

Friday, November 6, 2009

9:00 – 9.50 A.M. OUTSTANDING PAPERS Paramount Room

Presider: Linda Kondrick, Arkansas Tech University

10:00 – 10.50 A.M. EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN Paramount Room

Does a Classification of Developmental Delay Lead to Special Education in Subsequent Evaluations? Predictors of Special Education Outcomes at Age 9

Tammy C. Lavergne, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [OSERS] (2003) estimates that more than 250,000 students (7%) receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at age five, the Kindergarten year for most students. By age nine, when most U.S. students are completing third grade, more than 500,000 students (12%) are receiving special education. Despite the high incidence of students ages five through nine receiving special education services, relatively little is known about their participation in these programs. Do students who receive special education services during the primary years have a better chance of declassification, or do they continue to need special education despite intervention during this period?

This paper presented a theoretical framework for intervening with special needs students in the early primary grades which was based upon the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky), the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner), and the transactional theory (Sameroff). A comprehensive review of the literature was included and addressed early childhood special education (ECSE) programs, efficacy of ECSE, economics of ECSE, the effects of labeling, the future of ECSE based on national data sets, Louisiana eligibility criteria, and the effects of the proposed predictor variables on student achievement in ECSE.

Logistic regression was used to identify the influence of 14 independent variables considered to have an impact on student performance: (1) student variables – race, GPA, gender, percentile ranking on standardized math and reading assessments, time in general education, and duration of services, (2) parent variables – education level of mother, education level of father, income status, and family composition, and (3) teacher variables – teacher certification (general/special educator) and years of experience (general/special educator). Data were collected using the Special Education Reporting (SER) system, the AS400 database, and parent questionnaires to determine if evaluation outcomes could be reliably predicted.

Teacher Perceptions of Challenges to Preparing Professionals to Educate Children with Autism

Ruth S. Busby, Timothy Hobbs, Rhonda Bowron, and Jan Oliver, Troy University

With autism affecting 1.5 million American children and growing exponentially, early diagnosis and appropriate intervention is the key to significantly improving treatment. The purpose of this study was to collect and assess information regarding teacher perceptions of informational needs and professional challenges associated with educating children with autism. The participants in this study included both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in education courses at a rural university. The participants were selected because they were representative of practicing professionals in the community who have or will have experience teaching children with autism. Thirty-one students participated in this voluntary study.

The methodology for this study involved a nominal group technique conducted by university professors. This form of brainstorming produced a large number of ideas in a short period of time by posing this one question to participants: What are the challenges to preparing professionals to educate children with autism spectrum disorders? The design ensured that all members had an equal voice in the development and refinement of the list. Consensus-building techniques were used to identify issues that participants believed to be relevant to the education of children with autism.

The four stages in this process included: (1) silent problem generation, (2) public display of problems, (3) problem discussion, and (4) problem ranking and prioritization. A second phase involved group discussion of possible solutions to the top ranked problems. The process took less than an hour. The top three issues were identified by participants as: (1) collaboration between inservice and preservice

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teachers and caregivers, (2) a visit with families who have experiences with autistic children, including video footage of real life experiences in the home setting, and (3) an autism clinic for the training of preservice teachers. The findings in this study suggested implications for the better preparation of educators of autistic children.

Alabama Health Profession Students' Perceptions of Health Care Information and Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

Marcia R. O'Neal, Retta R. Evans, Kay Hogan-Smith, Betty Nelson, Stephen L. Firsing, III, and Brian F. Geiger, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Jeri Jackson and Gary Edwards, United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham

Data from Healthy People 2010 Midcourse Review are useful to compare the health status of populations related to quality of life and disparities. Little is known about barriers to accessing health information and clinical services in Alabama. Project funders, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, provided support to gather information concerning health information and health care services available to individuals with disabilities, to build a database of health information and service needs, and to develop training modules.

A team representing diverse disciplines and settings formed two working groups to guide the project. Members included university researchers, service providers, students, and consumers. Surveys were developed for four audiences: individuals with disabilities, families/caregivers, health profession students, and service providers.

The focus of this paper was on results from students. Surveys, available in alternate formats, included 25 items. Researchers activated social and professional networks to distribute surveys. Health profession students (N = 568) revealed areas of strength and need related to health disparities among patients with disabilities. Respondents included students in medicine, dentistry, optometry, nursing, therapies (PT, OT, SLP), nursing, and counseling. Approximately 70% reported receiving training to prepare them to treat individuals with disabilities, 55% felt comfortable treating these individuals, and 65% felt that they did so fairly. About 60% assisted their patients or caregivers to follow treatment recommendations and prevent illness. However, 15% to 20% of students were uncertain about how to answer these items.

Students identified obstacles/challenges and training needs related to treating individuals with disabilities. They expressed a desire for information on communication, mobility accommodations, various disabilities, and advocacy/accessibility. Results from each student group presented to the relevant health profession school will inform curricular change. Needs identified from surveys with all four groups have been prioritized to produce video and written training modules.

10:00 – 10.50 A.M. SOCIAL SCIENCE..... Louisiana Room

Wit, Mirth, and the Learning Environment: Maximizing Student Performance and Teacher Effectiveness by Incorporating Structured Humor in the Classroom

Michael G. Lovorn, University of Alabama

Studies show that humor is an effective strategy for fostering student engagement, development, and confidence-building (Rule, 2009; Harlin, 2008; Mawhinney, 2008; Morrison, 2008; Ogden, 2008; Walker, 2008). Structured use of wit and mirth can enrich and broaden learning by establishing a predictable environment wherein students are enabled to interact and grow socially and academically. Teachers who model and employ appropriate humor strategies embolden their students to perceive learning, content, and behavior in relevant, engaging, and dynamic manners, and promote students' positive attitudes toward school, coursework, and each other.

This session was designed to review literature related to humor as an effective classroom strategy and observe the ongoing humor research of the lead presenter in the areas of teaching and teacher development. Participants understood the great and numerous benefits of employing structured, content-based humor as a teaching strategy, and they were exposed to several humor-in-the-classroom strategies being investigated in the study. Participants also learned about the challenges and potential

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pitfalls of inappropriate humor in the classroom setting and what research reveals about how teachers may reduce or eliminate negative or bad humor. Additionally, session participants learned: (1) how to find humor within a given curriculum, (2) humor is not limited to oral transmission: teachers may also use the board, music, dramatic expression, props, handouts, tests, and other materials to introduce humor and wit, and infuse it into the classroom on a regular basis, (3) self-deprecating humor on the part of the teacher makes her/him more approachable to students and sets a tone for inviting and invigorating content-based conversation, and (4) despite the many benefits of using humor in the classroom, there are several challenges that teachers must consider and prepare for before employing the strategy.

Family Background, “Risk Aversion,” and 12th-Grade Math Achievement

Edward B. Reeves, Morehead State University

The association between family socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement is a persistent finding in large-sample national research. Explanations for this association often point to upper SES families having greater resources to invest in their children’s educational success. Breen and Goldthorpe have supplemented these explanations by proposing a motivational factor that influences educational decisionmaking. According to their theory, students and their parents value upward social mobility less than they fear downward. It follows from this dictum that the higher a family’s socioeconomic status, the more “risk averse” the student and parents were in their educational decisions. They will make choices that increase the likelihood that the student will remain in the same SES bracket as the parents. Consequently, upper SES students are more motivated to attend four-year college and graduate school. These same students are also more motivated to take advanced math courses in high school regardless of their ability in math. Lesser SES students are not as motivated to take such courses even when their math ability is equal to that of upper SES students.

The present study used the 2002-04 Educational Longitudinal Study national probability sample of high school seniors (N = 12,973) to test Breen and Goldthorpe’s decision-theoretical explanation of educational differentials. After controlling for 10th-grade math ability, family resources, math course-taking, and student demographics, multiple regression models were used to test the risk aversion hypothesis in relation to 12th-grade math achievement.

Risk aversion was found to have strong statistical significance and an effect size of 0.36. While the effects of family background accumulate over many years of schooling, in this study the effects were constrained to the last two years of high school. For risk aversion to have an effect of such magnitude over a limited time span is especially worth noting.

Perceptions of Campers Towards the Effectiveness of LifeSkills Training

Tonya M. Jackson, Southern University and A and M College

This study examined the perceptions of second-year summer campers towards the effectiveness of LifeSkills Training (LST), a government supported substance and violence prevention program taught during summer camp. Student perceptions were based on four categories: student knowledge of LST, the application and perceived usefulness of LST during the school term, and the willingness to recommend LST to others. A qualified LST instructor engaged 30 summer campers, consisting of middle and high school students, in a two-hour session per week of life skills training for the duration of eight weeks. After the training, students attended the regular school session, and 10 campers returned for a second year of summer camp.

The returning campers (seven females and three males), ranging from the ages of 12-16, were interviewed using a questionnaire. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using predetermined suggested answers for the questions falling in one of the four categories. An analysis of the data revealed that the campers did retain some knowledge of life skills taught the prior summer. Violence prevention and healthy emotion skills were applied more than any of the other skills at home and in the school setting.

The results indicated that students viewed LST in a positive manner. Over 90% of returning campers felt that it was very important to learn LifeSkills and that the training was useful. There has been little research on the students’ opinions or perceptions of the usefulness of the programs. This finding

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suggested a possible correlation between student interest in and perceptions of a behavior modification program and the possible impact of the program on the development of important life skills.

10:00 – 10.50 A.M. ADMINISTRATION/HIGHER EDUCATION.....University Room

A Correlational Study of Self-Regulation, Internet Use, and Academic Achievement in a Computer Literacy Course

SungHee YangKim, Southern University and A & M College

This research was a correlational study of the relationships among self-regulation, students' internet use, and academic achievement in an undergraduate computer literacy course. Students who are not able to self-regulate their internet use may not be able to maximize their academic achievement. There has been little research on the relationship between internet browsing and academic achievement based on self-regulation.

This study used a sample of 39 students who were enrolled in two sections of a computer literacy course. Each section was taught by the same instructor. Students self-reported the demographic questionnaire, a survey of internet and computer use, and responded to the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) selected section for self-regulation. The amount of internet use also was measured using computer software.

Factor analysis supported the construct validity of the MSLQ scores. The MSLQ internal consistency reliability Cronbach alpha was .735. Over 69% of internet access during class was for non-academic internet browsing. But, self-regulated learners were less likely to access the internet during class. The correlation of total internet access with academic achievement was negative. Students' strengths or weaknesses in using learning strategies were emphasized in computer literacy courses to maximize the potential benefits of the computer and internet. A longitudinal study of classroom use of computers and internet access to learn how students utilize the computer and internet and to develop effective teaching strategies for successful and efficient learning was suggested for further study.

Considerations of Distance Education Integration: A Qualitative Pilot Study

Jennifer L. Styron and Ronald A. Styron Jr., University of Southern Mississippi

Distance education has become a controversial commodity within educational settings throughout the United States particularly within sectors of postsecondary education. While studies generally look at institutional levels to determine whether or not distance education offerings increase or decrease the exploration of college level administrators and department chairs in such scenarios was explored. The purpose of this study was to further extend the research on the role of key administrators in expanding distance education offerings. Previous research conducted on an archival public data file made available from the Post-secondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education website identified four factor components that have an impact on distance education offerings: faculty concerns, institutional barriers, lack of funding/costs and resources, and external support. Participants were intentionally selected based on their leadership role within the institution.

Participants received a consent form prior to arranging the interview that detailed the project purpose, risks, and benefits associated with this study and contact information for the researcher. Four 30-minute interviews were conducted with guided questions developed specifically for this study. All interview audio and notes were transcribed for data analysis. After transcription, a hand analysis was conducted to identify common themes and descriptions using lean coding.

Five emerging themes arose: (1) faculty considerations and incentives, (2) student considerations, (3) resources and external support, (4) lack of funding and costs, and (5) administrative characteristics and considerations. Implications of the study suggested that key leaders understand that change is a lengthy process, the cost associated with distance education offerings, and the importance of tenure and promotion policies and procedures in the creation/expansion of distance education offerings.

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Decision Makers: Upper Level, White Female Administrators in Higher Education

Carlton R. McHargh, University of Alabama

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, one of the roles of higher education is to provide “national leadership on the issue of diversity” (<http://www.aacu.org/issues/diversity/>). While some studies have demonstrated that increased diversity in higher educational contexts has been linked to benefits, other studies have shown that achieving diversity in campuses across the United States, particularly at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is not an easy task to accomplish. Much of the existing literature has focused on diversity amongst the students at PWI’s campuses. In contrast, this paper argued that, in order for PWIs, to truly embrace the ethos that underlies diversity initiatives, policies and practices have to assure that individuals from underrepresented backgrounds are meaningfully included at all levels ranging from students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

This paper drew from qualitative interviews of five purposefully selected white, female, upper-level administrators at a southern PWI. Respondents addressed topics that included experience, education, interview process, and perceived prospects for advancement. Some research suggests that there are several inherent difficulties in achieving diversity in PWIs, including the lack of sound policies guiding their hiring, and overt and subtle discriminatory practices. Other research generally shows that there are fewer qualified candidates of color for top level leadership positions. Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies guided the study to understand the extent to which the theoretical arguments made were supported in practice.

This study utilized narrative case study and in-depth interview questions. The data were coded utilizing NVivo 8 and offered insight into the issues pertaining to the hiring of underrepresented administrators. Preliminary results showed that white women administrators trusted institutional hiring practices. Additionally, this study offered strategies for fostering an inclusive institution and postulates direction for future study.

10:00 – 10.50 A.M. MATHEMATICS..... King Room

Educating Students in Poverty in the Discipline of Mathematics

Leslie F. Jones, Nicholls State University

Student achievement and/or the performance of American schools gained national attention with the 2001 authorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. This legislation focused on many diverse, complex educational issues, and, in many ways, it is similar to the report A Nation at Risk, released by the task force the National Commission on Excellence. Former president Ronald Reagan created the National Commission on Excellence Task Force to critique the nation’s schools. There are obvious similarities between the A Nation at Risk and NCLB. First, there are complex issues addressed in both initiatives. Secondly, the focus of both initiatives is obviously, student performance in K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs in higher education. Standardized tests are significant for both A Nation at Risk and NCLB; there was an influx of the usage of standardized tests after A Nation at Risk, and the NCLB legislation mandates that students be tested yearly in grades three through eight. As a result of A Nation at Risk, rigorous structure was added to teacher preparation programs—the NCLB legislation addressed a need to have “highly qualified” teachers focusing on preparation, recruitment, and retention. The discussion was linked to the standardized testing movements because there is evidence to suggest that students in poverty who take standardized tests score lower than affluent students. In 1966, the Coleman Report revealed that the greatest determiner of student achievement was socioeconomic status.

In the study, the authors attempted to link several variables to student achievement in a multiple regression equation. This study was replicated in 1979 by Brookover and colleagues. Similar findings were recorded. Since those studies, many variables have been linked to student achievement; however, the question still lingers about the greatest predictor of achievement for students, particularly in poverty. Colleagues have discussed teaching methodologies in reading, science, social studies, and English language arts for teaching students in poverty. The mathematics and reading disciplines pose additional challenges because there is evidence to suggest that all students have difficulty with both mathematics and reading early.

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The National Assessment of Education Program reported that students performed inadequately on computation and have problems understanding word problems. American students also performed poorly in mathematics in comparison to other countries. According to Knuth and Jones (1991), improving instruction in mathematics is a national concern!

Secondary Mathematics: Four-Credits Vs. Continuous Enrollment for College Readiness

Jeremy Zekowski, University of Alabama

For nearly two years, an in-depth analysis of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) pertaining to secondary mathematics and the successful completion of bachelor's degree has been ongoing. During this period, many states have been modifying policy to require college-going high school graduates to complete four math credits to be college ready. The current research project aimed at examining the nature of credits versus continuous enrollment in secondary mathematics. The hypothesis was that many average bachelor-degree-seeking students opt for less challenging senior years in high school without mathematics, thus lowering the continuity for developing critical thinking skills necessary for higher education success.

The NELS consisted of about 25,000 1988 8th graders followed through 2000. About 50% of the participants had complete secondary and post-secondary transcripts, surveys, interviews, test scores, and more. NELS was a two-stage stratified probability sampling design to come as close as possible to a random selection of students nationally. Because of the complex sampling design of NELS, each participant in the study was assigned weights. The weights were reflected as the participant's likelihood of being randomly selected. The weighted sample size for the analysis was about 2.0 million students.

The variables analyzed in the study using regression models were (1) highest mathematics course completed in high school, (2) overall Carnegie credits earned, (3) continuous enrollment in secondary mathematics, (4) graduation mathematics credit requirements, and (5) early entry to algebra-1. Socioeconomic status (in grade 12) and 8th-grade math achievement were controlling covariates. Results found that continuous enrollment in secondary mathematics was more important at predicting bachelor degree completion than a three- or four-credit policy. The findings are a sign that block scheduling and higher education policy are in need of further research on this subject.

Accommodating Diversity in the College Algebra Classroom Using Differentiated Instruction: Effects on Student Achievement and Attitudes towards Mathematics

Valerie L. Epps, Southern University of Baton Rouge

Students enrolled in the college algebra classroom are diverse in many aspects: life and educational experiences, mathematical abilities, and learning styles. In search of strategies to best accommodate the diversity in the college algebra classroom, the researcher proposed that this task could be accomplished through the use of differentiated instruction. Research indicates that with the use of differentiated instructional strategies, the instructor can meet the needs of all students and help them meet and exceed the projected student learning objectives. There was limited research on the use of differentiated instruction in the college level mathematics course. However, studies conducted on the secondary school level indicated positive results in regards to student achievement in all content areas.

This pilot study examined the effects of differentiated instruction on student achievement and attitudes towards mathematics. The data analyzed for this study came from 80 students enrolled in college algebra by way of pre- and posttest and mathematics attitude and learning style surveys. These assessment instruments were administered initially to assess student initial readiness levels and attitudes towards mathematics and at the conclusion of the study. Students were either engaged in differentiated activities or in the lecture method of delivery depending on the class to cover course objectives. Data were analyzed and compared using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

The results of the study indicated significant difference between the groups. The study concluded that achievement levels of students increased when allowed to use strategies geared towards their learning styles and those students experiencing success attitudes improved in regard to mathematics. There were a number of concerns identified. Recommendations for addressing such obstacles and further research were discussed.

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10:00 – 10.50 A.M. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTGovernor Room

An Empirical Evaluation of the Progress and Achievement of English Language Learners in a Suburban School District

Marlynn K. Martin

The legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has brought to educators' attention the need, requirement, and demand that all children are guaranteed an equitable education. In support of this mandate, Assistant Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Education, Kathleen Leos, (2006) stated, "There are approximately 5 ½ million non-English speaking students in the United States public schools, speaking 440 different languages, and 80% of those English language learners speak Spanish." Continuing, Leos stated, "English language learners are the fastest growing K-12 population in the United States with 16 states reporting a 200% increase in English language learner enrollment from 1991-2001." The Mississippi English language learner population has steadily grown between 50-100% during this same time period (NCELA, 2006). Since 1994 the steady growth of numbers of English language learners is an indicator of why NCLB mandates specific requirements for English language learners in school districts across the nation (Part A. Sec. 3102, NCLB, 2002).

NCLB includes basic principles that require stronger accountability in all realms of education; increased flexibility and local control, expand options for parents, and utilization of teaching methods that have proven to work in other school programs. Other stipulations of NCLB included providing assistance to schools in need of improvement, provide better information to teachers and administrators, ensuring that teacher quality is a high priority, and giving more resources to the schools to accomplish these goals (USDE, 2004). Furthermore, this law has prioritized that all school age children must make the grade state-defined education standards by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Stemming from this legislation, educators and school districts have become more aware of their obligations to identify and provide English language instruction for immigrant students in order for them to understand and perform successfully in an all-English-speaking academic setting.

Because of the impact of immigration in Mississippi and the legislation of NCLB, this study was designed to determine the progress of English language acquisition of English language learners on the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELP) and the relationship, if any, to the progress of English language learners on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT). The results of this study showed that ELLs showed English language acquisition on the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELP) and academic progress on the Mississippi Criterion Test (MCT), and that there was a significant, positive relationship between the two assessments administered during the three-year period of this study in the suburban school district in Mississippi.

Online Instruction: Collaborative Learning and Video Lectures

Gail D. Hughes, University of Arkansas - Little Rock

To determine which aspects of online courses were most important 94 students enrolled in online graduate research and statistics classes completed surveys rating impacts of course instructional methods and providing VARK learning scores. To explore student learning styles as a mediator for students' preferred instructional technique, the researcher conducted one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests among learning style groups (visual/aural, read/write, and kinesthetic) on the importance ratings of instructional options (instructor notes, instructor communication, textbook, video lectures, assignments, and group activities) utilizing a Bonferonni adjusted alpha. The ANOVAs for instructor notes [(F(2, 78) = 5.620, p = .005, = 0.102], textbook [(F(2, 78) = 5.784, p = .005, = 0.106], and assignments [(F(2, 78) = 7.354, p = .001, = 0.136] were significant, and Tukey follow-ups revealed higher scores for reading/writing students than visual/aural students.

When asked, "What aspects of this course contributed most to your learning?" most frequently cited aspects were lecture videos, group work, assignments, instructor notes, and textbook. Students stated that video lectures "helped me feel like I was in an actual course with an actual instructor teaching it." Other students cited the value of collaborative learning: "Group tasks helped me apply the concepts taught and gave me the interaction that I need to get the most from class." Overall, individual

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learning preferences were only somewhat explained by students' learning styles.

Aligning with previous studies, the results from this study converged to indicate that most aspects of the online course were beneficial and that students appreciated the flexibility to select the instructional technique that best met their individual needs. Instructors teaching online courses should consider multiple learning options for students. While the textbook and lecture notes were the instructional techniques of choice for some students, other students benefited from collaboration with peers and from "attending" lectures via video.

College Student Use of Textbooks

Lola Aagaard, Belinda Riley, and Ronald L. Skidmore, Morehead State University

It has been reported (Aagaard and Skidmore, 2004; Sikorski et al., 2002) that only a minority of college students actually read the course textbook in preparation for examinations. Although professors widely lament students' propensity to ignore the carefully chosen textbooks, research specifically investigating why this phenomenon occurs is minimal. Bookstores have reported that fewer students are buying textbooks, perhaps because of rising costs (Mehegan, 2004).

A volunteer sample of undergraduate students at a regional university in the mid-south participated in a semi-structured focus group interview regarding their use of college textbooks. Questions were asked concerning textbook cost, course requirements related to the text, student knowledge of textbook features, performance in the course related to textbook use, and the pros and cons of e-textbooks. Researchers took notes on a laptop and also audio-taped the interview. Student responses were analyzed using the constant-comparative method.

Results indicated that students were buying textbooks, although they felt that any further rise in cost might prohibit them from purchasing texts for all courses. Generally, students reported that they were not reading the textbooks, as such. They used them more as a reference in case they needed further explanation of a concept they did not fully understand from the professor's lecture, notes of the lecture, or the additional material (powerpoint slides, diagrams, etc.) made available online by the professor. Students liked having physical texts, but some were open to the idea of e-textbooks. They noted that being asked questions over information that was covered only in the textbook would get them to at least skim the assigned chapters. Frustration was expressed with teachers who assigned a text but never required anything that would force use of the textbook by students. Recommendations were made for the best use of textbooks, based on interview results.

10:00 – 10.50 A.M. COGNITION/ACHIEVEMENTCapitol Room

Differential Item Functioning by Gender in State Predictive Tests

Eric M. Havens, Jwa K. Kim, and Dana K. Fuller, Middle Tennessee State University

This study investigated differential item functioning (DIF) by gender in tests that predicted the performance of students on state administered exams. Item analysis was also conducted on the tests through CTT and IRT in order to determine the strength and weakness of each item. This study expanded on Gallagher and Delisi's (1994) work, which included only high ability students by extending the sample to low and medium ability students. The tests examined were developed by Discovery Education Assessment.

The participants were eighth graders in the state of Tennessee. The tests for third through eighth grade have been through the most revision. The sample was further reduced to eighth grade to obtain a slightly older sample. The sample size for the reading test was 7,897, and the sample size for the math test was 8,044. Some of the tests were administered by paper and pencil, whereas some were presented through a computer. All of the items were identical in each format, and the students received the same amount of time to complete the tests. Eighteen out of the 28 reading items displayed DIF. Out of the 18 biased items, 12 of the items were biased for women, and six were biased for men. Seventeen out of the 28 math items displayed DIF. Nine of the items were biased for females, whereas eight items were biased for males.

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The results supported the initial concern that DIF was present for the math and reading tests. Items with DIF were discussed, and some possible explanations of the biased items were given. The findings in the present study may serve as evidence that DIF analysis should become a regular part of the test development process.

School Accountability Status, Student Core GPA, and ACT as Predictors for First-Year College Retention

Jason Droddy, Louisiana State University; Wade Smith and Rebecca Robichaux, Mississippi State University; and A. J. Guarino, Arkansas State University

The purpose of this study was to investigate the predictive validity of school accountability status, core GPA, and ACT scores on students' first-year college persistence rate. This dataset contained more than 17,000 records of students who graduated from a Louisiana high school and enrolled in a four-year university. Persistence was defined as any high school graduate who entered a public four-year university in the fall and enrolled at any public postsecondary institution the following academic year. School accountability was dichotomized into high and low performing high schools.

A direct logistical regression was performed on persistence status as the outcome and the three-predictor variables: (1) school accountability status, (2) Core GPA, and (3) ACT Scores. Initial results indicated that after controlling for Core GPA and ACT Scores, school accountability was statistically significant, yet failed to explain any practical effect. Both ACT scores and Core GPA, however, achieved statistical significance. Students were 2.6 times more likely to persist if they earned a 2.5 Core GPA while students who achieved a 20 or higher on the ACT were 1.3 more likely to persist.

The results of this study failed to support that a school's accountability status has any predictive value for their students' first-year college persistence. The variables of Core GPA and ACT, however, demonstrated predictive value and supports earlier research (Cohn et al., 2004; Daugherty and Lane, 1999; DeBerard et al., 2004; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Murtaugh et al., 1999; Noble and Sawyer, 2002). Core GPA provided approximately twice the predictive value of ACT. These findings questioned what high schools can accomplish. Traub (2002) analyzed this question from a human capital perspective and concluded that schools are incapable of providing the changes in human and social capital expected of them. Data from this study supports this conclusion.

What NCES Has Done In Comparing NAEP's Results with State-Level Testing

John J. Marshak, Virginia Commonwealth University

As required by NCLB, each state is responsible for providing the federal government with the results of its state assessment scores, along with measures of a number of other variables, in order to assess its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Each state created its own assessment instruments and established its own proficiency levels. At the same time, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) was charged with creating an assessment of the nation's students' educational progress. This is known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Counting the District of Columbia, Department of Defense Schools, American possessions, etc., there are well over 50 sets of scores with associated proficiencies to compare with the NAEP results for each of the subjects assessed.

In an attempt to address this problem in one subject area, NCES produced a report published in April 2008 entitled Comparison Between NAEP and State Mathematics Results: 2003 (NCES 2008-475). Its stated purpose was to address: (1) How do states' achievement standards compare with each other and with NAEP? (2) Are NAEP and state assessment results correlated across schools? (3) Do NAEP and state assessments agree on achievement trends over time? and (4) Do NAEP and state assessments agree on achievement gaps between subgroups? This paper went beyond the executive summary by delving into the 84 pages of text and over 300 pages of appendices to examine its conclusions.

10:00 – 10.50 A.M.

RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM: STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES (Symposium) Academy Room

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Shannon Audley-Piotrowski, Gilbert Parra, Bob Cohen, Amanda Kuryluk, Alyssa Blair,
Neha Kumar and Yeh Hsueh, University of Memphis, and Amber DeBono,
State University of New York at Albany

Respect is a vital part of daily life in the classroom, but the notion and act of respect are often difficult to define. To promote and maintain respect in the classroom, students and teachers must have a shared understanding of what respect entails and how respect is given, although there can be diverse views on these issues. These views vary from relationship to relationship such as that between teacher and student, between friends, between different peer groups, and within the peer group. In this regard, however, little empirical research has examined teachers' and students' perceptions of respect and disrespect, and how these relationship-based respect or disrespect play out in the classroom.

This symposium presented four empirical investigations of children's and teachers' perceptions of respect and disrespect in the classroom using different methods. Each paper focused on a particular perspective about respect by the teacher, by the student, or by the peer group. The findings from these studies suggested the complex role that respect and disrespect play in the classroom. The first paper reported a qualitative study grounded in phenomenology that examined middle school teachers' self-perceptions of showing and receiving respect/disrespect within a multi-ethnic classroom. The emerging themes suggested that the teachers feel respected when students are serious learners, but disrespected when they do not take learning seriously. However, disrespect becomes palpable when the teachers felt that their authoritative roles were challenged and jeopardized. Teachers' perceptions of respect in the classroom depend on students' activities.

The second paper introduced a longitudinal study examining elementary school (grade 3-6) children's understanding of respect for teachers, and the reasons behind respecting teachers over time. Results suggested that in addition to a developmental trend in children's understanding of respect, there is an increasing tendency among children to look at teachers for mutual respect.

The third paper used structural equation modeling to examine how respect, aggression, and popularity among children are related one another over time within the peer group. Results suggested that it is peer group liking, rather than popularity, that leads to peer group respect.

Finally, the fourth paper addressed the impact of social exclusion on feelings of being disliked versus disrespected. Although being excluded by the peer group often caused students to feel both disliked and disrespected, findings suggested that disrespectful social exclusion elicited greater aggression than respectful exclusion. Following the presentation of these studies, the audience was invited to discuss how respect could be nurtured in a classroom and what implications these findings may have for practitioners and researchers alike.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT..... Paramount Room

Perceived Effects of Online Professional Development on Teacher Belief and Instructional Practices

Cher C. Crockett, Southern University and A and M College

The presentation showcased literature reviewed in an attempt to research the perceived effects of online professional development (OPD) on teacher beliefs and instructional practices. The literature chosen allowed the researcher to investigate: (1) the attitude mathematics teachers take toward OPD, (2) the teachers' perceived benefits of participating in OPD opportunities, (3) the extent of which mathematics teachers utilize technology in their classrooms as a result of OPD, and (4) the extent to which mathematics teachers utilize the best practices learned via OPD in their classrooms. The researcher analyzed data from mathematics teachers who incorporated and did not incorporate technology into their academic instruction. Data pertinent to the incorporation of OPD-enriched content into the instructional practices were also analyzed. Data collected via surveys, classroom observations, and focus groups were assessed and reported.

The literature included in this study fell into one of four categories: (1) pertinent information about OPD, (2) teacher attitude toward OPD, (3) perceived benefits of OPD participation, and (4) use of technology in the classroom. Findings of the literature reviewed indicated: (1) teachers' attitudes changed after participation in OPD, (2) OPD training positively impacted most teachers' confidence regarding

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technology, and (3) there was an increased use of technology in the mathematics classroom. The findings for the study suggested implications for further OPD training and continued implementation and utilization of OPD best practices in mathematics classrooms.

A Wide-eyed View on Narrowing the Achievement Gap

Karen A. Franklin and Jessica Lester, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

In this paper, the authors took a dialogical approach to presenting two divergent voices on the educational rhetoric surrounding the call to narrow the achievement gap. The authors critically analyzed the dominant discourse surrounding this call, exploring such constructs as “educational excellence” and “leveling the playing field.” With the two authors approaching the analysis from unique lenses, two differing views on the related literature were presented. The first author took an historical and philosophical approach to examine the socially constructed view of “educational excellence.” Through this lens, the concept of educational equality is dismantled, with the support of historical and current literature. The second author deconstructed the notion of “narrowing the achievement gap” through a critical multicultural educational lens. Through this critical lens, the concept of meritocracy is problematized, drawing upon related literature.

After each author independently unpacked their own perspective on the explicit and implicit meanings within the discourse surrounding the achievement gap, they engaged in a meaningful dialogue. Through this dialogue, a final, jointly constructed voice was added to the conversation. This final layer of analysis showed where the two theoretical perspectives diverge, as well as, converge.

Second Life’s Multi-User Virtual Environment: Distance Learners MUVE to Avatars

Susan V. Dupre and Mitzi Trahan, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this paper was to present an overview of research related to Second Life™, an internet-based, multi-user virtual environment (MUVE), and its role in education and professional development. While the three-dimensional environment of Second Life exhibits a game-like ambiance, there is serious business going on "inworld" as educators experiment with this technology in increasing numbers. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has created its own ISTE Island and encourages the use of this virtual world to support professional development, networking, and leadership among its members. Second Life is also being used as a vehicle for university course delivery, conference sessions, informal meetings, collaborative projects, and creative products. As a result, Second Life (SL) has become the subject of recent research attention from those who seek to understand the current and potential educational value of this online phenomenon.

This review of literature examined articles primarily from educational and professional development journals, as well as research conducted in and delivered through Second Life educational portals. Findings revealed that Second Life educational opportunities and activities tended to mirror pedagogical best-practices in Real Life (RL), including the development of professional learning communities. However, barriers to access remain, including a steep learning curve associated with orienting users to the MUVE. The growing experimentation with Second Life for educational purposes demands rigorous examination of all aspects of this environment, which appears to enhance and expand traditional distance learning.

A Mentoring and Induction Program for New Teachers and Assistant Principals

William A. Kiser, Charlotte King Eady, Isreal Eady, and Mary Montgomery-Owens,
Jacksonville State University

Educators today face the daunting task of ensuring that every student makes academic progress. For new teachers and new administrators, the task is even more overwhelming when combined with new on-the-job pressures and demands. However, many states are making progress in supporting new classroom teachers and new assistant principals, but there is little consistency among new teacher

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support programs from state to state. To enhance teacher quality and effectiveness, The Commission on No Child Left Behind (CNCLB) found a large body of evidence suggesting that new teacher support makes an impressive difference in new teacher performance (CNCLB, 2007). Strong (as cited in CNCLB) found that schools with effective mentoring programs for new teachers have increases in student achievement and teacher-retention rates. Nevertheless, new teacher induction and mentoring programs are underdeveloped and under-funded across the country (Berry, Hopkins-Thompson, and Hoke, 2002). "Learning is the fundamental process and the primary purpose of mentoring. One of the principal reasons that mentoring relationships fail is that the learning process is not tended to and the focus on learning goals is not maintained" (Zachary, 2000, p.1). A number of studies in the literature indicated that well-designed new teacher and administrator programs enable these educators to flourish and grow. Not only do effective support programs benefit new teachers, but the students, staff, and entire school benefits as well. Fetler (as cited in Doeger, 2003) found that schools with structured induction programs experienced increases in student achievement and attendance in addition to increased staff morale.

The review of literature has revealed a number of key findings that support the need for a research-based, multi-year mentoring process for new teachers and new administrators. This process must be designed to carefully select and train mentors, as well as the new teachers and assistant principals, with a purpose to develop effective educators and increase student achievement. The literature findings also have shown that an on-going support system should include job-embedded professional development opportunities for new teachers and administrators to meet with mentors, observe expert teachers, and experience peer-coaching situations with their mentors. Moreover, the literature revealed examples of ineffective mentoring programs that can be detrimental to both new educators and mentors. Although there is no one way to implement mentoring programs, the research indicates several proven practices to promote success of new educators transitioning into the profession. The most common of these "is a solid induction program with a focus on mentoring" (Doeger, 2003).

Jacksonville State University has revised the Educational Leadership Program to better prepare school leaders to more closely determine the needs of new teachers in order to develop comprehensive and structured new teacher mentoring programs. Embedded into the two internship courses is a mentoring program for leadership candidates and a training program for mentors.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. TECHNOLOGY Louisiana Room

Bringing Web 2.0 Tools into Academic Coursework—A Look at Actual Student Usage, Interest, and Commentary

Sherri Restauri Carson, Franklin L. King, and J.Gordon Nelson, Jacksonville State University

Recent attention to Web 2.0 tools has surged in the media, and proliferation of these tools within the confines of academia abound. Yet, assumptions of value and usage of these tools of students may not accurately represent their preferences. Higher education's eager adoption of these tools too closely follows trends rather than substantiated data. Hence, data collection on student usage of these tools in personal and academic arenas warrants further investigation to determine factors of student interest, adoption, and purpose at institutions of higher learning.

The authors administered an online survey to a large (n=364), diverse sample of students at a mid-sized, southeastern university. Data were collected on numerous variables of Web 2.0 use in students' personal lives, as well as academic lives, to allow for comparisons between these different venues to be analyzed. Students' interest in these tools, usage patterns, and demographic variables were collected and analyzed for possible correlations. Continuing analysis across multiple disciplines has been underway to strengthen the generalizability of these findings.

Data collected from this project were utilized to recommend proper technology tool use in higher education environments, in traditional courses supplementing with technology tools, and in online courses and programs. As well, the heightened understanding of student interest and usage of Web 2.0 tools may be beneficial in variables relating to recruitment and retention of students in higher education by providing additional insight into the tools students feel are essential to their learning and personal lives while they are engaged in their college experiences.

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Role Play and Social Network Services to Understand Preservice Teachers' Conceptualization of School

Hannah R. Gerber, Sam Houston State University

This study examined the dynamics of a social networking service as a method for involving preservice teachers in discussing case studies. The freeware, Ning.com, was used in a secondary methods class at a university in a border town in the midwest. Eighteen students took part in the study. Each student was assigned a role-from parent or superintendent to bus driver or student. Students created a profile based upon their assigned role. Students read case studies and interacted through the Ning in order to discuss how they would deal with the scenario. Forms of data included project questionnaires, discussion board transcripts, and screen captures of students' social networking profiles.

Data were analyzed using pattern matching and were coded into themes of interaction, self-selection of Web 2.0 tools, and appeal. This study found that social network services encourage students to understand multiple roles within schools. Additionally, students' interaction with one another replicated ideas of socialization. The digital medium of the social network service allowed students the ability to communicate and socialize in a non-threatening manner because all students had pseudonyms; cliques that were formed in class did not exist within the social network. Interestingly, the pages of students who played the roles of the janitor, bus driver, cheerleader, and teachers were visited more; more comments were left on their walls than those of the students who participated as principals, superintendents, and deans. Therefore, the climate of school is established before students enter the classroom.

Student understanding of the case study was also enhanced through the use of multimodal elements. Students responded to the case study with text, but several also added YouTube videos, links to websites, and documents that supported their answers to the case study. The students who utilized a variety of multimodal sources offered more practical solutions of ways to approach the case study.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. MATHEMATICS.....University Room

Attitudes of Teachers Regarding Math Lab for High-Risk Algebra I Students

Oscar D. Carter, Ouachita Parish (LA) High School and Louisiana Tech University,
and Alice P. Carter, Louisiana Tech University

With increased emphasis on high stakes testing in recent years, schools have been searching for ways to improve mathematics performance in high-risk students. A number of studies has been conducted to evaluate various techniques for improving scores. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the attitudes of teachers who were involved in an intervention.

Students in the 9th grade were identified as high-risk based on performance on the 8th grade LEAP test, grades in 8th grade mathematics, and teacher recommendations. They were assigned to a regular Algebra I class and a Math Lab. The Math Lab was taught by a mathematics teacher and was to be a tutoring session. No effort was made to ensure that students in a particular Math Lab had the same Algebra I class.

Mathematics teachers were asked to complete an anonymous survey regarding their attitudes toward the concept of a Math Lab and its structure and to make suggestions for improvement. Six of those teachers taught Math Lab. Six of the 10 mathematics teachers completed the anonymous surveys. In addition, comments were collected from general discussions in faculty meetings. There was a general agreement regarding the criteria (test scores, grades, teacher recommendations) used to assign students to Math Lab; however, there was some disagreement regarding whether Math Lab was required of the identified high-risk students. All of the teachers agreed that the tutoring session does not work and recommended that the class be more structured. As the course progressed, most teachers introduced more structure. In addition, it was recommended that rules regarding moving students in and out of Math Lab be developed. Additional details on the program and recommendations for change were presented. Pros and cons of such a program were explored.

Mathematics and the Anxious Undergraduate

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Martha Tapia, Berry College

This study examined differences in attitudes toward mathematics of college students because of gender and level of mathematics anxiety. It was prompted by an interest in the importance of attitudes and its connection with anxiety and gender gap in mathematics. A sample of 73 students currently enrolled in introductory calculus classes at a private liberal arts college was asked to complete the Attitudes Toward Mathematics Inventory (ATMI). Twenty-six participants were male and 47 were female. The sample was predominantly Caucasian and 39 participants were incoming freshmen. Participants were to provide their gender, number of semesters in college and level of mathematics anxiety from four previously identified levels of mathematics anxiety (none, little, some, and great deal).

Data were analyzed using a multivariate factorial model with four factors of attitudes toward mathematics as dependent variables (self-confidence, value, enjoyment and motivation) and two independent variables, gender and mathematics anxiety. Assumptions were checked, and multivariate analysis of variance was performed.

The interaction of math anxiety and gender and the main effect of gender were found to be nonsignificant with small effect size. The main effect of mathematics anxiety was found to be statistically significant with large effect size on all four factors of the ATMI. Students with no math anxiety scored significantly higher than all other students in self-confidence, significantly higher than students with a great deal of math anxiety in value and significantly higher than students with some or a great deal of math anxiety in enjoyment and motivation. Students with little math anxiety scored significantly higher than more anxious students in self-confidence and motivation and significantly higher than students with a great deal of math anxiety in value and enjoyment. Students with some math anxiety scored significantly higher than students with a great deal of math anxiety in self-confidence.

Assessing Elementary Teachers' Beliefs and Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching

Rebecca R. Robichaux, Mississippi State University, and Paulette Rodrigue, Nicholls State University

Students in Mississippi are not so successful in mathematics as students in the general population. Research has indicated that one key factor in improving student achievement is quality professional development for teachers. Another key factor is the use of a nationally aligned, challenging state curriculum. To address the need for a more challenging, nationally competitive curriculum, the Mississippi State Department of Education released a new mathematics framework in 2007. Within this framework, new objectives are stated for each grade level in terms of Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) construct. The DOK construct suggests that students be engaged in challenging activities that require them to use complex reasoning skills and divergent thinking skills to solve multi-step tasks. In order to facilitate this kind of mathematical understanding, teachers need to possess a thorough conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematics.

Thus, the purposes of this study were to: (1) assess elementary teachers' content and pedagogical content knowledge of the new framework, (2) determine what professional development is needed, and (3) determine the nature of teachers' beliefs concerning mathematics education. Seventy elementary teachers representing four schools completed an evaluation which assessed knowledge of the new framework and beliefs about mathematics education.

Results of this assessment indicated that these teachers possessed stronger content knowledge than pedagogical content knowledge. The strength of their content knowledge was the Number and Operations strand with an average score of 82%. Content knowledge scores of the Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data Analysis and Probability strands ranged from 60% to 74%. Pedagogical content knowledge scores of the Algebra, Geometry, and Data Analysis and Probability strands ranged from 59 to 66%, while scores for the Number and Operations and Measurement strands were below minimum expectation at 42 and 49%, respectively. Implications of their traditional mathematics education beliefs were discussed.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. **READING** **King Room**

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Teachers' Beliefs and Knowledge About Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Yuko Iwai, University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse

Reading ability strongly influences student success in all areas of academic learning (Koda and Zehler, 2008). Research showed that metacognition is associated with students' reading proficiencies. Metacognition refers to one's awareness of cognitive processing (Flavell, 1976). More advanced readers tend to use a variety of metacognitive reading strategies than less advanced readers (Baker, 2008; Baker and Brown, 1984; Israel, 2007; McCormick, 2003). In addition, previous research has indicated that teachers' explicit instruction using metacognitive reading strategies facilitated students' reading comprehension. With these backgrounds, it is important for teachers to know and value different metacognitive reading strategies so that they can deliver them in the classroom setting. However, there is little research about teachers' metacognitive awareness and beliefs about metacognitive reading strategies.

The purpose of this study was to critically examine previous literature regarding teachers' beliefs and knowledge about metacognitive reading strategies. The central research question in this study was, What are teachers' beliefs and knowledge about metacognitive reading strategies? The researcher conducted a literature review by identifying key terms, locating resources, critically evaluating the literature, and organizing it.

After thorough examination, major findings were discovered. First, teachers who knew and valued metacognitive reading strategies implemented these approaches in their teaching. Second, there were few tools that measured teachers' metacognitive awareness and reading strategies. For implications, more research on teachers' beliefs and knowledge about reading strategies is needed. It is also important for scholars and educators to focus on metacognitive reading strategies in teacher training for both pre- and inservice teachers.

**Metacognitive Awareness and Strategy Use in Academic English Reading
Among Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) Students**

Yuko Iwai, University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse

This mixed method research study explored the role of metacognitive awareness in reading among adult English as a second language (ESL) students of various academic levels enrolled in a university in the southeastern part of the United States while engaged in academic reading. In addition, this study examined metacognitive reading strategies employed by those students. The following research questions were posed: (1) What role does metacognitive awareness have in academic English reading for adult ESL students enrolled in a university in the southeastern part of the United States? and (2) How does the use of reading strategies impact academic success for adult ESL students enrolled in a university in the southeastern part of the United States? In the quantitative portion of the study, 98 students responded to the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) instrument and a background information questionnaire.

In the qualitative portion of the study, six students (two English Language Institute [ELI], two undergraduate, and two graduate) participated in semi-structured interviews, including examinations of their academic reading materials. The quantitative results showed that the ELI students reported the most frequent use of metacognitive reading strategies compared to the undergraduate and graduate students. Also, no positive correlations were found between the students' academic performance and their reading strategy use or between the students' self-rated English reading proficiency and their reading strategy use. Furthermore, key reading strategies used by the students were found in the qualitative research design. They included adjusting reading speed and selecting strategies for different purposes, using prior knowledge, inferring text, marking text, focusing on typographical features, and summarizing.

Based on the findings, implications for students, teachers, and researchers to improve reading strategies were discussed. Recommendations for further research were also given.

**What Instructional and School-wide Practices are in Place to Support or Motivate Literacy Growth
in Schools that Serve Predominantly Low Income, African-American Communities?**

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Danjuma R.Saulawa, Alabama State University

This study was an attempt to find out from teachers what their schools had set in place to support and motivate literacy growth for students. The participating teachers come from 17 schools that serve predominantly African-American, low income communities. A 25-item questionnaire was circulated, and 195 teachers whose work experience ranged from 1 to 21 years responded. The questionnaire was organized into three categories: Instructional Practices, School wide Practices, and Support from the Administration.

Preliminary results indicated that a variety of structured classroom and school-wide practices, such as comprehension strategies, small group instruction, etc., were in place. Moreover, teachers generally seemed to have good feelings about the administrative support they had. However, practices that allowed for student-student interactions and aroused interest, such as Reader's Theatre, literacy circles, supplementary reading, and community functions, etc. were not used as much.

The findings of this study have implications for teachers, administrators, and the communities for ways to extend literacy experiences beyond the school walls. Some neglected areas could have positive impact on the literacy growth and development in students if put in place.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. RESEARCH/STATISTICSGovernor Room

**The Effects of Variations from Normality on Multiple Regression Results:
A Conceptual Tutorial with Data Examples**

Jeffrey R. Mills, University of North Florida

Most introductory statistics textbooks include a discussion of “moments about the mean” (i.e., variance, skewness, and kurtosis). Statistical moments, simply defined, are a set of statistical properties of a sample that describe the degree to which the distribution varies from normal. While most researchers understand in the abstract that variations from normality affect correlational results, it is rare that statistical moment values are consulted when interpreting results (with the possible exception of variance or, more likely its square root, standard deviation). Although correlational methods tend to produce robust results, especially with larger samples, even when normality assumptions are violated, violations of assumptions can frequently produce biased results.

To illustrate the extent of this problem, the present study investigated variations in normality assumptions on multiple regression results. Data from a published research study were divided into purposive subsets to produce data subsamples with varying degrees of departure from assumptions of normality. A common multiple regression equation (three predictors of the same dependent variable) was computed for each subset. Statistical moments were calculated for variables across each data subset, along with the multiple R and the regression coefficients for the regression analysis conducted for the subset. As anticipated, shrinkage in the value of multiple R was found with smaller subsets and when one or more variables were restricted in range; conversely, larger multiple R values were found with larger sample sizes. The effects of skewness and kurtosis were somewhat mixed depending on the patterns of these deviations from normality across the several variables included in the analysis. Based on the results, guidelines were proffered for inspecting data prior to conducting a regression analysis and for interpreting regression results when normality assumptions are violated.

Three Useful Methods for Detecting Problems with Collinearity in Multiple Regression

LeDale Southerland, University of North Florida

Collinearity results when two or more predictor variables included in a regression equation are highly intercorrelated. Individual regression coefficients for any given predictor variable can change appreciably in magnitude when an additional collinear predictor is either included in or removed from an analysis. Collinearity can result in poor interpretations of variable results.

In this paper, three methods were illustrated for interpreting variable contributions in the presence of collinearity: tolerance values, variable inflation factors (VIFs), and regression structure coefficients. An educational research data set featuring collinear predictor variables was used to compute

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several regression equations for which these useful statistics were derived and interpreted. First, the tolerance value for a variable is 1 minus the R-squared for the regression of a given predictor variable on all the other predictor variables, ignoring the dependent variable. When tolerance is close to 0, there is high collinearity of that variable with other predictor variables, and the b and beta coefficients were unstable. Second, VIF values are simply the reciprocal of tolerance. Therefore, when VIFs are high, there is high collinearity and instability of the b and beta coefficients. Both tolerance and VIF values point out where redundancies occur in prediction but do little more than assist the researcher in determining a variable that might better be omitted from the analysis.

In contrast, regression structure coefficients actually give estimates of variable contribution independent of variable collinearity. Structure coefficients express the degree of relationship of a given predictor variable with the predicted values of the dependent variable, or, stated differently, express the degree to which a given predictor is reproduced in the computation of predicted dependent variable scores. Comparisons of structure coefficients with regression beta weights across the several analyses were presented to illustrate the importance of interpreting structure coefficients.

Did You Vote Today? Student Government Elections and Democracy Education

Jennifer M. Miles and Michael T. Miller, University of Arkansas

Student self-governance is a way for students to have a voice in the decision-making process at institutions of higher education. Formal student governance can occur in the form of student government associations, associated student governments, and commonly, student senates. Student governance bodies are charged with representing the student body as a whole. Although there are substantial challenges to teaching students to be representative of others' interests, there are also challenges associated with garnering student interest in participation.

The purpose for conducting this study was to profile the extent to which college students participate in student government elections. Specifically, the study sought to identify the number of students contesting elections and the rate of voter turnout in different appropriation models. Drawing on data from the 2009 election cycle, 100 colleges and universities were selected for inclusion in the study, including 33 land grant universities with large student (and graduate student) populations and a research mission, 33 comprehensive master's institutions that are traditionally defined as regional public institutions, and 34 private institutions that offer primarily undergraduate programs and are classified as liberal arts institutions. Although frequency data were primarily identified, the percentages of contests and turnout did provide an important portrait of student interest in participating in self-governance activities. Findings revealed important differences between participation levels of students at different institutions, but also indicated broad issues surrounding low levels of participation. Implications of these findings impact how administrators address, rely upon, and relate to students both in and out of classroom.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. STUDENTS AT RISK/MOTIVATIONCapitol Room

Hire Today, Gone Tomorrow: The Determinants of Attrition Among Public School Teachers in Arkansas

Glenn Sheets and David Bell, Arkansas Tech University

The purpose of the study was to determine what factors lead teachers to leave the school/district in which they work or leave the teaching profession entirely. Staff selection is one of the most difficult tasks facing a school administrator, but so is keeping a highly qualified faculty. Teacher attrition has been and continues to be a fast-growing problem across the nation. It is getting more and more difficult to retain good teachers, and the cost of teacher replacement is very expensive.

In Arkansas in 2004-2005 there were a total of 30,191 teachers; 1,434 left the profession, and 2,369 transferred to other schools. The total cost of teacher turnover was \$38,086,582. Nationwide the cost of teacher turnover was \$4,867,879,421. This is an enormous loss to taxpayers, schools, educators, students and communities. There is a substantial body of literature that studies the factors affecting teachers' decisions to exit the teaching profession and the reasons range from teacher pay to poor working conditions.

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Data for the study were obtained during the later part of the 2008-2009 school year using a survey developed by the researchers. The survey was designed to examine the reasons for teacher turnover. The survey listed the various reasons teachers leave their present position or leave teaching altogether (ex., salary, heavy workload). The instrument was mailed to 50 area school administrators at all levels. The instrument asked for the participant to check the reason(s) why teachers had left their school or district on 19 factors based on research findings. Thirty-seven useable instruments were returned (a 74% return rate). The findings of the study reported the top reasons for teacher attrition as well as solutions to retain quality teachers.

A Five-Year Assessment of the Pre-Collegiate Algebra Summer Program for Underrepresented Minority

Jeffrey N. Thomas, Southern University

This study investigated the effects of the Summer Pre-College Algebra Course over a five-year period, namely, 2004 through 2008, on high school juniors and seniors. The course, an intensive, eight-week, three-credit hour college precalculus course, included an integrated package of lectures, problem solving sessions, pre- and post-standardized tests, other examinations and quizzes, mentors, peer-tutoring, seminars, and computer-assisted learning. ACT preparation sessions were conducted to supplement instructional objectives of the course.

The purpose of this study was to conduct research on the impact of an intensive college algebra and trigonometry course for underrepresented minority students. This initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), addressed the disproportionate number of minorities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The program served as a foundational gateway for students in their transition to college-level courses in STEM.

A mixed methodology was employed to examine the data, and to determine relationships between the five cohorts. The sample consisted of 102 students (31 males and 71 females) who were surveyed and interviewed. A pretest and posttest, developed by the Department of Mathematics, were administered to each participant. Archival data consisted of students' final grade, ACT composite score, ACT mathematics subtest score, high school grade-point-average, race/ethnicity, and gender.

The results of independent t tests revealed the mean posttest score and the mean pretest score were statistically different ($t = -19.713$, $p = .000$). Furthermore, the dependent variable posttest score and the independent variables gender and final grade were statistically significant ($F = 26.355$, $p = .000$). The findings of this study helped to dispel the myths concerning underrepresented minority students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

11:00 – 11.50 A.M. DISPLAY: TEACHING ISSUES.....Academy Room

Fundamental Issues of Literacy

Lori V. Hunt, Port Arthur (TX) ISD, and Louis Reed, McNeese State University

Throughout the history of America, the process of learning has been a major concern for many educators. Without a curriculum, school personnel would have to resort to exhortation and good intentions for improving learning in schools. Although the need for reform has been recognized (Cross, 1971, 1976; Hashway, 1988,1990), no fundamental reform model has been developed. The basis for a reform model needs to be related to the program of literacy. Literacy refers to the formulation of all significant learning. The development of a reform model must address the fundamental issues that impact literacy. The significance of this research is devoted to exploring the philosophy of developmental education which sheds light into this great and expanding field. The vision, according to Robert M. Hashway, Ph.D. (1988,1990), will modify the way education currently operated by intensifying and supporting existing services, infusing a developmental learning management system, and modernizing the face of the classroom.

Methodology utilized data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and LISREL (Linear Structural Relations) was the statistical tool utilized to achieve parsimony. Endogenous variables of the modified model, including interaction in school, writing outside of school,

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parents' education, pupil/teacher ratio, mediated instruction, academic preparation, general teacher interaction, language arts orientation, writing outside of school, teacher interaction, and language arts were descriptors representing variables for the research. A qualitative search for a definition of literate behavior was explained.

When Starting Salary Won't Cover Student Debt

Jennifer Styron, Wendy Jean Sonstrom, and Kyna Shelley, University of Southern Mississippi

Graduate assistants are essential to the operations of higher education as well as to the livelihood of many research-intensive institutions. Yet, many studies reveal that graduate student retention is less than 50%. Associated with graduate student retention is, among other factors, the cost of graduate education, its likelihood of increasing in light of the current national economic state, as well as a depressed job market for these graduates. This study explored the reported likely benefits relative to the costs of education at the graduate level in a southern research-intensive university. (No medical, law, or other professional schools were included.)

Specifically, the researchers surveyed students with current graduate assistantships to solicit information in the following areas: demographics, area of study, degree type, prior degrees earned, student loan debt prior to starting her/his current program, student loans for the current academic year, supplemental incomes, estimated student debt upon graduation, personal debt, anticipated geographic region for post-graduation employment, and anticipated salary post-graduation. Findings showed that for nearly half the students, student loan debt was surprisingly low or non-existent although other students were leaving graduate school with more than \$140,000 in student loan debt.

When comparing anticipated salaries against actual mean salaries within specific disciplines, respondents generally underestimated likely starting salary for post-graduation employment. Given the current national economic state, finding that large numbers of students will owe between .1/2 – 2 times their annual salary in student loans, this ratio might prove more problematic as job options and the pay scale of post-graduation employment decreases. By understanding the needs of graduate assistants as well as the financial scenario that many of them experience, this research theme may be able to provide essential information that will help institutions better understand the needs of the graduate assistant.

When Teachers are Students: Statistics, Procrastination, and Perfectionism

Wendy Jean Sonstrom and Kyna Shelley, University of Southern Mississippi

Research frequently suggests that, across disciplines, students often fear or misunderstand the role of statistics in their programs of study. In educational research courses specifically, there are often larger numbers of students who are already employed within the field maintaining their full-time jobs while taking graduate classes. This unique population of teachers who are also graduate students could be better understood by exploring differences between teachers and non-teachers in their attitudes towards statistics and the related constructs of perfectionism and procrastination. This study used the MPS (Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale), the PASS (Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students), and the SATS (Students Attitudes Towards Statistics).

Data were collected from 90 graduate students during the Spring 2009 semester at a public university in the Southeast. Data collection was distinct from other studies in documenting when the questionnaire was administered (avoiding exam periods), who collected the data (a fellow student and not the instructor), and the range of graduate classes surveyed (600, 700, and 800-level required and elective educational research and statistics courses). Of the three instruments used with the two groups (teachers and non-teachers) there were no differences between the groups' MPS subscale scores (MANOVA, Wilk's Lambda = .973, $F(3, 73) = .637$, $p = .577$, partial eta-squared = .027) or the PASS total score ($t(88) = -1.576$, $p = .119$). There were significant differences between the groups on four of the SATS' six subscales (MANOVA, Pillai's Trace = .987, $F(6, 83) = 1.907$, $p = .026$, partial eta-squared = .155) with the non-teachers scoring higher on the SATS subscales affect, value, difficulty, and interest.

These findings suggested that, for this subset of students (teachers), there may be a lower level of appreciation for the relevance of such course content, which has implications for higher education, specifically the graduate education of teachers.

Friday, November 6, 2009

Teachers' Perceptions of Respect in the Classroom and Student-Teacher Relations: A Case Study

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Respect is a pillar in character education, often described as “treating others as you want to be treated” (U. S. Department of Education, 1994). However, this golden rule seems more a propos to respect among peers, not among teachers and students. While there is limited empirical data concerning students' perception of respect in the classroom, no known research to date has examined teachers' perceptions of respect in the classroom.

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine teachers' perceptions and definitions of students' respectful and disrespectful behaviors and (2) to examine teachers' perception of respect experiences (classified as unilateral-ordinate and subordinate- or mutual-egalitarian) in relation to their: (1) observed classroom management and (2) perceived typical teacher-student communication exchanges. This qualitative case study examined two teachers' perceptions and experiences of respect within their classrooms. Both participants were female, had taught for two years in multiethnic middle and high schools, and were pursuing graduate degrees in education. They were chosen for their different approaches to teacher-student communication and classroom management success rates to determine if there were levels of agreement from two perspectives concerning respect and disrespect.

Data were collected through classroom observations, four semi-structured interviews, a respect journal where the participants spent a week recording their respect and disrespect experiences, and a concept map activity wherein the participants elaborated on specific respectful and disrespectful behaviors in the classroom. Participants shared specific experiences of being respected and disrespected by students in the classroom, their views of the role of the teacher in the classroom, and their particular expectations about teacher-student communication. All data were analyzed holistically following Mostakas (1996) guidelines, first creating clusters of meaning, aligning them horizontally, and finally uncovering themes. The results of this study suggested possible implications for teacher-student interactions and classroom practices.

The Effectiveness of Health Promotion Presentation Demonstrated Through Pre/Post Testing

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An original skit and the WIC video, “Breastfeeding: Another Way of Saying I Love You,” were part of the 60-minute presentation, “Does Breastfeeding Make a Difference?” The WIC video was developed by the MS Department of Health and the University of Southern Mississippi for the 1997 pilot study conducted in Mississippi with low numbers of mothers initiating breastfeeding. The original skit, developed by the researchers, uses role playing as the teaching technique. The researchers utilize several teaching strategies to encourage learning – viewing the video, lecturing, role playing, pretests, and posttests. Permission was granted to use a printed version of an online breastfeeding quiz (11 multiple choice items) as the pre/post tests. This study was approved by the Mississippi State University IRB.

The participants were 34 MSU students enrolled in HS 4803/HS 6803 The Art of Parenting for the 2008 fall semester taught by one of the researchers. A paired sample t-test was calculated to compare the mean pretest score, 8.15 (SD=1.73), to the mean posttest score, 9.79 (SD=1.20). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ($t[33] = -5.76, p < .001$).