defined local school quality through a letter grade rating scale that has used an index for school performance scores (SPS), which in turn impacts traditional and nontraditional (e.g. charter) school expansion, closure, and takeover, administration of opportunity scholarships (e.g. voucher) for-private school enrollment, and parent petition actions (Louisiana State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education [SBESE], December 2015, §301). Louisiana's test-based accountability system had not been designed to

provide information on student achievement beyond the cognitive domain of learning for accountability purposes, though skills in the affective and psychomotor have been integral to life success (Rothstein, 2004).

This study examined the test-based accountability system in Louisiana and the extent to which the system provided meaningful and actionable data for stakeholders. The intent of this two-phase, concurrent, mixed-methods study was to discover the educational values most prioritized by Louisiana stakeholders and the extent to which policymakers have been willing to pilot an advanced system for test-based accountability, including tests of the higher levels of the cognitive domain as well as indicators for learning in the affective and psychomotor domains. In the first phase, quantitative research questions addressed the comparison of perceptions about Louisiana's test-based accountability system and educational values of stakeholders through the administration of a digitally based statewide survey. Over 500 survey responses were collected and interview data from two participating lawmakers were collected. Stakeholders indicated positive interest in holding schools accountable for values other than standardized tests scores and lawmakers indicated interest in piloting an advanced system, while also indicating the political complications for advancing the system in such a way.

Is Truancy in the K-12 Virtual Education Environment Destroying the Viability of an Otherwise Sound Alternative To Traditional Schooling?

Tammy Morgan and Susan Kahn, *Northwestern State University*

Chronic absenteeism profoundly impacts students, classrooms, and schools across the nation. The measurement of attendance has long been based upon a student's documented presence, as witnessed by a teacher. A vast amount of research revealed the correlation between good attendance and academic achievement, and conversely between chronic absenteeism and increased retention, drop-out rates, and poor academic performance. As school-choice options expanded to include virtual public schools, attendance takes on different definitions; so too does the means by which attendance could be measured. Far less research had been conducted to examine the varying methods of measuring attendance in the virtual environment, and even less to determine the relationship between participation and academic performance.

Annual state-mandated standardized test scores have served as a significant component in measuring schools' efficacy and their mission to prepare students for college and careers. This research study examined the correlative relationship between student participation in the virtual

setting and state standardized test performance to answer the question, is truancy in the K-12 virtual environment destroying the viability of an otherwise sound alternative to traditional schooling.

The study analyzed student time spent in their virtual ELA and math lessons and the percentage of completed assigned activities. The researcher correlated the participation metrics to the year-to-year growth in state standardized test performance. Results indicated a lack of correlative relationship, meaning that increased time spent and percentage of activities completed failed to correlate to student growth in academic achievement. However, the findings suggested a high turn-over rate among students in the virtual setting. The research also indicated key features virtual schools should consider in adopting learning management systems so as to ensure teachers and administrators have access to meaningful data with which to address truancy in the virtual setting.

Institutional Leadership to Impact the Assessment and Improvement of Student Learning in Higher Education

Susan Kahn, *Northwestern State University*

This was a multi-case study enabling institutions to pursue a cohesive and interconnected student learning-focused assessment process. By exploring how institutions institutionalize the student learning assessment process as the fundamental drivers of curricular, instructional, and pedagogical enhancement, the investigation served to develop assessment in higher education beyond a mere reporting mechanism for external constituencies enabling institutions to pursue a cohesive and interconnected student-learning focused assessment process.

Through a multiple case study approach, the overarching goal of the investigation was to affect assessment practice by providing examples and contributing factors of institutions that approached assessment with the explicit purpose of cultivating the learning desired within all academic programs across the institution. These examples provided models that institutions could use to promote effective curricular and instructional development and analysis, enabling institutions to pursue a cohesive and interconnected student learning-focused assessment process.

This presentation included the results of phase I of the exploration, a content analysis of institutions selected for study due to evidence of academic integration (i.e. characteristics that are associated with institutions that have integrated the assessment process and practices with curriculum and instructional development and improvement practices to maximize student

learning) and organizational culture (i.e. the view of assessment is a recognizable feature of the institutional culture). This research was presented as an affiliation of the Knowledge Development Task Force of the Association for Assessment of Learning in Higher Education for which the presenter served as a member and research associate.