

## Friday, November 7, 2008

**9:00 – 9:50 AM**                    **OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION .....**Summitt II

**Presenter:**                    Dana Thames, University of Southern Mississippi

### **The Psychometric Equivalency of Scores from a Web-Based Questionnaire Administered via Cellphone versus Desktop Computer**

John F. Edwards, Mississippi State University

This study investigated the psychometric issues and viability of cellphone-based testing, a novel test administration modality whereby testtakers use a cellphone to respond to items on a web-based assessment. The study explored mode-dependent differences in scores from a web-based version of the Self-Monitoring Scale (SMS) administered across two modalities: desktop computer and cellphone. The SMS was selected because its rights of use were part of the public domain and it had been previously validated for online administration.

The determination of score equivalence was based on the following analyses: comparisons of central tendency, dispersions, and rank order; the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of equal score distributions; the Pitman procedure for detecting differences in reliability coefficients; a confirmatory factor analysis of the equality of factor structures using LISREL; and an analysis of differential item functioning based on item response theory using BILOG-MG.

The study employed a counterbalanced repeated measures design whereby 234 participants took a web-based version of the SMS using a desktop computer and/or a cellphone. In determining the psychometric equivalency of scores from the two modes of administration, all statistical comparisons provided overwhelming support for one general conclusion: There were no mode-dependent differences in scores on the web-based version of the SMS when administered by desktop computer versus cellphone.

The study also explored participants' attitudes toward using cellphones as a test-taking tool. The participants correctly anticipated that their scores would not be affected by using a cellphone, but they categorically rated the cellphone as less enjoyable and more cumbersome than a desktop computer. Despite these findings, one cannot ignore that our modern society appears obsessed with information on demand. As cellphone technology continues to improve and the text-messaging generation begins to influence the field of educational and psychological measurement, cellphone-based testing will likely become an accepted standard for both academic and clinical practice.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM**                    **UNDERSTANDING THE BASIC TOOLS IN FLASH CS3 TO ENHANCE COMPUTER-BASED DESIGN (Training Session).....** Cumberland

Ai-Lun Wu, University of Tennessee

This presentation was designed to help teachers who were interested in becoming more independent, proficient 2 D designers to work with the tool bar that was located in Flash CS3. Flash CS3 allows teachers to develop interactive images that they can use for teaching. This training session helped teachers who want to explore the basic tools used in Flash CS3. The tools in Flash CS3 provide the teacher with a comfortable and easy way to work with different types of graphic images. One of the great advantages of understanding the tool bar was that users have greater control over their images. Teachers can easily edit digital photos, draw, paint, and sketch using a wide variety of software utilizing the Wacom pen and tablet. This tablet is compatible with both PC and Mac.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM**                    **READING (Displays).....**Board Room

### **Using Graphical Representations to Enhance Elementary Science Teaching**

Sharon E. Nichols, University of Alabama

Research substantiates that both the frequency and variety of graphical representations or GRs (e.g., cross sections, diagrams, tables) within school texts has increased in the past decade. If

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elementary-age children were to understand complex diagrams, multimodal presentations, and computer-generated graphics found in science texts and develop the necessary skills to communicate their understandings, then teachers must be equipped to draw on GR-based pedagogical strategies.

The following questions guided this study: (1) How do elementary science teachers perceive the role of graphical representations in inquiry-based science teaching? (2) What constraints do they perceive using GRs for science teaching practices? and (3) To what extent do they see adopted science curricular resources as effective towards supporting GR-based science pedagogy? Study participants included six elementary teachers enrolled in a master's level summer science methods course. The authors provided face-to-face and online instructional sessions. Three foci provided instructional coherence that addressed: (1) rationales for using graphical representations as a teaching strategy, (2) involving students in producing and interpreting GRs to communicate their science understandings, and (3) facilitating science inquiry through graphical representation use. A core assignment involved teachers' analysis of a kit-based science curriculum in which they identified GR uses and revised or created lesson plans to more effectively provide support for GR pedagogy.

The study used case-based methodology, drawing primarily on data generated through "conversations with a purpose" (Merriam, 1998) captured during audiotaped class sessions, and online discussions. Data sources also included teachers' lesson plans, and researchers' field notes and journal narratives. Data analysis involved independent and comparative interpretation by the researchers throughout the duration of the study. The presentation provided insights about using GRs in science inquiry-based instruction, strategies for teaching teachers about effective uses of GRs, and issues salient to the guiding questions of this study.

### **The General Preschool and Emergent Literacy Practices of Parents**

Janet A. Harris, East Baton Rouge (LA) Parish Schools, and  
Jimmy D. Lindsey, Southern University - Baton Rouge

This study examined parental, familial, and child factors that affect general preschool and emergent literacy activities parents provide to their children with learning disabilities; parental, familial, and child factors that affect the emergent literacy skills parents focus on for their children with learning disabilities; and associations between parental, familial, and child factors and the technology use of children with learning disabilities during the preschool years. It also explored whether gender, preschool activities, and preschool computer use affect the reading achievement (word identification and comprehension) of students with learning disabilities.

The accessible population (N = 94) was parents (or guardians) of students with learning disabilities (ages six to nine) enrolled in an urban school district in a southeastern state. A sample of 64 parents from the accessible population was selected to participate in the study using a power analysis and stratified, proportional random sampling (stratum gender of the parents' children with learning disabilities). Fifty-nine (59, 92%) of the selected parents participated. Two- and one-way between-subjects designs were used. Factors included parental (age, educational level), familial (family configuration, number of siblings), gender (male, female), preschool experience (limited, extensive), and preschool technology use (limited, extensive). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and two tests of difference were used to analyze dependent measures, including: (1) general preschool and emergent literacy activities, emergent literacy skills, and preschool computer use scores obtained using a researcher-developed questionnaire and (2) Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ-III) Word Identification and Passage Comprehension standard scores.

Significant findings indicated that younger parents (ages 18 to 35) focused more on emergent literacy skills with their children with learning disabilities during the preschool years, and that children with learning disabilities who had limited preschool computer use had higher WJ-III Word Identification and Passage Comprehension means. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research were presented.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM**                    **ACHIEVEMENT .....** **Salon A**

**Presenter:**                            Pat D. Clark, Lincoln Memorial University

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**Narrowing the Gaps: Student Performance Outcomes in Reading First Schools in Kentucky**

Karen D. Abney, Fayette County (KY) Public Schools; Jerry Johnson, Eastern Kentucky University;  
and Jennifer Chambers, Mercer County (KY) Public Schools

The purpose of this paper was to investigate variations in reading performance among students in Kentucky Reading First schools. An earlier study (Abney & Johnson, 2008) investigated the extent to which school and demographic characteristics were associated with school-level aggregate performance on reading assessments. Findings suggested the possibility that differences among schools in the implementation of Reading First grants might provide a more robust predictor of outcomes.

A second study (Abney, Johnson, & Chambers, 2008) included potential explanatory variables related to program implementation; e.g., the literacy program selected and time spent in literacy instruction. Additionally, gain scores were deployed as a dependent variable in order to investigate influences on performance growth. Results suggested that the instructional program did not influence absolute reading performance. Additionally, gain scores were positively associated with school poverty level (higher poverty schools making greater gains) and negatively associated with school size (smaller schools making greater gains).

The current investigation extended earlier work by deploying different methodologies—specifically, by using student-level performance data as the dependent variable and incorporating student-level, school-level, and cross-level interaction terms as independent variables. Of particular interest, the use of cross-level interaction terms allowed the regression to disclose how the influence of student characteristics on reading performance varies with changes in the school environment (e.g., Does the influence of student SES status vary according to the size of the school?).

Findings from these analyses were interpreted within the context of Reading First grant guidelines to suggest implications for policy and practice. Developed as part of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and intended to help schools with high numbers of struggling readers get additional support for kindergarten through the third grade, the Reading First initiative supports efforts to teach literacy and increase reading development of K-3 students (particularly low-income students).

**Principals' and Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Student Achievement:  
What Really Works in Their Schools**

Sharon R. Gieselmann, University of Evansville

This study examined principals' and classroom teachers' perceptions regarding how to obtain high levels of student achievement during this accountability era. The problem grounding this research was that schools were under intense pressure to meet both state and federal assessment goals while classrooms became increasingly diverse through the assimilation of immigrant populations and the inclusion of special needs students (Tomlinson, 1995). Several studies described a conceptual linkage between principal and teacher performance on student achievement; they were key players with helping schools accomplish high-stakes testing goals. Therefore, their perceptions about what really works in schools was important inasmuch as a school's response to reform efforts may be short-term without strong principal and teacher leadership (Bista & Glasman, 1995; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Keedy & Simpson, 2002).

Principals and classroom teachers serving in high performing schools in one southern state were selected for participation in this study. High performance was determined by selecting schools that scored in the top 20 of all public educational institutions on the annual state assessment. These schools were identified using assessment results obtained from the state department of education. The researcher used interviews as the impetus for data collection and believed that this avenue was more likely than surveys to provide deeper understanding and insight into practitioners' perceptions.

Emerging patterns among the responses were identified and presented in the research findings. Findings indicated that principals' and classroom teachers' attitudes about student success impacted school and classroom strategies. These schools have implemented "no fail" policies to help students become responsible learners in this standards-based environment. Using this approach, educators help students focus on content mastery rather than content "completion." Differentiated instruction permitted students to actively explore topics of interest while classroom assessments allowed students multiple opportunities and means to demonstrate their understanding of state-mandated curricula.

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**Charter Schools in Indiana: Exploring the Impact on Student Performance**

Brian D. Reid and Mary Jo Ratterman, University of Indianapolis

Across the nation 4,000 charter schools are up and running, with 400 new charter schools opening their doors each year. In Indiana, since the legislation authorizing charter schools has been in effect, over 40 charter schools have opened. The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis has been asked to conduct a state-wide study of the impact of charter schools on student achievement.

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the students in charter schools, the academic growth of students in Indiana charter schools as compared to students in non-charter schools, and the relative cost to provide that growth. The primary questions to be answered: (1) What were the demographics of charter schools compared to traditional public schools? (2) What is the level of growth of student academic performance in charter schools versus traditional public schools when controlled for initial student performance? and (3) Which is more cost effective in the improvement of student achievement, charter schools or traditional public schools?

This study used several sources of data to identify the impact of charter schools on student performance when compared to the impact of traditional public schools. The primary data were student data from the NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Performance) test. All charter schools in Indiana were required to participate in this assessment, as do many of the traditional schools. Using their Growth Research Database, NWEA also created a "virtual control student" for each charter school student, who was matched on standard NCLB demographic variables. The analysis looked at the growth in student performance and the added value of the school, charter or traditional public, on that growth. This session provided an overview of the design, data collection, analysis, and results of the study.

**Middle School Students: Obesity and Academic Achievement**

John R. Slate, Sam Houston State University, and Gina C. Viglietti, Clinical Dietitian Consultant

In this study, the authors examined the relationship of 1,128 sixth- and seventh-grade students' grades in four subject areas (i.e., math, reading, science, and social studies) and their scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills (TAKS) Reading, Math, and Writing measures for the 2006-2007 school year as a function of their weight status (i.e., Obese versus Non-Obese). After determining the number and percentage of students who were obese, tables were generated by gender and by ethnic membership to show these statistics.

Statistically significant differences were found between the percentage of boys and girls who were obese, as well as among the ethnic categories of Hispanic, African American, Asian-Pacific Islander, and white, and among grade levels. Obese children were found to have statistically significantly lower course grades in math, reading, science, and social studies. Similar results were present for the three TAKS measures. Given the importance of test scores for accountability purposes, differences were sufficiently strong between obese middle school students' test scores and non-obese middle school students' test scores to influence the school's accountability ranking. Implications of the findings were discussed as well as suggestions for further research.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM      ADULT EDUCATION ..... Salon B**

**President:**                      Jean N. Clark, University of South Alabama

**Using Problem-Solving Processes as a Technology to Promote Learning  
in Online and Facilitated Sessions for Adults: An Example**

Lila L. Holt, University of Tennessee

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While creative problem-solving processes are not new, when applied as a technology and combined with online and facilitated training for adult learners, does it create an environment for adult learners to create knowledge in an enjoyable, yet cost effective training? Research has shown that adult learners prefer to acquire knowledge in a manner that is applicable in their lives. It is also a fact that companies require training to be relevant and cost efficient. By preparing background information for discussions, online companies can reduce travel costs of extended face-to-face sessions. Additionally, integrating a creative problem solving technique incorporates another skill for adult learners to use to create knowledge and apply to their own situations.

The presenter discussed the blending of the Simplex process with teaching a sample group of front line supervisors 14 topics applicable to their jobs. The Simplex process is an eight-step, creative, problem-solving technique of divergence and convergence that begins with asking questions moving to implementing action plans for chosen solutions. The 14 topics were structured into online modules to present the materials to the supervisors at work. After that they were brought together in three different sessions to apply the online materials in case studies.

In informal interviews conducted after the first two sessions, students were already discussing how they were applying the Simplex process to aspects of their work other than just the topics presented for training. Additionally, student evaluations after each session revealed that, while the students would have liked better formatting of the online modules used, they found the guidance of the Simplex process a valuable tool for analyzing the case studies to make them applicable to their own personal work environments.

### **A Study of the Causes of Absenteeism Among Girl Students in Rural Sindh**

Shahid H. Mughal, GECE Thatta, and Saeeda Shaikh, Government, Girls' Degree College

The World Declaration on Education for All places priority on the education of girls and women. Universal education has also been the national policy since 1950 in Pakistan. Despite the fact that Pakistan is the signatory of international protocols and conventions, the situation in the country is not so satisfactory with reference to girls' education. Enrolment rate at primary level is not encouraging. The situation in rural areas is very alarming. The present inquiry was an attempt to study "Absenteeism," a major problem in rural areas of Pakistan. This study explored the causes and problems faced by the girl students, teachers, parents and school authorities. It also focused on the facilities provided by the government authorities to promote primary education in rural areas of Sindh Province. The nature of the enquiry was empirical.

Primary data have been generated through the administration of the questionnaire and holding interviews with the respondent. Secondary data have been obtained from Sindh Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development department, Government of Sindh and SEMIS (Sindh Education Management Information System). The scope of the study was limited to 22 primary schools of district Naushehro Feroze. The survey was used as a research strategy. The population of the study consists of all (183) government primary schools of District Naushehro Feroze. The principles of classification were based on the control of districts wise location of the schools. Stratified sampling has been adopted to ensure the inclusion of representatives from all categories of students. Cluster sampling design has been used in the final stages of sampling. The total sample size was 11%.

The finding of the study indicated a significant difference found in the number of primary schools, number of teachers, and physical facilities in girls' schools as compared to those of boys. A high level of absenteeism has been observed in girls' schools as compared to those of boys. Major reasons of absenteeism found were sickness, work in the fields, babysitting, corporal punishment, schools were not available, lack of physical facilities, teacher absenteeism, difficult syllabi, shortage of teachers, children were not interested in studies, and schools were at long distance from children's residence. In the light of the findings, the following recommendations were made: (1) imbalance should be addressed because discrimination against girls is perpetuating the educational gap between boys and girls, (2) special measures should be taken to reduce gender disparity in the rural areas of Pakistan, (3) maximum facilities in terms of schools, teachers, and proper buildings with basic amenities should be provided in the rural areas of Pakistan, and (4) a sufficient number of teachers should be employed in girls' schools in order to avoid multigrade teaching, thus ensuring quantity and quality.

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**Examination of Undergraduate Student's Learning Styles  
and the Relationship to Demographic Variables**

Maria Martinez M. Witte and Prasanthi Pallapu, Auburn University

This study examined undergraduate students' learning styles from the Colleges of Business, Education, and Liberal Arts as measured by the Index of Learning Styles - active/reflective, sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, and sequential/global. The examination also included gender, ethnicity, age, GPA, and grade-level variables. There was a need to examine learning style differences between students from different academic programs because research in this area was both sparse and contradictory. Teachers, instructors, adult educators, trainers, course designers, program and training developers invest a significant amount of time and effort in designing courses and training to achieve specific objectives and to provide a better learning experience to the learners. An emerging issue in education is the understanding and application of individual learning styles. Awareness of the individual's learning styles will assist in the development of a curriculum that addresses learning needs.

There was a total of 346 participants from the Colleges of Business, Education, and Liberal Arts. The participants completed a survey with six demographic and 44 learning style questions via an Internet survey. According to the analysis of the results, more Caucasians were taking undergraduate courses at this large southeastern university, and the ages ranged from 19 – 43 years. There were twice as many active and sequential learners as reflective and global learners. There were four times as many sensing and visual learners as intuitive and verbal learners. To address sensing learners' needs, activities should be incorporated that involve creativity for course topics. Visual learners learned better when the information was provided to them through pictures, maps, and in colors.

This study reinforced the importance of providing a variety of instructional strategies, techniques, and methods when working with learners. In a postsecondary education setting, it is vital to provide tools for those responsible for the teaching-learning environment.

**Creation and Validation of a Self Directed Learning Readiness Scale Instrument**

James E. Witte and K. Shannon Hogg, Auburn University

The purpose of this research study was to expand on previous efforts of Guglielmino and others (Caffarella & Caffarella, 1986; Conti, 1979; Knowles, 1975; Oddi, 1984; Pilling, 1991) by creating and validating an instrument for measuring tendencies and potentials for engaging in and succeeding with self-directed learning, specifically related to a work environment. The first objective in this study was to develop the instrument for assessing traits, perspectives, and environmental settings related to an individual's likelihood to engage in self-directed learning within a work environment. This was initiated through a review of literature and the establishment of a theoretical framework to explain self-directedness within a psychological framework of motivation/self-regulation, cognitive elements, and social/environmental.

The items for the survey were examined and analyzed through a series of card sorts to establish their fit within the theoretical framework. A follow-up analysis of the instrument items through the use of grade-level review and an extensive card sort process led to final adjustments to the language and a sorting into the final format of the items into three domains. The instrument was then field tested with a representative sampling of the total company population at a subsection of a southeastern industrial manufacturing facility. An analysis of data from the field test allowed for minor adjustment of the instrument items before conducting the major sampling at the main section of this manufacturing company. The data obtained using the instrument were analyzed to determine reliability and validity, and to assess the results in the research questions.

The results of the survey and subsequent analysis suggested that the instrument provided a means of assessing adult learner traits within these three domains and yielded an indication of how prepared the individual is for the self-directed learning of work-related skills and knowledge.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM                    QUALITATIVE ..... Salon C**

**Presenter:**                    Alexandra A. Conniff, Eufaula City Schools

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**Teaching As A Profession: Would You Choose It Again?**

Gahan Bailey, Edward L. Shaw, Jr., Lynda Daughenbaugh,  
and Jayne Kennedy, University of South Alabama

The purpose of this study was to examine three areas of choosing teaching as a profession. A total of 436 teachers (128 elementary, 108 middle, and 200 high) completed a Teaching as a Profession Survey (TAPS) that asked three questions: (1) Why did you choose education as a profession? (2) If you were starting over and choosing a profession today, would you choose education? Why or why not? and (3) Would you encourage high school seniors/college freshmen to consider a teaching career? Why or why not?

Question 1 was analyzed qualitatively for emerging themes. Five themes for each grade level emerged; three themes were shared by each grade level: making a difference, family life, and inspired by others. Questions 2 and 3 were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, the responses of “yes” or “no” to the first part of the questions were analyzed according to seven demographic variables: level of education, teaching experience, area of certification, current grade level taught, gender, age, and ethnicity. Qualitatively, the open-ended portion of questions 2 and 3 were examined for emerging themes. There was a larger variety of responses for why teachers would not choose education or encourage others to choose education than for choosing to become a teacher or encouraging others to become a teacher.

It was recommended that the results of this mixed-method study be used to support K – 12 schools in teacher retention and aid higher education in recruiting future teacher educators.

**Understanding the Challenges Faced by Beginning MAT Teachers**

Li-Ching Hung, The Overseas Chinese Institute of Technology,  
and Cary S. Smith, Mississippi State University

Several states introduced alternative certification (AC) programs in the mid-1980s to alleviate the teacher shortage situation; the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program was an example of just such a curriculum. Three research questions for this study were: (1) What were the challenges beginning MAT teachers faced? (2) What were beginning MAT teachers’ perceptions of their training program? and (3) What were the beginning MAT teachers’ attitudes toward their teaching career? Case methodology was conducted to highlight the research questions.

Six beginning MAT teachers who graduated from Mississippi State University participated in this study. Data were drawn from interviews, observations, and a concomitant related document analysis. Results revealed three themes as primary challenges for the majority of MAT teachers: (1) students’ low motivation, (2) No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability, and (3) lack of parental support. In terms of perceptions regarding their training program, all six MAT teachers exhibited gratefulness for their training program’s availability, especially for the opportunity to gain teacher licensure.

These findings could be perceived as guidelines for the improvement of the MAT program and as methods for ensuring that effective AC teachers graduate from the training program. Among the six participants, five wanted to quit teaching in the near future. The sixth, an older individual who became a teacher because of boredom with her first career, wanted to remain in the profession. Most importantly, she was the only one whose previous educational background and job experience were the same as the subject she taught. The above findings filled several research gaps when compared with previous studies. For example, there was an inconsistency between MAT teachers’ licensure area and content knowledge background. Further studies are needed to investigate samples of graduates from other AC programs.

**A Case Study About the Effect of a Casual Teacher Student Relationship  
in a Junior High Theater Arts Classroom**

John A. Sargent, East Texas Baptist University

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a casual student teacher relationship on student behavior in a junior high school theater arts classroom. The research question guiding this qualitative intrinsic case study was: How does a casual teacher-student relationship affect student behavior in a seventh- and eighth-grade theater class in a semi-rural, East Texas junior high school? The participants in this case study were 21 junior high theater arts students in a suburban junior high school located in northeast Texas, a teacher who was in his third year of teaching junior high school theater arts, and the researcher. The case study took place over a 14-week period.

Action research methodology facilitated insights on a daily basis because of interaction between the participants and researcher. Data collection procedures included observations/field notes, reflective journal, student interviews, and teacher interviews. Categories were generated through the constant comparison method with continual refining and analysis. Three themes emerged from the data analysis. First, off-task behavior was at a premium within the classroom. Second, the students did not respond to the disciplinary measures and instructions of the classroom teacher. Third, the students had no filter when it came to saying and doing inappropriate things.

Implications from this case study were in several areas and are important for teachers who teach in theater arts classrooms and those who teach in other types of classes. A casual student teacher relationship provides the background for teachers and students to cross professional boundaries. The blurring of these boundaries creates problems for the student and the teacher. Casual student teacher relationships were almost always initiated and developed by the teacher. Teachers must be cautious and cannot let their own need for approval get in the way of providing an education for the student.

**10:00 – 10:50 AM      LEARNING .....Summitt I**

**President:**                      Patricia Davis-Wiley, University of Tennessee

### **Composition Classroom Narratives of Teaching and Learning**

Annie J. Gray, Pellissippi State Technical College

This action research examined: (1) narratives community college writing students had about themselves as writers in a college-level writing course and (2) the connection between those narratives and student experience of collaborative learning activities. The study of narrative was particularly useful in determining how people make meaning of experiences in their lives. The class utilized three types of teaching and learning to explore the writing process, including lecture, discussion groups, and collaborative learning activities. Students and teacher used a social-constructionist approach to conversation that implemented a process of reflective dialogue about writing and writers' strategies.

At the end of the course, which began with 30 students, 20 out of 21 students anonymously volunteered to participate in the study. A neutral third party randomly selected 12 names for final participation. The researcher conducted a phenomenological analysis of audio-taped entrance and exit interviews of the 12 students. This process yielded relevant themes that the researcher later subjected to metaphorical analysis. The study also utilized relevant examples from student journals and researcher field notes.

Findings revealed what narratives students had about themselves as writers on entering and exiting the course. Results showed that using collaborative learning activities in the writing classroom influenced student narratives. Students experienced interpersonal and technical gains from participation in social-constructionist-oriented classroom dialogue about writing and from certain aspects of a learning environment incorporating collaborative learning activities. Conclusions discussed the use of collaborative learning activities in helping freshmen writers transition into college writing. Further implications for classroom practice were discussed.

### **Arts in the Aftermath: Fifth Graders' Use of Haiku After Katrina**

Gaye B. Winter and Gaylynn Parker, University of Southern Mississippi

The study examined fifth-grade students' creative writing of haiku in order to express their feelings after Katrina. This was funded by a Learning Challenge Award from Mississippi Gulf Coast

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Community College in order to accomplish the following outcomes: (1) give education majors a chance to enter the classroom before official student teaching, (2) give fifth graders on the coast of Mississippi a chance to express their feelings about Katrina, (3) learn haiku, (4) develop lifelong coping skills, and (5) foster a partnership between MGCCC and USM.

Two classes of 25 fifth-grade students participated in the study at St. James Elementary School, which reopened its doors September 12, 2005 in Gulfport, MS. Of the 50 students, over half had lost everything from homes to pets to people in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The future educators, in groups of two, planned a lesson for one of the six visits. The "haiku" visit encompassed four educators (two in each classroom) along with the regular classroom teacher, in each, circulating among the students to answer questions if needed. The children were taught haiku and asked to write about Katrina if they wanted to; all chose to do this. They also wanted to talk about what was happening and how they were affected, including "We must stay inside Black as night is Katrina I cannot go play" by fifth-grader Morgan. Each classroom was diverse and even included displaced students from other schools.

There is a crisis, even today, by not having more creative writing/arts curricula in public schools as an outlet for other learning, including helping children learn how to solve real-life problems.

**11:00 – 11:50 AM            CREATING A TRIFOLD BROCHURE IN ILLUSTRATOR CS3  
(Training Session) ..... Cumberland**

Ai-Lun Wu, University of Tennessee

This session was designed to help the teachers who were interested in creating a simple and effective trifold brochure by using Adobe Illustrator CS3. Illustrator CS3 allows teachers to develop brochures that were ideal for many uses, including classroom, presentation, and conference settings. This training session was aimed at helping teachers who wanted to explore Illustrator CS3 templates and who wanted to know more about the wide range of possibilities for using them. The tools and templates in Illustrator CS3 provide the teacher with a comfortable and easy way to create different types of brochures. One of the great advantages of understanding the tools and templates is that users have greater control over their own designs. Teachers can easily edit digital photos, draw, paint, and sketch using a wide variety of the tools in Illustrator CS3.

**11:00 – 11:50 AM            ACHIEVEMENT (Displays) ..... Board Room**

**Improving Working Conditions in an Urban School District: A Proposal**

Talana Vogel, Christian Brothers University

Urban school districts spend millions of dollars replacing hundreds of teachers who leave each year; however, students pay the greatest price when qualified teachers leave the schools that need them the most. Research has shown that teachers leave their schools and/or profession because of poor working conditions. The research questions of this study focused on the following: (1) Why do teachers leave schools? (2) Are conditions different in low and high performing schools? and (3) Can improving teaching and learning conditions improve student achievement?

This study utilized the work of the Center for Teaching Quality. School administrators in the Memphis City Schools were invited to participate. Once selected, participating school faculty completed an online survey the following spring. Data were presented at each school site. School teams were trained in how to utilize the data and to make positive changes based on the data. Training and support were ongoing during the following school year. The following spring the survey was administered again. Data were analyzed for positive shifts in the perception of participants and for correlations between improved perceptions and standardized test data.

Understanding the conditions that exist in the MCS provided a greater understanding to how to address and improve the teaching and learning conditions across the district. Based on the previous and current work of the CTQ, the researchers were confident that teaching and learning conditions can be improved for teachers and students in the Memphis City Schools. Working through the multiple layers of

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politics in a large urban district has been challenging. The researchers felt that their patience would soon be rewarded.

**Secondary Career and Technical Student Achievement**

Shelley H. Bock, Mississippi State University

This study examined the relationship of teacher attributes and school contextual factors to secondary student achievement in career and technical education (CTE) in Mississippi. The independent variables included: years teaching experience, degree(s) of attainment, professional development, national board certification, enrollment, academic achievement, and socioeconomic status. The statewide standardized assessment instrument for CTE was used as the dependent variable measuring student achievement at the school district, CTE program area, and individual CTE course levels. The significance of this research included implications for teacher recruitment and retention, degree requirements, professional development, national boards, technical assistance, programming for disadvantaged students, and integration of academics into CTE.

A correlational design using multiple linear regression analysis determined relationships between the independent variables of interest and the dependent variable. Examined at the school district and seven CTE program area levels, all predictor models showed statistically significant variance in student achievement. Additionally, an ANOVA was used to examine differences in national board certified teachers and non-national board certified teachers at the CTE course level. Five of the 21 CTE courses identified showed statistically significant differences.

**Mastery and Performance Achievement Goal Configurations  
and the Help-Seeking of University Students**

Jared M. Bartels, University of Central Missouri, and Susan Magun-Jackson, University of Memphis

Previous research suggests that interactions among mastery and performance achievement goals, or "goal configurations" (Schraw, Horn, Thorndike-Christ, & Bruning, 1995) may produce different patterns of cognitive and motivational self-regulation among college students (Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche, 1995). Previous research with adolescent (7th and 8th grade) students also suggests differences in help-seeking behaviors between those adopting mastery and performance goals.

The purpose of the present study was to extend the previous findings by examining mastery and performance goal configurations and help-seeking behavior among a sample of undergraduate students from a Mid-South university (N = 141). Different hypotheses with respect to the relationships between goal configurations and help-seeking may be anticipated within a normative goal and revised goal framework. That is, a normative goal framework posits adaptive motivational and self-regulatory patterns among those adopting mastery goals and a maladaptive pattern among those adopting performance goals. Under a revised goal framework, however, the most adaptive pattern would be expected among those adopting both mastery and performance goals (Elliot & McGregor, 1999).

Participants, based on a median split of mastery and performance goals, were categorized within one of four groups: high mastery/high performance, high mastery/low performance, low mastery/high performance, or low mastery/low performance. ANOVA results did not reveal significant differences among the goal groups,  $F(3, 137) = .62, p > .05$ . In light of normative and revised goal theories, such results failed to support the normative hypothesis that students high in mastery goal adoption and low in performance goals would be the most likely to utilize help-seeking, an adaptive self-regulated learning strategy. However, results also failed to support the revised goal hypothesis that a high mastery/high performance goal configuration was most adaptive. These results have implications for educators as achievement goals were influenced by the mastery/performance structure of the classroom (Linnenbrink, 2005).

**11:00 – 11:50 AM      POLICY and PRINCIPALS.....Salon A**

**President:** Sandra M. Harris, Troy University - Montgomery

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**Correlates of Professional Isolation for First-Year Principals**

Scott C. Bauer and Ed Stephenson, George Mason University

Professional isolation has hampered the performance of employees in public education for decades. Factors that were known to influence isolation include social support, the presence of formal mentoring relationships, and organizational attributes like role conflict, ambiguity, and overload. The effects of isolation cited in the literature include burnout, turnover, and job dissatisfaction. While much has been written about the relationship between professional isolation and teacher efficacy in schools, considerably less attention has been dedicated to exploring the correlates of isolation for principals.

The purpose of this study was to explore the correlates of perceived isolation among first-year principals in Louisiana. This survey analysis used data from a broader study of the efficacy of coaching and mentoring programs for new principals. The sample included data from 98 first-year principals from Louisiana, approximately half of whom participated in a coaching program focused on assisting them in developing their instructional leadership capabilities. The conceptual model tested suggests that isolation may serve as a factor that mediates the relationship between perceived organizational factors and outcomes such as burnout and intention to leave, though this relationship was more pronounced in the impact of social support and isolation on emotional burnout than either cognitive or physiological burnout.

As might be expected, social support emerges as an especially potent correlate of isolation ( $r = -.64$ ), while participation in a formal mentoring program has a statistically significant but much more muted impact. (Curiously, perception of role overload seemed to be more pronounced among new principals involved in mentoring, suggesting that this might be seen as more of a chore than a help!)

**The Educational and Psychological Experiences of Children Orphaned by Aids in Western Kenya**

Grace Jepkemboi, University of Alabama - Birmingham

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of teachers and caregivers concerning the psychological and educational experiences of Children Orphaned by AIDS in Western Kenya. The design of the study focused on phenomenology inquiry. Audio-taped interviews were the primary source of data. There were 20 participants, 12 teachers and eight caregivers, in seven orphanages who volunteered to participate in the study.

Findings of the study revealed that the children orphaned by AIDS went through a continuum of experiences. At one end of the continuum were the experiences that arise as the children see their parents develop signs of HIV/AIDS, become terminally ill, and eventually die. Children were most affected psychologically and educationally in their first year in the orphanages. Some of the emotions they expressed included feeling sad, rejected and unwanted, lonely, feeling strange, in need of acceptance, gloomy, dull, cold, worried, desperate, afraid, hopeless, angry, annoyed, upset, feeling stigmatized, in panic, disturbed, frustrated, confused, tensed, angry, reserved, desperate, violent, stigmatized, emotional, and in grief. At the other end of the continuum were the emotions, personalities, and attitudes of the orphaned children towards the end of the first year and in the second year that included being happy, hopeful, trusting, confident, respectful, outgoing, cooperative, warm, complacent, and courageous. The techniques that teachers and caregivers used to help children cope with grief following the loss of the parent(s) were also described.

The results of the study could provide information for early childhood educators, psychologists, administrators at orphanages, and policy makers as they consider the psychological and educational needs of the children orphaned by AIDS.

**Coaching New Principals**

Jeffrey Oescher, Southeastern Louisiana University, and Scott Bauer, George Mason University

Since 2003 the School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans (SLC) has been developing a coaching/mentoring program to help local districts meet the needs of new school leaders.

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While immensely popular, coaching has not been studied in great depth. This study sought to determine the elements of coaching that lead directly and indirectly to school improvement. It reported the results of the evaluation of the program during the 2007-2008 school year. Forty-three first-year principals from four public school districts and 48 second-year principals from seven public school districts plus five charter school principals anticipated, along with their 25 coaches and 41 mentors.

Data were gathered from coaches' journals, mentors' reports from Colleague Critical Team meetings, principals' portfolios, evaluators' observations, and focus group interviews. Through learning walks and coaches' conferences with the principals, the research team discerned common issues about which principals requested assistance. Instructional leadership was the most prevalent concern. New principals gained confidence in conducting classroom observations with the support of their coaches. They learned to quickly identify successful teaching strategies and saw firsthand the relationship between engaged learning and student behavior.

Several other issues were discussed frequently. These included personnel management, self-improvement, logistics, and professional development. Each issue was discussed in the paper. One of the most interesting findings was the high value principals placed on the Colleague Critical Team (CCT) exchanges. These exchanges included cross-district participants and allowed for greater input in the topics discussed.

### Writing Grant Proposals

John R. Petry, University of Memphis

The session emphasized the following: (1) sources of grant and project funding (local, state, and federal); (2) initiating activities: statement of need, personnel concerns, contract issues, ethical issues, work/task analysis, costing, scheduling, and network analysis; (3) project management budgeting, meeting deadlines, resource changes, reviews and reports, and evaluation procedures; and (4) deliverables (product and reports). Knowledge bases and skill requirements cited were: (1) teamwork, (2) critical thinking, (3) problem solving, (4) professional responsibility, (5) values, (6) time management, and (7) best professional practices. Emerging computer applications were discussed, including university electronic services for grant seekers. Websites were contacted during the session for information. Participants spent time in imagining an educational need, submitting a short proposal to a funding agency to create a project to meet a need and manage the project, noting deficiencies in design, discrepancies in meeting goals, and success in the achievement of objectives.

**11:00 – 11:50 AM      EFFICACY.....Salon B**

**President:** Debby Hayes, Lincoln Memorial University

### Increasing On-Task Behavior in Every Student in a Second-Grade Classroom

Daniel L. Fudge, University of Tennessee

A withdrawal design (B-C-B-C) was used to evaluate the effects of the Color Wheel classroom management system (CWS) on on-task (OT) behavior in an intact, general-education, second-grade classroom containing 12 African American students. The CWS included three sets of rules, posted cues to indicate the rules students were expected to be following at that time, and transition procedures for altering activities and rules.

Class-wide data revealed rates of off-task behavior higher than those found in classrooms serving students with emotional-behavioral disorders prior to implementing the CWS. Visual analysis of the time-series graphs showed large, immediate, and sustained increases in OT behavior when the CWS was applied, with OT behavior returning to baseline levels when typical classroom management (TCM) procedures were reinstated. Each student's average phase data also showed increases in OT behavior when the CWS was applied and re-applied, and showed reductions when the CWS was withdrawn. Within-subject, across-phase effect size analysis revealed an ES equal to the greater than one for each adjacent phase (i.e., for all 36 comparisons). Maintenance data showed that these changes were maintained over time. These data provided 36 repeated and clear demonstrations of experimental control

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(internal validity). Teacher acceptability data, narrative reports, and the teachers' continuation of the CWS after the study ceased provided evidence of sustainability. The positive impact across each student in the class provides evidence of contextual validity.

Discussion focused on future theoretical research designed to identify possible mechanism(s) that account for the effectiveness of the CSW and studies designed to enhance the external validity by using longitudinal designs to evaluate the effect of CWS procedures on students' learning and inappropriate behaviors rates and teacher burn-out.

### **Classroom Teachers (K-12) and Value of Voice in Public Policy Process**

Mary C. Hammon and Karen A. Franklin, University of Tennessee

The largest set of policy "actors" in America's K-12 public education policy arena is classroom teachers. Yet the direct voice of these teachers, the professionals with the most sustained contact with students, is often weak or absent in the policy-making process. The researchers approached the literature review from a multidisciplinary perspective and with a focus on voice. Theories and studies about self-perceptions on the value of voice and characteristics of people who experience marginalization of voice were of particular interest.

With regard to basic findings, a sample was provided. Some political scientists pointed to the ironic nature of Interest Groups (e.g. the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association) as facilitators of voice (Anderson 2006). The very representational nature and the aggregated power base within these groups tended to marginalize the direct voice of its members. Educational psychologists and practitioners described systemic issues impacting the potency of teachers' voices. Craig (2006) suggested that there were barriers in the effective dissemination of policy knowledge. Others pointed to issues of willingness and skill in being advocates for one's own field (Bartell, 2001; Koonce-Morton & Masterson-Staggs, 2001). Studies in the psychology literature linked individual personality traits to value of voice, assuming voice opportunity was present. Specifically, extraversion and self-efficacy were isolated as positive predictors of value of voice (Avery, 2003).

Over 70% of classroom teachers were women. Sociologists found that gender moderated the power of voice particularly in given situations and under certain structural conditions (Conway, Steuernagel, & Ahern, 2005; Sapiro, 1983; Tedin et al., 1977). The limited voice of classroom teachers represents a gap in information about professional practice with serious implications for the soundness of policy decision making, implementation, and results.

### **Promoting Doctoral Studies in Engineering at Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

Rochelle L. Williams, Southern University and A and M College

This research was conducted to address the disproportionately small number of African Americans receiving PhDs in the field of engineering. Research suggests that in 2005 a total of 1,999 PhDs were granted in engineering to U.S. citizens. Of this number, 76% (1,521) were white, 4.3% (85) were black, and 19.7% (393) were conferred on other ethnicities. Only a limited number of investigations was being performed to address the issue of retention of African American doctoral-level graduate students.

In order to understand the factors leading African American students to pursue graduate studies, undergraduate students were given a survey evaluating both cognitive and non-cognitive factors. Of the 30 students surveyed, 63% (19) were male and 37% (11) were female. All participants attended a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), were African American, and majored in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM).

The findings of this study revealed factors that most contribute most to African American student apathy towards doctoral studies in engineering. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the students surveyed believed that their efficacy towards pursuing graduate studies was influenced by faculty. The results of this study strongly indicated the significant role that faculty members can play as mentors for potential PhDs in engineering. Possible solutions for increasing the number of African American PhDs in engineering were given.

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11:00 – 11:50 AM      **PRESCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ..... Salon C**

**Presenter:**                      Eric J. Heinrich, Louisiana Tech University

### **Inquiry International Investigation**

Sally Blake, Sandra Brown Turner, and Satomi Taylor, University of Memphis,  
and Chia-Hui Lin, National Taichung University

Concern about science education and science standards has been driven by the gap in science achievement between groups of students in American schools and worries that American students lag behind their peers in international rankings. The future of science education depends on the acceptance and investigation of diverse populations and how best to develop and utilize these resources in school environments. Inquiry reasoning was a key element in understanding and developing the nature of science learning. Many now believe that early childhood education may play a major role in science learning.

Research questions were: (1) What variations in indicators of inquiry reasoning do young children exhibit when investigating school environments that support the inquiry process? and (2) To what extent is inquiry reasoning evident in students across diverse learning environments (populations, settings, and measures)? Children from the United States and Taiwan were used for the validation study of the observation instrument for this work. Percentages of indicators were tallied under five constructs to compare results and ranked by great indication (more than two occurrences), some indication (two occurrences), and no indication.

Video tapes of children's interviews were coded and analyzed to support observation data. Validation of the protocol and instrument was determined by 70% agreement by the team of researchers. Data from the validation study indicate that the children in programs in Taiwan have a higher percentage of inquiry behaviors than the sample in American schools. This instrument was used to compare children from Japan, China, and Mexico.

### **Teacher Responses to Negative Emotionality and Socioemotional Competence in Early Childhood**

Shelley L. Esquivel, University of Tennessee

Few studies have explored the possible contribution of teachers to children's social and emotional adjustment, although research on parental influences was abundant. In this study, teacher and parent reactions to children's negative emotional displays were assessed to determine whether teacher reactions accounted for differences in children's socioemotional adjustment beyond any parental influences.

Participants were 45 mothers, 18 fathers, and 23 teachers of 90 children (37 girls, 53 boys), ages 3 through 5 ( $M = 48.39$  months,  $SD = 9.33$ ) who attended 11 childcare centers in the Omaha metro area. Of the 45 participating mothers, 41 were white, two were Hispanic, one was Asian, and one was American Indian. Sixteen of the fathers were white and two were Asian. Of the teachers who participated, 23 were white, one was black, and one did not report ethnicity. One teacher was male.

Participants completed two measures. Twelve items comprised the first measure, in which participants indicated the likelihood of responding to children's negative emotionality in ways which corresponded to five subscales: (1) distress, (2) punitive and minimizing, (3) expressive encouragement, (4) emotion-focused, and (5) problem-focused. The measure used to assess children's socioemotional adjustment consisted of six subscales: (1) hyperactivity, (2) aggression, (3) anxiety, (4) depression, (5) withdrawal, and (6) social skills.

In 11 of 24 regression analyses, teachers' reactions were related to children's adjustment when controlling for parental reactions. Specifically, emotional encouragement by teachers predicted five of the six outcome variables: anxiety, aggression, depression, withdrawal, and social skills. Emotion-focused reactions predicted children's anxiety, depression, and withdrawal. Finally, punitive and minimization responses predicted children's aggression, hyperactivity, and social skills. Results suggested that to more fully understand social and emotional adjustment in early childhood, more studies

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need to be conducted that investigate the role of teachers, rather than focusing only on possible parental influences.

**The Effect of a "Mock" Grocery Shopping Activity and Subsequent Nutrition Education on the Food Choices of Children in a Pre-School Setting**

Debra K Goodwin, Jacksonville State University

Fifteen pre-school children aged 3-5 years participated in a six-week nutrition education program introduced in the form of age-appropriate puppetry, stories, and songs. To determine if the program had an appreciable effect on children's food choices, a classic pretest-posttest design was employed. The study involved setting up a mock grocery store containing a wide variety of both healthy and unhealthy foods and beverages. Prior to participating in the program, the children went "shopping" in the mock grocery store and were instructed to select five items. After the program, the procedure was repeated, with the children again selecting five items at the "grocery store." Children's food and beverage selections at the pretest and posttest were compared in terms of calories, fat, fiber, sugar, and number of fruits and vegetables selected.

Findings indicated that 92% of the children in this study made at least one positive change (e.g., reduced calories, decreased fat, increased the number of fruits and vegetables) in their food choices. More specifically, 69% of children decreased calories, 54% decreased fat, 54% increased fiber, and 46% increased the number of fruits and vegetables selected. For the sample as a whole, there was a mean decrease of 156 calories and 4.78 grams of fat between pretest and posttest. There was a mean increase of 5.21 grams of sugar from pretest to posttest. Table 1 compares the means and standard deviations at pretest and posttest for this study's variables of interest.

Overall, the results of this small pilot study were promising and suggested that the program may be effective with regard to improving the food choices of young children. Although the amount of sugar increased, this finding was likely attributable to the fact that several of the children selected substantially more sugar-laden fruits during the posttest. The program appeared to be particularly effective in teaching children to select foods containing fewer calories and grams of fat. However, in order to fully validate these findings, as well as the efficacy of the program, an additional study utilizing a larger sample comparing treatment and control groups is necessary.

**Kindergarten Teaching Practices and Child Literacy Outcomes**

Sonia Michael, Eastern Kentucky University

The purpose of this study was to examine current literacy instruction in kindergarten classrooms and the relationship between these practices and kindergarten student literacy outcomes. Quantitative measures of classroom practices and quantitative child literacy outcomes were used to examine this relationship. Individual student characteristics of gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, home language, and home literacy environment were also considered in relationship to student literacy outcomes. All of the kindergarten classrooms in one school district were included in the study for a total of 18 kindergarten classrooms. Students were included in the study based on written consent of the parents for a total of 204 kindergarten students.

Multiple regression analysis and hierarchical linear modeling were used to consider whether classroom practices and individual student characteristics were related to student literacy outcomes. Data analysis suggested that classroom instructional practices were not related to student literacy outcomes. Student characteristics of socioeconomic status and home literacy environment appeared to be the most significant predictors of student literacy achievement.

**11:00 – 11:50 AM      PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....Summitt I**

**President:**                      Cheron N. Hunter, Auburn University

**Physics Content for Elementary and Middle Teachers: Factors for Successful Professional Development**

**Friday, November 7, 2008**

Bonnie V. Daniel, Patty Flowers, and Joan K. West, University of Tennessee - Martin

The No Child Left Behind Legislation has provided funds for teacher professional development and has encouraged higher education institutions to provide content in targeted areas of need. This paper reported on an ongoing teacher professional development program that has provided physics content to elementary, middle, and high school teachers since 2003. Approximately 20 teachers from rural school systems participated each summer. Incentives included graduate credit, laboratory equipment, and one week of interactive sessions.

Data from pre- and posttests and workshop evaluations indicated that teachers' content knowledge improved significantly. A follow-up survey revealed that the delivery of the instruction was effective and that certain components of the program design empowered the teachers to teach a typically difficult content area. While the quantitative data from the summer workshops indicated an increase in physics content knowledge, the qualitative approach of the follow-up survey addressed how the management of the project increased the likelihood that the teachers would implement the new content and laboratory skills into their classrooms.

All participants from the five years of the project were given an opportunity to participate in the survey. The instrument included a listing of the topics that were taught each summer and asked whether the participants continued to teach that particular topic. If they did not teach the topic, they were asked to explain why. Because of No Child Left Behind Legislation parameters, many professional development programs were required to focus on content, to the exclusion of pedagogy in program design.

The findings of this study suggested that while high-quality content is essential, program directors must also address teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors regarding the implementation of the newly learned content. The research on effective teacher professional development continues to evolve, and the results from this study offered new insights on effective program design in rural areas.

### **Teaching Reading and Writing Across Content Areas in the DELTA**

Natalie A. Johnson-Leslie, David Saarnio, Christy Brinkley, Jennifer Miller,  
and Carmen Williams, Arkansas State University

In the second and third year of school improvement, what reading and writing strategies are vital to ensure student success in the Delta? How can teachers help junior and high school students in the Delta learn to read and write at the advanced level? There are no easy answers to the questions posed above, and the results of this workshop provided answers to these crucial questions. A clear focus was that students in the Delta need effective reading and writing strategies that help them read and write proficiently across content areas.

The purpose of this professional development workshop was to provide high yield teaching and learning strategies in reading and writing for junior and high school teachers in the Delta of the Mid-South. Instruction was provided to teachers in an effort to improve their content knowledge with effective pedagogical methods in reading and writing, a notion supported by scientifically-based research. These research findings indicated that teachers need to continually increase their knowledge of the material being taught. Between June 9-13, 22 teachers and one principal from junior and high schools across the Delta were trained using strategic reading and writing skills directly aligned with student's needs. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through pre- and posttest, as well as written response, to measure gains in their content knowledge.

During this conference, the preliminary findings from the workshop were presented. Preliminary results indicated that junior and high school teachers in the Delta benefited from the training to utilize effective reading and writing strategies. When teachers gain knowledge of effective research-based reading and writing strategies they will in turn help students increase fluency, improve vocabulary, and strengthen text comprehension, as well as improve students' writing skills.

### **Effects of Leadership and Professional Development on Accountability Outcomes: Data from Kentucky's Scholastic Audit for School Improvement**

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Stephen K. Miller, University of Louisville; D. Clayton Smith, Western Kentucky University;  
and Beverly C. Ennis, Campbellsville University

Two problems were combined in this study. First, leadership and professional development (PD), essential components of school reform, were seldom examined together. Second, Kentucky has developed nine Standards and Indicators for School Improvement, extending standards-based performance assessment from disciplinary content to whole school reform. The standards, each with specific indicators, were organized into three groupings: Academic Performance, Learning Environment, and Efficiency. To assist schools, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) developed a Scholastic Audit, with trained teams scoring each indicator (4-point scale) from each standard based on level of implementation. KDE has done no formal study of these standards, and only two other companion dissertations have utilized this data.

This secondary analysis (Scholastic Audit database) constituted mediated leadership (Murphy, 2004) by the principal via professional development (Guskey, 2000, 2003). Under accountability, schools were asked for value-added improvements (Miller, 1992), and the principal's role was central (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Likewise, helping teachers improve their effectiveness is the *raison d'être* of PD, yet evidence linking this to achievement was limited (Fullan, 2001).

From 181 elementary school audits, descriptive statistics, factor analysis of the indicators from each standard, and simultaneous and hierarchical multiple regressions were computed. Academic Index (criterion-referenced accountability composite) was regressed on Leadership (Standard 7) and Professional Development, Growth and Evaluation (Standard 6), controlling for six demographic factors. Factor analysis confirmed the underlying constructs in the two standards (one for Leadership, two for PD). Hierarchical regression supported the mediated effects model, explaining 70% of the variance. All six demographic factors, plus Leadership and the Professional Development component from Standard 6, were significant, with Professional Evaluation not significant.

Results provided evidence that Scholastic Audits have diagnostic potential to guide school improvement. Both Leadership and PD contributed to the exceptionally high effect sizes. Findings were discussed vis-à-vis reform, equity, and accountability.

### **Laptop Initiatives in K-12 Schools: Is Portable Better?**

Cassie G. Raulston and Vivian Wright, University of Alabama

This study examined the impact of a district-wide teacher laptop initiative in one K-12 school district in the southeast. Teachers completed pre- and post-surveys that assessed attitudes toward using computers and implementing technology integration plans in their classrooms. Many teachers were resistant to using computer technology in the classroom with their students because they did not feel comfortable enough with their personal level of technology ability. The successful use of computers in the classroom was dependent on the teachers' attitudes toward computers; therefore, changing teachers' attitudes was a key factor in fostering computer integration (Lawton & Gerschner, 1982). Teachers must be educated in the use of technology as both an instructional tool and professional tool (Woodrow, 1992).

Participants received an individual laptop in August 2007 followed by staff development training by the local school Instructional Technology Specialist on a monthly basis: 282 teachers agreed to participate in the study. They were surveyed at the beginning of training and again eight months later following the training sessions. The researchers used the Teachers Attitudes Towards Computers (TAC) survey (Christensen & Knezek, 1998). The current version for this study was TAC (v5.11) and had efficient internal consistent reliability for nine factors: Interest, Comfort, Accommodation, Interaction, Concern, Utility, Perception, Absorption, and Significance.

Pre- and post-analysis concluded that implementing a teacher laptop initiative can increase technology integration in the classroom while also raising teacher comfort level and computer significance. Once educators were provided with the resources and proper instruction about how to use the equipment they were more likely to become more comfortable with it and use it in the classroom to educate children. This presentation presented these findings along with implications for teacher educators, administrators, and technology professional development professionals.