

**Wednesday, November 4, 2009**

**9:00 – 9:50 A.M. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ..... Paramount Room**

**Elementary School Campuses and Beginning Teachers**

Cynthia Martinez-Garcia and John R. Slate, Sam Houston State University

In this study, the researchers examined the five most recent years of data (2003-2004 through 2007-2008) from the Academic Excellence Indicator System of the State of Texas regarding beginning teachers on elementary school campuses. Research questions addressed in this study were: (1) What is the difference between the elementary school campuses with the highest percentage of beginning teachers and elementary school campuses with the lowest percentage of beginning teachers in their percentage of minority students, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and percentage of at-risk students? and (2) What is the difference among elementary school campus accountability ratings in their percentage of beginning teachers, average salary of beginning teachers, and percentage of minority students? These questions were repeated for each year of data analyzed herein.

Of the 10 multivariate analyses performed, all 10 procedures resulted in statistically significant differences. Effect sizes ranged from small to moderate (Cohen, 1988). What these overall analyses revealed were that differences were present where beginning teachers were employed for each of the last five school years. Following the overall analyses, 34 univariate analyses were conducted, of which 33 yielded statistically significant differences. Effect sizes for these analyses ranged from small to large (Cohen, 1988). The large effect sizes were consistently present for the percentage of minority students enrolled on elementary school campuses and beginning teacher percentages. Elementary schools with the highest percentages of beginning teachers had an average of 70% of minority student enrollment across the five years of data analyzed. These percentages were substantially higher than the minority student enrollment for the elementary schools with the lowest percentages of beginning teachers. Similar results, though not so strong, were present for the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students. Elementary schools that had higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students also had higher percentages of beginning teachers.

**Increasing College Opportunity: A Case Study of School Counselors**

Jacquelin T. Broussard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this case study was to explore the role that school counselors play in students' educational experiences regarding preparing for post-secondary options. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) encourages school counselors to promote the academic development of all students in their preparation for the challenges of the 21st century. School counselors provide activities to support students with academic preparation, but the extent of these services vary by school, district, and state. Increasing opportunity to access and pursue post-secondary options has become an increasing top priority for middle and secondary schools. The ASCA National Model (2005) provides a framework for the development of school counseling programs that addresses the achievement concerns spelled out in NCLB. For this study, both the ASCA model and Perna and Thomas's (2006) conceptual model of academic success were used as the framework to understand student success as defined by college readiness, access, and achievement.

A convenience sample of 10 middle and high school counselors in grades 6–12 was selected using maximum variation sampling strategies. Interview questions were created to explore the role of school counselors in promoting the academic, career, and personal development of students. Data were transcribed and analyzed using both categorical and contextual coding procedures to identify emergent themes and patterns. The study provided valuable insights into the perceptions of school counselors regarding their role in providing activities that promote college opportunities.

The findings revealed that school counselors' influence on students' academic development was minimal. However, there was greater evidence that the career and personal development of students were addressed. To increase educational opportunities for students, counselors need to accept responsibility for implementing preventative programs and activities that address the academic, career, and personal development of all students.

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**The Decline in Social Capital Among U.S. Teachers**

Cheri H. Minckler, University of Louisiana Lafayette

Robert Putnam (1994/2000) sounded an alarm regarding America's decline in social capital, a fundamental asset of a democratic society. Because educators are charged with the responsibility to foster the democratic principles necessary to function in a democratic society and the social behaviors and attitudes necessary to be a productive member of one's community, it is important to know whether a similar decline in social capital is observed among teachers. This study addressed whether social capital has declined among teachers over the past 30-40 years as has been observed among the general population.

Following the lead of Putnam (2000), Paxton (1999), and Fukiyama (2001), all of whom used the General Social Survey (GSS) as the data source to track changes in Americans' social capital over time, the researcher used the GSS as the data set to study the trend in teachers' social capital between 1972 and 2006. To ascertain teachers' disposition towards community or bonding social capital, the researcher used existing variables in the GSS that correspond to McMillan and Chavis' (1986) elements of community (membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection). Crosstabs were run for each of the variables relative to whether the respondent was a teacher, a non-teacher, or a non-teacher with 16-20 years of education (to control for education).

Results of the study indicated that, although teachers score higher than non-teachers in elements of bonding social capital, teachers experienced a decline in most of these indicators over time (1972-2006). The decline was observed among the three groups studied: teachers, non-teachers and non-teachers with 16-20 years of education. Declining social capital among teachers may indicate a decline in a sense of community that could negatively influence the school culture and, ultimately, student achievement. The findings suggested implications for both school culture and our American democracy.

**9:00 – 9:50 A.M.                    ACHIEVEMENT (Displays)..... Louisiana Room**

**Evaluating Criterion-Referenced Achievement Tests in the No Child Left Behind Era:  
The Arkansas Benchmark Examination, 2005-2008**

John D. Hall, D. Lynn Howerton, and Craig H. Jones, Arkansas State University

The No Child Left Behind Act and the accountability movement in public education have resulted in many states developing group-administered, criterion-referenced achievement tests. These tests are administered to students in select grades. The resulting test scores are often used to make high stakes decisions that may affect both students and schools. Unfortunately, many of these tests are not being subjected to independent psychometric examination.

The 2005 Arkansas Benchmark Examination (ABE), which was being used as part of the state accountability system, was evaluated based primarily on The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing and The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education. This evaluation resulted in a number of concerns related to test development and data reporting. The current investigation extended previous work on the 2005 ABE by evaluating the 2006, 2007, and 2008 editions of the ABE in accord with The Standards and The Code. Using the Technical Manuals for the ABE obtained from the Arkansas Department of Education, the following test properties were examined: the model of test theory, the sample of students, item development, bias, item analysis, performance levels or cut-scores, reliability, validity, and the availability and content of the technical reports.

Recommendations based on this evaluation were offered to enhance the psychometric properties of the test, to increase accountability, and to prevent the misuse of the test.

**A Template for Teaching the Multiple Linear Regression Technique**

Robert L. Kennedy, University of Arkansas for Medicine, and Pamela M. Broadston,  
Arkansas School for the Deaf

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A template is a pattern that might be used for cutting out sections of material for recovering a couch, for sawing wood into pieces to assemble into a toy box, or for guiding information gathering for a report. Over the past couple of decades of teaching, this teacher has found that the use of templates for instructional purposes has been advantageous for communicating relatively complex topics efficiently and clearly. Any number of ways of teaching multiple linear regression might be tried. Examples that have been derived from the literature include Java Applets, various other software programs, graphs, statistical labs, puzzles, and worksheets. All are reasonably effective tools for teaching regression and other statistical techniques. However, another tool for teaching that is widely marketed is the template.

Templates are distributed and/or sold for quizzes, certificates, posters, surveys, course management, syllabi, electronic portfolios, and interactive exercises, among other purposes. They save time, not only for the less-experienced (or even experienced) teacher using them, but they can also benefit students by allowing a more efficient approach to learning. They may be available as open source documents, freeware, trialware, demoware, commercial software; immediately downloadable from a website or available on CD through snail mail; and in common word processing or PDF formats.

In particular, the template presented in this session was directed toward multiple linear regression. The primary components included an abstract of the scenario to be investigated, the reference or citation for the source of the scenario, number of cases, variables, data, rationale for the statistical technique chosen, null hypothesis, assumptions to be tested, steps in testing the assumptions, the reading and interpretation of the findings, and a conclusion relative to the hypothesis. Because of the data files, the materials were available on computer media.

### **Adolescents' Comprehension and Content-Area Education Students' Attitudes Benefit from One-on-One Tutoring**

Bonnie Z. Warren-Kring, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

In an essay book review on knowledge to support the teaching of reading, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005), authors Barone and Morrell concluded that teacher educators must address a research agenda that relates teacher preparation to student literacy achievement. This research analyzed the effectiveness of content-area education students' tutoring of adolescents in literacy strategies over two semesters. It also documented the changes in the attitudes of the education students toward implementing literacy strategies in content areas over the course of the semester.

Two premises were part of this investigation. The first was that adolescent students would benefit from the one-on-one tutoring that occurred as part of the adolescent literacy course on campus. The second was that, through the act of teaching literacy strategies to middle and high school students, education content-area students would show positive changes in attitudes toward implementing literacy strategies within the content-area classroom.

The Bader Reading and Language Inventory (2005) assessment tool was used with adolescents who were tutored and with comparison adolescents who were not tutored. Originally, there were no significant differences between the pre-comprehension scores of the tutored and non-tutored groups. However, post-comprehension scores of the tutored group were significantly higher at the .05 level when compared to the non-tutored group using a paired t test. Changes in attitudes of the education students over the course of the semester were measured through the use of a literacy survey, entitled *Preservice Teachers' Literacy Perception/Attitude Survey*, designed for this research project. Significant gains were found pre- to posttest on 50% of the attitude survey items using a paired t test.

In summary, this study found that one-on-one tutoring impacted not only the comprehension of the adolescents but also the attitudes of the content-area education students.

### **Educator Attributional Style: A New Measurement Model**

Amy C. Fineburg and Cecil Robinson, University of Alabama

Attributional style is one's dispositional explanation of good and bad events (Seligman et al., 1978). Although well-established in the literature, two problems exist. First, research highlights the domain-specific nature of attributional style. This study developed and cross-validated the Educator

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Attributional Style Questionnaire (EdASQ), a content-specific measure developed from the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ; Peterson et al., 1982). Second, measures of ASQ do not always load on three factors, as theory suggests. Most measurement focuses on negatively worded items and ignores positively worded items. This study tested a new six-factor measurement model—three negatively worded and three positively worded. The original ASQ was modified to create the EdASQ. K-12 public school teachers from three districts participated in two studies.

The first study involved half of the teachers from a suburban district in Alabama (N = 169) taking the EdASQ and ASQ, and the other half taking only the EdASQ. All teachers also took the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1967) as a validation measure. In the second study, teachers from an urban district in Nebraska (N = XXX) and a rural district in Alabama (N = 182) took the EdASQ and RSES to cross-validate the measure further. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis revealed that the EdASQ had similar reliability and validity as the ASQ across teacher samples. Confirmatory factor analysis with structural equation modeling indicated that the measurement model with three factors for positively and negatively worded item sets was a better fitting model than the original three-factor solution.

These results lent support for the domain-specificity of attributional style and introduced the hypothesis that positively worded and negatively worded item sets measure explanatory styles that are distinct from each other. These findings have implications for attributional style theory and introduce a new measure of attributional style for teachers.

### **Visual Skills as a Predictor of Student Outcomes in Statistics Coursework**

Terry E. Brumback, Vivki Schmitt, and Randal Schumacker, University of Alabama

This study attempted to estimate performance outcomes in statistics coursework using the Rasch Partial Credit Model. A 27-item instrument was designed and administered to 30 nursing students who had completed an introductory statistics course. Each line item was designed to evaluate the student's ability to view, retain, and apply numbers and formulas in the solution of a statistical problem. Subjects were then evaluated using an item-response matrix fitted into the Partial Credit and Rating Scale models. Results showed that subjects who scored higher in visualization skills performed at a higher level in statistics coursework than those who did not.

### **9:00 – 9:50 A.M. FIVE-STATE LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM: TEACHER LEADER DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS (Training) .....University Room**

JoAnna Dickey, Eastern Kentucky University, and Debbie Daniels,  
Kentucky Department of Education

This workshop was developed to provide information about materials and activities available for a teacher leader course or professional development. A five-state consortium was organized and funded by the Wallace Foundation and participating state departments of education to develop a resource set of materials in the area of teacher leadership. The five states included Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Alabama, and Kansas. Fourteen courses/professional development units were created in the areas of: developing an understanding of the whole school, working productively with others, deepening the instructional capacity of colleagues, and leading school improvement. Information about the purpose, participants, and materials was provided. Sample activities were demonstrated, and a CD of the complete set of materials was distributed to each participant.

### **9:00 – 9:50 A.M. READING ..... King Room**

#### **Teaching Multiple Perspectives with Children's Biographies**

Hani Morgan, University of Southern Mississippi

In today's culturally diverse society, it is important for young students to develop multiple

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perspectives. Some of the standards today's teachers are required to adhere to include an understanding of different cultures. The National Council for the Social Studies, for example, indicates that teachers should provide instruction that complies with various thematic standards that include teaching about global connections and cultural diversity. To encourage young students to develop multiple perspectives, teachers need to pay attention not only to how they teach, but also to what they teach. Educators can guide students to develop cross-cultural understanding at an early age by using culturally authentic children's biographies representing a wide variety of cultural groups.

This position paper explored strategies that are designed to help educators select children's biographies that contribute to the accurate understanding of different cultural groups. It offered guidelines for teachers to help them recognize and avoid books that are stereotypical or offensive. The article included a list of recommended children's biographies and referred to various websites educators can visit to find annotated lists of culturally authentic children's biographies and additional guidelines for choosing culturally authentic children's books. This article explained what multiple perspectives are and offered research-based teaching strategies for educators that can help children develop an understanding of frames of reference that different groups of people hold. The paper also emphasized the importance of developing multiple viewpoints at a young age and referred to educational research indicating the need for children to develop positive cross-cultural attitudes during their early years of schooling.

Some of the research-based teaching strategies discussed included group projects, read-alouds, and independent reading. A discussion referring to research on childhood education indicating how each strategy was implemented, and why these methods are likely to lead to positive cross-cultural understanding was provided.

### **Developing Family Literacy Connections to Foster Reading Engagement and Improvement**

Jo Anne Heisterkamp, Camille Branton, and Theresa Dumas, Mississippi Valley State University

An individual's ability to read affects her/his economic situation and likelihood to succeed. Our nation's current financial status makes the improvement and development of literacy, at every level, an imperative priority. Over the years, family literacy programs have proven to be significant contributors to the solution of this universal dilemma. Many states have successfully imparted individual and family education goals through governor-supported, as well as, auxiliary family literacy programs. Traditionally, the seeds of family literacy programs have originated in schools that comprehend the significance of parental and community partnerships. The success of these family literacy programs has proved to be contingent on the implementation of goals and objectives tailored to the specific geographical, social, and academic needs of communities, schools, and participants.

The existing economic crisis in our nation demands an assault on the rudiments of literacy attainment that was made available and attractive to disadvantaged children and families who dwell in poverty stricken areas. Effective family literacy programs are valuable components of this assault that can be launched and maintained to aid in the support of an economic recovery. This position paper highlighted a review of family literacy strategies. Dialogue emanated from this session that motivated increased parental and community involvement toward the development and preservation of successful family literacy initiatives.

### **Bibliotherapy: Another Coping Mechanism**

Theresa Dumas, Jo Anne Heisterkamp, Camille Branton,  
and Sonya Walton, Mississippi Valley State University

Children are often faced with various devastating emotional issues that can sometime render them helpless and unable to cope from day to day. Frequently, these problems overflow from home to the school environment causing a lack of concentration and failure in school. With this in mind, teachers have been compelled to find other techniques or solutions to help alleviate problems caused by these disturbing issues.

An option that some teachers have used to help children deal with distressing problems is a technique identified as bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy uses books or stories to inform, instruct, and reassure children who are having difficulty managing traumatic experiences. Bibliotherapy is not a new

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technique. Using bibliotherapy as a coping mechanism dates back to the time of Aristotle. Reading children's literature has been a restorative catalyst in dealing with traumatic issues such as divorce, death, bullying, abuse, and alcoholism. Reading about characters who have effectively resolved predicaments similar to problems children are currently experiencing have opened new avenues of personal self-discovery and promoted healing. Bibliotherapy also gives children the opportunity to travel with story characters in discovering that they are not alone when confronted with challenging circumstances.

This position paper drew attention to the use of bibliotherapy as an additional teaching resource. This session called attention to another method in assisting children who are dealing with traumatic experiences and that a channel of communication would develop among educators, parents, children, and the community pertaining to this issue.

**9:00 – 9:50 A.M.                    EDUCATION REFORM .....Governor Room**

**Alternative Teacher Certification Programs as Policy Response  
to Teacher Shortage: Foresight or Folly?**

Mary Catherine Hammon, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

Historically, colleges and universities have shouldered the task of preparing the nation's teachers for service in K-12 school settings. Amidst calls for school reform in the 1980s, however, the teacher education landscape in America was forever changed. As a matter of public policy, states began introducing alternative teacher preparation and certification programs. These programs have grown significantly over time and are now providing one-fifth of the nation's K-12 teachers.

This paper was a review of the literature on the origins of alternative teacher preparation programs, the public policy problems they were designed to address, and the effectiveness of the programs in producing intended policy outcomes. Three mature programs - New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program, Teach for America, and Troops to Teachers - were examined in more depth for program history, organizational purpose, and program features. Program effectiveness in light of stated goals was characterized using available evidence. Implications for the field of teacher education were discussed.

**The Impact of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education on the Teaching  
Profession of the United States - A Review of Evidence and Perspectives**

Mary Catherine Hammon, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

Given its role as an accreditor of teacher education programs, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has had over 50 years to contribute to the teaching profession. The nature of NCATE contributions, as well as the organization's overall value to the profession, was explored from multiple perspectives and various stakeholders within the larger educational community.

The review was situated historically and structurally by providing summary and context for the origins of accreditation of higher education in the United States and the evolution to accrediting specific professional programs. Issues associated with whether teaching is a distinct profession were characterized and served as backdrop for the discussion about NCATE's specific impact. Included in the review was the eventual creation of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) in 1997 as an alternative accreditation option. NCATE and TEAC governance structures, organizational goals, and accreditation processes were compared and contrasted. Implications for NCATE's likely future were discussed.

**Good Schools and Bad Schools: A Current Review of the School Visitations Literature**

Brian R. Beabout, University of New Orleans

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This paper presented the results of a review of the literature on school-site visitations as modes of gathering both formative and summative assessment data on school performance. This work was motivated by two forces: (1) it seems clear that our math-English-only accountability system measures only a fraction of what one expects schools to accomplish and (2) the local context of New Orleans, in which charter schools and state takeover schools must be evaluated on a 3-5-year cycle. Articles were selected for review based on using the titles of a number of well-known site visitation processes: Baldrige Quality Award visits, regional accreditation visits (SACS, NEASC, MSACS, NSACS, NAAS, and WASC), Elaine Fink's intervisitations and learning walks, Rhode Island's SALT visits, as well as the British school inspection system. Articles returned from a search of general visitation terms (site-visits, visiting committees, accreditation visits, etc.) were also included.

The analysis of the collected literature (currently ongoing) revealed an over-reliance on standards created outside of the local community and a lack of participation from local community members in the visitation process (parents, students, and other community members). These visits also showed an admirable attention to the classroom activities of these schools and not making judgments on more superficial features of the school.

The implications of these findings were that, while there are a number of visitation models that attend to instruction as a primary focus, the standards by which this instruction is evaluated are generally standards created outside of the local context. This may lead to visitation models that unintentionally seek to homogenize instructional practice without regard for variations in student populations and community goals. The creation of visitation teams that are a mixture of expert educators and local community members would engender a useful dialogue about the purposes of school in a given geographical context.

### **Perceptions of Core Secondary Teacher-Coaches: A Critical Review of Literature – 1920 to 2009**

Alan Brown, University of Alabama

In describing her work with students, Shirley Brice Heath (1983) once wrote, "We read and write a lot of the time, lots of places. School isn't much different except that here, we work on techniques, and we practice a lot – under a coach. I'm the coach" (p. 289). The role of coach is becoming increasingly prevalent in current educational arenas (Knight, 2009). However, one type of teacher-coach seems to be taking a hit in the academic court of public opinion. Although physical education coaches have been a popular research topic for years, very few studies exist pertaining to teacher-coaches in core content areas. Despite this lack of research, there is a common perception among educators and non-educators alike that those who coach are not so effective in the classroom as non-coaching teachers and that teacher-coaches are more interested in coaching first and teaching second (Chiodo, Martin, and Rowan, 2002; Figone, 1994; Hill, 1997; Hogan, 1980; Millslagle and Morley, 2004).

The question that guided this review was: How does educational literature portray the perceptions of core (mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies/history) secondary teachers who also serve as athletic coaches? The purpose was to synthesize the available literature since 1920, the year the National Federation of State High School Associations, the governing body of all education-based interscholastic sports and activities, was formed.

Results indicated the following themes related to teacher-coaches: perceptions, specific content areas, teacher education, employment opportunities, common characteristics, classroom environments, professional development, school culture, harsh realities, and balance. Discussion of the findings included gaps in the literature and opportunities for further study.

### **9:00 – 9:50 A.M.                    RETHINKING SCHOOL REFORM: CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND CHANGE (Symposium).....Capitol Room**

Heather K. Olson Beal, Stephen F. Austin State University, and Angela Lee  
and Petra Munro Hendry, Louisiana State University

This research explored three high-achieving public schools in East Baton Rouge Parish (EBRP), Louisiana: (1) an autonomous high school, (2) a foreign language immersion magnet school, and (3) a traditional elementary school. Despite decades of desegregation efforts, one-third of all children in

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EBRP attend private schools, which are 86% white, while public schools are 83% African-American and 81% socioeconomically-disadvantaged. The schools in the case studies were majority African-American and socioeconomically-disadvantaged, yet are unique because they have school cultures that function as “achievement gap-closers.” These school cultures are created by parental involvement, strong leadership, curricular autonomy, and teachers with high expectations of all students. Educational literature increasingly acknowledges the influence of school culture on teaching, learning, and student achievement, and is, therefore, critical to understand to achieve systemic change. Toward that end, this research identified aspects of school culture at these campuses in which high student achievement is both expected and attained. The research presented here adds to historical and contemporary narratives that highlight successful urban, public schools, and students.

The first paper was a one-year case study of EBR Lab, an autonomous high school that is part of a community-school partnership initiative to promote school reform. Contrary to a focus on “closing the gap,” which assumes that the norm is the standard, a culture of excellence has been created in this school where students are expected to excel and do excel. Drawing on a theoretical perspective that acknowledges the importance of civic and cultural domains to school reform instead of a limited focus on “testing,” this paper discussed the characteristics of the culture as well as the process of creating that culture.

The second paper was a one-year case study of South Boulevard Elementary, a foreign language immersion magnet school that has achieved both integration and educational excellence. Despite studies to the contrary, this research found that both white and African-American parents chose South Boulevard, a dilapidated, inner-city school that is majority African-American and is socioeconomically-disadvantaged. This research identified aspects of the unique culture created by the immersion curriculum that counter several common narratives that focus on the achievement gap and deficit models of minority culture: (1) a culture of academic rigor, (2) a culture of multiplicity, and (3) a culture of community.

The third paper was a case study of Ryan Elementary, a traditional school that has been recognized as one of the highest performing schools in the state despite its 96.3% poverty rate. Regardless of the difficulties, real or perceived, faced by Ryan students, they have been achieving beyond some of their more wealthy peers. This research found that the school culture, created by the school principal and based on principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, was critical to student achievement at Ryan. This research explored the practices and behaviors of the principal that contributed to the creation of a school culture that promotes academic achievement and excellence. The presenters shared findings and elicited discussion among audience members regarding the complex ways in which school culture is created and negotiated.

**9:00 – 9:50 A.M.                      READING .....Academy Room**

### **The Effects of the Reading First Program on the Acquisition of Early Literacy Skills: A Comparative Study**

Monica Wong-Ratcliff, Texas A and M University – Kingsville

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of the Reading First (RF) program on the early literacy acquisition of young children. The primary research question was to investigate whether first-grade students in RF schools would have better reading performances than those students in non-RF schools as measured by Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) subtests. The secondary research question was concerned with whether third- and fourth-grade students in RF schools performed better than those in non-RF schools on statewide-mandated English Language Arts (ELA) assessment measures.

A three-year longitudinal study was conducted to examine the ELA scores between 2006 and 2008. Data were obtained from six elementary schools in two rural school districts in Louisiana. The results showed that the first-grade RF students had better performances in reading than the non-RF students at the beginning of the school year 2007-08. However, the differences in the adjusted means of the DIBELS subtests (Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency) were not statistically significant at the end of the school year. Also, all of the first graders in both the RF and non-RF schools demonstrated significant gains in their reading skills.

As the school district required the non-RF schools to implement some of the RF components

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in the classrooms, the findings indicated that the RF practices, which were based on scientifically-based reading research (SBRR), helped produce positive reading outcomes in both RF and non-RF classrooms. As for the statewide-mandated ELA assessment, the findings of the longitudinal study indicated that the students in the RF schools performed better than those in the non-RF schools in the Louisiana ELA assessment programs between 2006 and 2008. The study provided evidence that the efforts of the RF program in implementing research-based reading instructional strategies into classrooms were successful.

**Reinventing Preservice Education in a Post-Katrina Venue: Rethinking Professional Course Structure by Providing Service and Using Access to Literature Through Classrooms Libraries to Enhance Preparation for Urban Teaching**

Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell, Louisiana State University

A critical focus of elementary education programming is preparation to teach reading. Using literature and providing access to books is a cornerstone of reading development. Post-Katrina New Orleans has continued to face formidable, frightening, and fascinating challenges, recovering, rebuilding and reforming education, mostly within the public schools. The research is undeniable for students; those who read regularly perform better all around. The current national estimate on the ratio of access to books is approximately 22 books to one child; in the fall of 2007 in New Orleans-East, the number was zero books per child. Television and media reports counted the number of missing and displaced persons, cataloged the loss of property, and even lamented the months of missed school days and the catch-up many students faced. However, one key component missing in that discussion was the lack of access to books.

In August 2007, Abramson Science and Technology Charter School opened in New Orleans-East, serving one of the hardest hit areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Housed in temporary buildings and run on generators until late fall 2007, the school had no working library. Devoid of a neighborhood public library, children lacked opportunities to access literature. The success of many teachers weighs on their preservice experience, and this course-embedded project focused on avenues for preservice teachers to experience meaningful opportunities to engage in authentic course activities, provide service, expand their cultural horizons and frames of reference while strengthening preparation for teaching in urban environments.

This case study highlighted service, teaching, and research efforts to establish classroom libraries at Abramson involving public school faculty, College of Education faculty, and education candidates at Louisiana State University in a reciprocal and mutually beneficial learning experience, ultimately gathering 8,865 books and establishing classroom libraries at all levels in every class.

**The Role of Readability When Comparing Local Norms to National Norms**

George W. Hebert, Louisiana State University

Curriculum-based measurement in Reading (R-CBM) has long been regarded as a robust measure of reading in both scientific and applied settings. Currently, universal screenings in reading in a Response to Intervention (RtI) model utilize the R-CBM practices. However, uncontrolled systematic error often appears in R-CBM data, perhaps because of passage difficulty. In this study, local reading norms were compared to nationally established reading norms. The readability of the grade-level probes was calculated by various established and accepted formulas. Additionally, adjusted scores were calculated for comparative purposes. Discussion focused on the importance of establishing valid readability estimates to better equate reading passages.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M. MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND SOCIAL STUDIES ..... Paramount Room**

**Science Achievement Among Fifth-Grade Students in the United States**

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Mary N. McNeese and Rose B. Jones, University of Southern Mississippi

This research study investigated the interrelationships among fifth-grade students' science skills, their standardized science achievement scores, and their science teachers' instructional activities. The 5,324 students and their science teachers were a nationally representative sample whose responses were made available through the Early Childhood Longitudinal Program (ECLS) in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The specific demographic information on the sample was presented.

Results of the analysis of these quantitative data showed that interrelationships among specific science instructional activities and student science skills were positive, meaning that science teachers using certain activities and students with certain science skills were likely to be using multiple activities to develop multiple science skills. For example, teachers' frequent use of hands-on activities was associated with frequent use of the internet for science. Likewise, students' skilled in communicating science ideas were also skilled in the understanding of science concepts. The activities and skills, which were significantly related to standardized science achievement scores, were: frequency of hands-on science activity, frequency talking about science results, frequency using the internet for science, frequency generating/testing hypotheses, emphasis on science facts, understanding science concepts, developing science problem solving, and communicating science ideas.

All of these significant interrelationships were negative, which indicated that greater frequency of these activities (indicated on the questionnaire by lower numbers) was associated with higher science achievement. These three variables were not significantly related to science achievement: taking science tests/ quizzes, frequent use of library science resources, and use of technology as a science tool.

These results have implications for policy and practice; i.e., since both instructional time and science resources are limited, perhaps the most efficient tactic would be to focus on activities and skills that are the most productive. Additionally, participants were encouraged to discuss these variables from their respective experiences.

### **The Identification of Essential Developmentally Responsive Middle School Principals' Practices and the Construction of the Essential Practices Rating Instrument**

Tiffany N. Taylor, Paige Tompkins, and Mary O'Phelan, Mercer University

The research study identified essential practices of developmentally responsive middle school principals as related to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards of 2008 and professional learning as identified by the National Middle School Association: (1) vision of learning, (2) instructional programs, (3) professional learning, (4) management, (5) faculty and community collaboration, (6) ethical behavior, and (7) political, economic, legal, and cultural contexts. A panel of 16 middle-level experts participated in a Delphi study. The panel was comprised of a national panel of principals associated with the National Forum for Accelerating Middle-grades Reform, authors and researchers identified by a review of literature, and other pertinent educational leaders. The panel identified 256 essential principal practices. Responses were analyzed, and common responses were combined.

Data analysis of Delphi II, a 179-question rating scaled survey, revealed that 111 practices were rated as absolutely essential or very important by 90% of the participants. A statistical profile, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score, and percentage rating each response as absolutely essential or very important, was developed and used as the Delphi III instrument to determine the degree to which the panel members agreed on each practice. A final review of the Delphi III results indicated that 111 practices were essential middle school principal practices.

Findings provided a non-exhaustive, research-based list of essential practices of middle school principals. The rating instrument can be used by middle-level special interest groups, middle school principals, and local school districts to assess middle school principals. Future research was recommended to find relationships between the level of practice of the ISLLC standards of 2008 by middle school principals and student achievement. Future research is necessary to determine relationships and effects between principals' practices and school performance.

### **The Effect of Tangrams on the Spatial Ability of College Students**

## Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Kimberly E. Ball and Linda K. Morse, Mississippi State University

Students with a strong spatial ability have consistently migrated toward fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM disciplines). In the past, it has been assumed that boys have higher spatial abilities than girls. Recently, in children with low socioeconomic status, spatial abilities for boys and girls have been found to be equal. This has brought to the forefront the influence of environment. The National Research Council released a report in 2006 touting that students who do not learn to use their spatial abilities to their maximum potential are at a disadvantage. Integrating spatial skills instruction into the classroom is a challenge issued by the National Research Council.

Tangrams appear to be an ideal transition tool. Tangrams are a set of seven shapes invented by the ancient Chinese. They can be utilized in classrooms as a way of satisfying national and state requirements in the area of geometry. A unique aspect of these tangrams is that they can be formed into thousands of different pictures. The tangrams may be transformed into a given picture by translation, rotation, and/or reflection of each individual piece. Subjects in this study consisted of 20 students enrolled in Educational Psychology summer courses at Mississippi State University in 2008. Utilizing spatial ability tests before and after a two-and-a-half week exposure to tangrams, spatial ability was found to increase significantly.

The results of this study should encourage the development of tangram activities within the classrooms of K-12 schools. Perhaps this could lead to increased representation by women in the STEM disciplines. A follow-up study needs to be performed to see if tangram intervention in the K-12 grades could indeed result in greater spatial ability.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M.      WRITING A SUITABLE SABBATICAL PROPOSAL  
(Training) ..... Louisiana Room**

Gahan Bailey and Brenda C. Litchfield, University of South Alabama

Do you WANT to take a sabbatical? Do you NEED to take a sabbatical? Have you EARNED a sabbatical? Sabbaticals are not guaranteed just because you have the requisite number of years invested in the university. Certainly, not all sabbaticals applied for are approved. How can you write a sabbatical proposal that will stand out among other proposals submitted? What do you need to include in your proposal so it were approved? How can you prepare a proposal, that once granted, will lead to a successful sabbatical that will enhance your college and university's mission? How will your sabbatical scholarship be disseminated among the various scholarly networks? Preparing a successful sabbatical takes time, effort, and creativity. If your university is going to invest in you and pay you while you are not teaching, it wants to make sure that you have a solid, unique, and worthwhile project planned. Too many sabbatical proposals are written that lack specific details and a unique approach to study that are outside the regular activities of a professor. You need something new, something different. A sabbatical is a time to show your ability to contribute to your field and advance your knowledge and skills and showcase your university.

This training session provided relevant literature and guidelines about writing a successful sabbatical proposal and helped to find out how to make your proposal stand out and have a better chance of being approved. Participants learned how to think creatively and generate project ideas that are unique and fundable. Examples of well written and poorly written proposals were shared. Additionally, an evaluation checklist, including pertinent elements of a suitable sabbatical proposal, were distributed. Participants shared their ideas and learned how to develop them into a great proposal that could be funded.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M.      PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....University Room**

### **Developing Into a Mentor: Combining Style with Substance**

Randy Parker, Louisiana Tech University

A continuing issue for school leaders is the recruitment, induction, and retention of new

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teachers. Despite numerous reform efforts and professional development programs, research has indicated that large numbers of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first three to five years. The effectiveness of a mentor can be a critical element in the process supporting and retaining new teachers. An effective and engaged mentor can be critical in helping a new teacher to master day-to-day issues, develop strong professional relationships, and become an integral part of the professional learning community.

This position paper presented the argument that mentors must be carefully selected to maximize effectiveness and that not enough attention has been paid to matching the veteran teacher's style of mentoring with the needs and aspirations of the new teacher. The tenets of three common styles of mentoring (Responder, Colleague, and Initiator) were presented along with the common outcomes and limitations of each approach.

A discussion followed about the methods appropriate to identify potential mentors and to match the style of the mentor with the needs of the new teacher. Six research-based strategies to maximize mentoring effectiveness in modeling effective teaching, nurturing development of the new teacher, and increasing opportunities for professional growth were presented. Research has indicated that there is no one right way to approach mentoring and that individual situations dictate which mentoring approach to use. Knowledge of mentoring style and effective, research-based mentoring strategies can be used to clarify expectations and maximize opportunities for effective mentoring. By putting this knowledge into practice, effective school leaders can enhance both the effectiveness of new teacher induction programs and the mentoring expertise of experienced faculty.

### **School Wellness Policy - What Novice Educators Need to Know**

Vincent R. McGrath, Mississippi State University, and Linda C. McGrath, Community Health Educator

In this training session, the use of the creative arts in grief therapy was discussed. Students experience less difficulty in their school work when given the opportunity to express their emotions by drawing, composing, creating, and performing. Packets with information and materials on successful use of the arts were given to the participants. Educators increased their understanding and confidence in innovative techniques that compliment their skills in supporting students through life/death issues. The facilitators have personally experienced loss of spouses, organized a community support group, worked with school counselors, and conducted numerous national, regional, and local workshops.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M.      EFFICACY.....King Room**

### **Telephone, Internet, or Support from Both: Which is the Best Predictor of Smoking Cessation?**

Joseph A. Haas, Dana K. Fuller, Chris Tate, and Jwa K. Kim, Middle Tennessee State University

Telephone and internet-based smoking cessation programs are cost effective interventions that have the opportunity to reach many smokers. The smoking cessation program in this study allowed participants the choice of using either method of support or both methods. This study endeavored to determine which support method (telephone, internet, or both) was the best predictor of quitting smoking.

In July and August of 2007, a group of 5,346 participants enrolled in a smoking cessation program through their employers or health plans. Four sources of information were collected from these individuals: intake characteristics, telephone call records with counselors, website usage, and a follow-up survey given during their seventh month after enrollment. Abstinence from smoking was defined as not having "even a puff" in the last 30 days.

Logistic regression was utilized to determine which support method was the best predictor of cessation, along with demographics and smoker characteristics. The variables included in the model were time until first cigarette after waking ( $p = .0009$ ), average number of cigarettes per day ( $p = .0045$ ), usage of nicotine replacement therapy ( $p < .0001$ ), modality ( $p = .0305$ ), stage of change ( $p < .0001$ ), active internet social networking ( $p = .3721$ ), passive internet social networking ( $p = .0057$ ), interactive tools ( $p = .8437$ ), gender ( $p = .3148$ ), number of phone calls ( $p < .0001$ ), number of online sessions ( $p < .0001$ ), and age ( $p = .0982$ ).

Participants who only used the internet modality were no more likely to quit than those who

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used only the phone modality (OR = 0.66,  $p = .1274$ ), and participants who used both modalities were significantly less likely to quit than those who only used the internet (OR = 0.62,  $p = .0086$ ). A more concentrated usage of one modality may be more beneficial than using some of both.

### School- and Teacher-Level Correlates of Teacher Autonomy

Mindy L. Crain-Dorough and Kathleen T. Campbell, Southeastern Louisiana University

The study examined the correlates of teachers' perceptions of autonomy. The set of correlates included school-level variables (achievement level of school and school climate subscales) and teacher-level variables (teacher efficacy, years of teaching experience, years of experience at the current school, National Board certification, and degree level). Previous research has found relationships among teacher autonomy and several constructs (e.g., empowerment, job satisfaction, motivation, professionalism, and burnout; Burnetti, 2001; Kim and Loadman, 1994; Klecker and Loadman, 1996; Ulriksen, 1996). Research is needed to explore constructs related to teacher autonomy in the context of schools as social systems (Pearson, 2006).

Data were collected using a survey that was administered online via the Survey Monkey website. A link to the survey was sent to the respondents in an e-mail. The survey was open to respondents for almost three weeks. A follow-up e-mail was sent a few days before the survey closed. The administered survey was a combination of three pre-existing surveys, the Organizational Climate Index (OCI), the Teacher Autonomy Scale, and the Teacher Efficacy Scale (short form), in addition to demographic questions. The survey was administered to teachers from eight schools located in three school districts in southeast Louisiana. There were 150 teachers who completed the survey. A multiple regression analysis was utilized to examine the relationship of teacher autonomy with the two sets of variables.

A full model, including both sets of variables, was compared to a reduced model containing only the school-level variables to evaluate the differential impacts of the two sets of variables on perceptions of autonomy. The findings suggested implications for improving teachers' sense of empowerment in their classrooms and schools with the end result of improving student learning.

### Measuring Teacher's Perceptions of School Culture in Southeast Louisiana

Nan B. Adams, M. Flo Winstead, and Thomas A. DeVaney, Southeastern Louisiana University, and Mitzi Trahan and Dianne F. Olivier, University of Louisiana - Lafayette

This study investigated the differences in teachers' perceptions of multiple dimensions of school culture reflecting norms of professional teaching and leadership behaviors in rural southeastern Louisiana. Data were collected using the Revised School Culture Elements Questionnaire (RSCEQ), which examined actual and preferred features of school culture. A variety of demographic variables was collected to allow the analysis of several factors considered relevant to teacher efficacy, such as years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and level of academic attainment of teachers.

During March 2009, the Revised School Culture Elements Questionnaire (RSCEQ) was distributed to faculty in PreK-12 schools in southeastern Louisiana. The surveys were distributed as part of a class project for students enrolled in graduate courses in Educational Leadership. Each student was required to distribute the surveys to the faculty at her/his school. The students were required to obtain consent from their school to administer the surveys. Surveys were completed by over 600 teachers in approximately 30 schools. The data were analyzed by school and then aggregated to provide a norm by which to compare each school score. Tentative conclusions were drawn.

The findings of the study suggested implications and recommendations for principal behaviors that demonstrate shared leadership and vision, collegial teacher behaviors to support teaching and learning, and teacher commitment to developing themselves to better serve the needs of their students.

10:00 – 10:50 A.M.      COGNITION/ACHIEVEMENT ..... Governor Room

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**University of Southern Mississippi Teacher Leader Institute**

Ronald A. Styron, Margo Guillott, Gaylynn Parker, John Bishop,  
and Stacey Reeves, University of Southern Mississippi

The goals of this study were to: (1) investigate how utilizing embedded literacy strategies as measured by the Mississippi Curriculum Test during a 20-day summer institute setting functions regarding the improvement of students achievement (grades six through eight) in Language Arts, (2) investigate how engaging in coaching/supervisory skills with lead teachers and building-level administrators in facilitating language arts skills and comprehension through the use of the Understanding by Design conceptual framework as found online on the Mississippi Curriculum Framer impacts student performance in Language Arts, (3) explore how utilizing Mississippi Curriculum Framer online resources functions in the integration of literacy within different content topics and how subsequent supervision of these standards into daily instruction impacts student achievement, (4) examine how engaging in the praxis outlined by theories of Understanding by Design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) and Depth of Knowledge (Webb, 2002) strategies (as framed by second order change) function towards student achievement on state literacy tests, and (5) explore Walkabout supervisory/coaching techniques (Guillott, unpublished) based on the conceptual framework of Understanding by Design functions to facilitate the cognitive ability to transfer knowledge across content areas by middle school students.

These goals were accomplished through a comprehensive 20-session summer program, with two follow-up sessions, involving 20 participants from low achieving and high poverty schools from the area of south Mississippi. The researchers administered three separate questionnaires, including one prior to the Institute, one upon conclusion of the Institute, and one after the administration of the MCT. One-way ANOVAs, correlation, and multiple regression analyses were performed.

**Meandering Mind Mapping: Congenitally Blind Students' Conceptualizations of Matter**

Sinikka Smothers and M. Jenice Goldston, University of Alabama

A multiple case study was used to explore the following question: What conceptual understandings do four congenitally blind adolescents have concerning the nature of matter? More specific research questions focused on the following: (1) What formal physics constructs or theories do congenitally blind adolescents use in their explanations about changes in matter? and (2) How do the congenitally blind adolescents' explanations express conceptual consistency within a certain theoretical framework?

Methods included tactile investigations on the concepts and processes associated with changes in matter that included: dissolution, chemical change, expansion, and condensation. Individual interviews, model making sessions, journal writing, and focus-group interviews comprised the primary data. Responses were analyzed using three frameworks: structural views of matter, types of understanding of matter changes, and conceptual consistency of students' explanatory schemes of matter which identified macro- and microparticulate views and alternate understandings of matter.

Data analysis led to the development of Meandering Mind Maps, analytical tools that illustrate visually shifts in participant's thinking between theoretical views of matter. A Meandering Mind Map consists of a macroparticulate outer layer, microparticulate inner layer, and an interface layer that includes lynchpin concepts molecule, atom, and element. The lynchpin concepts are perceived to mediate and scaffold cognitive shifts between the macroparticulate, physically observable, and the microparticulate, abstract views of matter. Each participant's responses were coded to one of the three categories, plotted in clockwise sequence, and connected with a line on the meandering-design.

The findings of this study suggested that congenitally blind adolescents have theoretically inconsistent and emerging conceptual frameworks of the structure and the behavior of matter. These findings parallel results noted with sighted adolescents. Pedagogical and future research implications, including the design and use of tactile models to scaffold all students into understanding abstract concepts in physics and chemistry, were discussed.

**The Role of Counselor-Led College Preparation Activities in Increasing College Opportunity for Aspiring First-Generation College Students**

## Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Jacquelin T. Broussard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this study was to determine if college preparation programs and activities presented by school counselors increased student opportunity to attend a four-year institution. Students who do not have college educated parents often have many characteristics that put them at a disadvantage in gaining access to a four-year college. First-generation college students are more likely to enroll in community colleges and technical colleges and are less likely to enroll in four-year institutions. Increased opportunity for first-generation college students to gain access to college is dependent on the programs that are offered through the educational process. The guidance provided by the school counselor can have a profound impact on increased opportunity.

A questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale was completed by 222 aspiring first-generation college students who were planning to attend a four-year institution. Participants' perceptions regarding counseled college preparation activities and programs were examined. Measures of central tendency, variability, and frequencies were examined for each college preparation activity or program presented by school counselors.

Study results revealed that participants indicated that they were more likely to be exposed to activities about course selection to prepare for college and scholarship and financial aid to pay for college and less likely to be exposed to activities geared to help students choose a four-year college over other post-secondary options. Almost half of the participants also indicated that they were not exposed to career related activities. This was a surprising find because career and lifestyle development is a course required for school counseling certification.

This study has implications for the development of school counseling programs that address the needs of underrepresented groups such as first-generation college students. The results provided insight into the perceptions of aspiring first-generation college students regarding their increased opportunity to attend college.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M. EVALUATION .....Capitol Room**

### **Psychometric Validation of the Cross-Cultural Religiosity Scale**

Philseok Lee and Jaw K. Kim, Middle Tennessee State University

Since Allport and Ross (1967) introduced the Religiosity Orientation Scale, many researchers have examined the measurement of religiosity. Gorsuch and Venable (1983) proposed the Age-Universal Intrinsic/Extrinsic Scale (I/E Scale) to make ROS suitable for various age groups. Kirkpatrick (1989) argued that extrinsic religiosity was subdivided into two categories: Personal Extrinsic (Ep) and Social Extrinsic (Es) factors. In the same year, Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) revised the I/E Scale to make the Age-Universal Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religiosity Scale-Revised (I/E-R Scale) consisting of 14 items with a five-point Likert-response format through factor analysis. However, previous studies have one common problem that the scale was only analyzed by classical test theory (CTT), which has been proven to have many practical problems. In 2005, Kim and Kim developed a new religiosity scale, the Cross-Cultural Religiosity Scale (CCRS), consisting of 22 items based on item response theory (IRT). They found that CCRS was generally acceptable according to IRT as well as CTT.

This study examined CCRS from three angles. First, the validity and item test correlation of CCRS were computed in conjunction with I/E-R. Second, the study confirmed three distinctive factors of CCRS (I, Ep, and Es). Third, this study evaluated each item of CCRS with item discrimination index and item information in IRT. Data from 233 students were already collected. Data analysis was completed during the summer of 2009, and the results were compared and interpreted based on the three-factor theory. This study enhanced the understanding of human religiosity dimension through a new development of CCRS.

### **Legal Literacy for School Administrators and Teachers: Measurement in the Mid-South Area**

Vivica Smith Pierre, Eugene Kennedy, and Patrick Saidu, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**Wednesday, November 4, 2009**

Schimmel and Militello (2007) found that over 75% of the 1,317 teachers they surveyed had taken no course in school law and that over 50% of respondents were uninformed or misinformed about teacher and student rights. The findings from the Schimmel and Militello study suggested that most educators: (1) are uninformed or misinformed about student and teacher rights, (2) have taken no course in school law, (3) get much of their school law information from other teachers, (4) would change their behavior if they knew more about school law, and (5) want to learn more about these issues. In addition many teachers are utilizing technology to enhance student learning and are uninformed about educational technology and current legal issues.

The Schimmel and Militello survey, however, did not utilize a representative sample that allows us to make inferences about all teachers and their knowledge of school law, including educational technology and legal issues. Rather, Schimmel and Militello used purposeful sampling. Specifically, researchers contacted principals who were interested in administering the survey with their teachers and in examining the answers with their staff. The 1,317 respondents represented 17 states: Massachusetts ((n=690), Texas (n=174), Colorado (n=145), Michigan (n=75), California (n=52), and other states (n=181). In examining the survey data, Schimmel and Militello (2007) ran simple statistical analyses, correlations, and analyses of variance (ANOVA). This research has built upon the Schimmel and Militello survey and Pierre and Saidu added new areas (e.g., current awareness of cyber bullying, online crime and safety, security breaches, and legal compliance current issues and trends, if any). In addition, Pierre and Saidu focused more particularly on the Mid-South geographic area. Pierre and Saidu utilized mixed methods research methods and the interpretation of results.

**Launching Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Program Evaluation  
Through Rubric Development in Composition Courses**

Elizabeth Woodworth, Jennifer Good, Susan Barganier,  
and Kelly Birchfield, Auburn University at Montgomery

Developing effective writing assessments is difficult, and using those assessments to develop an overall writing program evaluation is even harder. The complexity of skills necessary to produce good writing, combined with its developmental nature, make it difficult to create an assessment system that measures all nuances of growth (Yancey and Huot, 1997). Typically authentic writing samples are preferred over standardized assessments when measuring writing outcomes, yet the need to standardize and report program results remains a challenge (Spandel and Stiggins, 1980).

This exploratory study chronicled early efforts of administrators in developing a writing rubric for use throughout a four-year WAC program. The Director of Composition created a general rubric to rate assignments for the two required composition courses in the WAC program. At the end of the term, eight different raters from across the university were gathered to complete a blind evaluation on a sample of student portfolios (N=17) from both composition classes, with identity and composition course coded. Two different raters read each full portfolio and, using a four-point scale, rated dimensions of a student's overall writing ability on a 34-item survey. Because of internal consistencies of .78 or higher, the items of the survey were collapsed into scales of macro-organization, micro-organization, word-level errors, referencing, and style. Mean ratings for these scales were compared at both composition levels, yielding no significant difference between the two groups. Nonetheless, important information per writing dimension, which will help flesh out full program evaluation details, was explored and discussed.

This initial evaluation has led to the further development of a writing rubric that will serve as the framework for the upper-level, writing-intensive courses. Discovering a valid and reliable method to provide flexibility for growth, while maintaining common overarching dimensions of writing for reporting purposes, can have an impact on future program evaluations.

**10:00 – 10:50 A.M. ENGLISH/READING .....Academy Room**

**Creating a Collaborative Classroom: An Experience of Learning  
English as a Foreign Language Through Dialogue**

Rong Li, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

## Wednesday, November 4, 2009

The author grounded this qualitative action research in the practice of teaching English as a foreign language in a university in China. In the research, the author examined students' lived experiences of collaborative English learning through dialogue in a comprehensive English class. The research suggested that engaging students in dialogue can be a powerful way of English teaching and learning. The author used Peters' (1998, 2002) DATA-DATA model of action research. They provided a rich description of what their teaching situation was like. They analyzed why their teaching situation existed as they described. The author offered a detailed plan on how and under what conditions the dialogical pedagogy worked out.

Data collection included students' interviews, students' weekly and final reflections on their learning experiences as a group, and the author's field notes. Nine out of 30 participants were randomly chosen for interviews. A thematic analysis technique advanced by Moustakas (1994) was implemented for data analysis. The process involved the researcher's reading of the entire transcript, grouping statements into "meaning units," reflecting on their structural descriptions of tentative themes, and constructing an overall thematic structure of the data. Findings were: (1) the need for both interaction and reflection in language learning, (2) students are motivated to learn when seen as making contributions to the group, (3) dialogue engages students in thinking and making meaning collaboratively, and (4) students practice various language skills as they are involved in dialogue.

Implications of the research suggested that building a collaborative classroom takes time and experience. Essential to collaborative learning in a foreign language classroom is the creation of a respecting and trusting dialogical environment.

### **Social Graces: Women's Education in the American South**

June S. Newman Graham, Louisiana State University

This paper explored the construction of southern womanhood and its relationship to the history of women's education in the American South. The author asked, How were women "schooled" during the late 19th to early and mid-20th century? Also, the author examined how women educated themselves. The story of educational history in the United States has many biases. It focuses on northeastern education to the detriment of the rest of the regions in the United States. Also, the concentration emphasizes formal schooling almost exclusively. Finally, for the most part, it has ignored females other than the token mention of women's names. In this paper the author sought to recover many of these areas collectively.

The author used a case study approach of one group of women in the South, the Natchez Garden Club, an elite social club in Mississippi, to explore the relationship between women's informal education, as well as their formal efforts to involve themselves in the school system in their local area. The researcher's results showed that the women of the Garden Club were involved in various literacy practices that helped them to educate themselves in an informal manner. They published a monthly periodical that covered a wide range of topics. As well, they had a vast mentoring program. Formerly, in the schools, the women of the Garden Club sponsored contests such as essay competitions. One of the ladies even wrote a text book on the history of Mississippi that was used for 30 years in the public schools.

The implication drawn from this study is that women in the South were often innovators in education. Their contributions have long been ignored. As an association focused on the southern region, the author was attempting to recover the history of southern education and considering the pioneering work that women have done for this region.

### **The Exploration of Preservice Teachers' Metacognitive Support for Science Literacy**

Dana G. Thames, Kathleen C. York, and Tania H. Hanna, University of Southern Mississippi

Many students find it difficult to read and understand science materials. Providing metacognitive support is one way for teachers to help students improve reading comprehension in science. This study sought to address a common problem in science instruction: most novice teachers lack confidence and experience in providing metacognitive instructional support that leads students to independent use of strategic behaviors to meet the reading demands of science texts. This qualitative

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study explored the following question: How do novice teachers plan and implement metacognitive communications during instruction with science texts? During the course of the research study, the following subset of questions naturally emerged: (1) What do novice teachers' semi-scripted, metacognitive instructional conversations about science reflect? (2) What do novice teachers' semi-scripted-metacognitive Think-alouds about science reflect? and (3) What problems and challenges do novice teachers face when they attempt, plan, and implement metacognitive support for science literacy?

Three data sources, each drawn from a random and purposeful chain sampling of 50 out of 150 comprehensive case studies, were analyzed. The researchers conducted preliminary analyses of novice teachers' metacognitive verbalizations in semi-scripted lessons, journal reflections, and conference field notes, and they identified significant statements, which were coded, analyzed, examined for redundancy, and collapsed into broad themes and patterns and reexamined analytically.

The findings were verified using multiple data sources, peer review, and reconceptualization. Key emergent themes identified included metacognitive support reflecting: (1) an initial reluctance on the part of the novice teachers to draw on personal funds of knowledge to think aloud about science texts, (2) less mechanistic strategy talk during metacognitive teacher-student communications after repeated practice with planning and implementing interactive instructional conversations with science texts, and (3) improved generative use of developmentally appropriate questioning during interactive instructional conversations. Implications for educators were identified.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M.      ON WRITING IN APA FORMAT: USING THE NEW SIXTH EDITION  
(Training)..... Paramount Room**

John R. Slate, Sam Houston State University

Faculty and students in education, educational research, and psychology, as well as many other disciplines, use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) as their guide for scientific writing. Manuscripts submitted for journal publication, as well as master's theses and doctoral dissertations, have to be written in compliance with APA's Publication Manual. For the past eight years, the Fifth Edition of the APA Publication Manual (2001) has been the standard. In July 2009 the long-awaited Sixth Edition was released. According to APA, this Sixth Edition contains substantial changes, particularly related to the digital world. Since the 2001 edition, many changes have occurred via the Internet and digital publication and storage of manuscripts. As such, the 2001 edition was not sufficiently directive to the use of digital resources. In particular, this 2009 edition will consolidate "information on all aspects of reference citations, with an expanded discussion of electronic sources emphasizing the role of the digital object identifier (DOI) as a reliable way to locate information" (APA website).

Other revisions and updates include, but are not limited, to: (1) new ethics guidance on such topics as determining authorship and terms of collaboration, duplicate publication, plagiarism and self-plagiarism, disguising of participants, validity of instrumentation, and making data available to others for verification; (2) new journal article reporting standards to help readers report empirical research with clarity and precision; (3) simplified APA heading style to make it more conducive to electronic publication; (4) updated guidelines for reducing bias in language to reflect current practices and preferences, including a new section on presenting historical language that is inappropriate by present standards; (5) new guidelines for reporting inferential statistics and a significantly revised table of statistical abbreviations; (6) new instruction on using supplemental files containing lengthy data sets and other media; (7) significantly expanded content on the electronic presentation of data to help readers understand the purpose of each kind of display and choose the best match for communicating the results of the investigation, with new examples for a variety of data displays, including electrophysiological and biological data; (8) consolidated information on all aspects of reference citations, with an expanded discussion of electronic sources emphasizing the role of the digital object identifier (DOI) as a reliable way to locate information; and (9) expanded discussion of the publication process, including the function and process of peer review; a discussion of ethical, legal, and policy requirements in publication; and guidelines on working with the publisher while the article is in press (verbatim from the APA website).

In this training session, an overview of the major changes delineated in the Sixth Edition of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual was provided. Specific objectives of the training session were: (1) to examine the major revisions in the Sixth Edition that involve changes in professional writing, (2) to contrast the changes in the Sixth Edition from current professional writing

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practices, and (3) to provide participants with an overview of the differences from the Fifth Edition.

Participants were requested to bring their Sixth Edition of the APA Publication Manual with them. Powerpoint slides were matched with pages of the Sixth Edition to point out areas of particular concern. Discussion was encouraged regarding the major changes that need to be incorporated into professional writing behaviors.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M. MATHEMATICS..... Louisiana Room**

**Teacher Quality as a Factor of Student Achievement: How Does the Type of Teacher Certification Correlate with Student Achievement in Mathematics?**

Dona I. Robinson, Southern University

This study investigated the extent to which student achievement in mathematics was correlated with the type of mathematics certification held by teachers. Demographic variables, such as socioeconomic status, teacher salary, overall school spending, urbanicity, and educational attainment, were also examined. Student mathematics achievement was defined as the mathematics score on the Louisiana Graduate Exit Exam for the 21st Century (GEE-21). The GEE-21 is a criterion-referenced test for all Louisiana public high school students to show sufficient knowledge and skills to be eligible for a standard high school diploma. The study employed an ex-post facto correlational design that utilized data from the 64 school districts in the state of Louisiana. The sample consisted of the 64 school districts in the state of Louisiana.

The district mean mathematics GEE score was used as the dependent variable, and the predictor variables were each district's percentage of each certification type of the mathematics teachers. A Pearson coefficient correlation was used to examine the linear relationship the district mean of student mathematics scores, teacher certification types, and the district demographic variables. A multiple linear regression model was used to illustrate the relationships of the independent measures of best fit. Beta weights and structure coefficient were examined to determine which predictors contributed most to a district's mathematics performance. Teacher certification types and socioeconomic status of school districts were statistically significantly associated with district mathematics performance (full,  $r = .283$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; temporary,  $r = -.257$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and socioeconomic status,  $r = -.645$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A statistically significant regression equation for predicting a district's mathematics performance on the GEE was developed.

Beta weights and structure coefficients of the linear regression model confirmed that socioeconomic status rather than teacher certification type had the greatest influence on student mathematics performance on the Louisiana Graduate Exit Exam.

**Primary Grade Teachers' Teacher Identities and Teaching Practices in the United States and Japanese Mathematics Classrooms**

Kyoko M. Johns, University of Alabama

Previous studies focused on teacher behavior and classroom mathematics practice, but there was limited information about teacher identities and classroom practice. Hence, the problem of this study was to examine teachers' identities, dispositions toward mathematics and teaching, and their effects on classroom teaching practices with sociocultural perspective

The case studies were embedded in Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory, and Gee's Discourse analysis theory. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective and Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory helped to explain how social and cultural aspects interacted with individuals' identities in a community. Lave and Wenger (1991) defined learning as "increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world" (p. 49). Gee's theory provided a tool to analyze language as it enacted with social practices and developed one's social identity (1999).

The qualitative case studies included two participants from the same elementary school in Japan and two participants from the same elementary school in the United States. These teachers provided the unit of analysis. Data collection methods included observations of mathematics lessons over

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four weeks, field notes, teacher interviews, and teacher surveys. All data were analyzed to find common themes among the four participants. Data were analyzed first to compare the two teachers from each country and then to compare all teachers from both countries

The data suggested that teacher identity and identity formation in sociocultural perspective were essential components in understanding mathematics teaching practice and the mathematics pedagogical content knowledge expressed in teachers' instruction. Teachers' background experiences and the communities in which they participated influenced how teachers taught mathematics. The creation of a learning community within a school to support teachers in developing positive and strong mathematics teacher identities and in providing mentors for new teachers could help address some of the issues were discussed.

**Single-Sex Education and Its Impact on Academic Achievement, Discipline Referral Frequency, and Attendance for First- and Second-Grade Public Education Students**

Katherine L. Bradley, Mercer University

According to various educational theorists and researchers, single-sex education is an effective instructional strategy for increasing student performance. However, little is known about the impact of single-sex public education in the United States. This study investigated differences between single-sex students and coeducation students on academic and non-academic outcome variables. It was the intent of this researcher to contribute to the empirical understanding of single-sex education within a public elementary educational environment, specifically, for first- and second-grade students. This quantitative research analyzed the impact of single-sex education on academic achievement (math and reading improvement), discipline referral, and attendance for public school first and second-grade students. Though there are over 30 outcome variables cited in the literature, these outcome variables were chosen for this investigation based on their direct and indirect impact on a school's ability to make AYP. An ANOVA was used to analyze the academic data, and chi square was used to analyze the non-academic data.

Analysis of the academic data with ANOVA indicated that female students in the single-sex environment showed statistically significant improvement in both reading ( $p = .01$ ) and in math ( $p = .04$ ). Attendance data were analyzed for significance differences between single-sex classes and coeducational classes. Statistically significant differences ( $p = .004$ ) for attendance were found between all single-sex students and all coeducational students. Differences in attendance were also statistical significance ( $p = .01$ ) between females in single-sex classes and coeducational classes. Only an empirical reporting of discipline referral data was included because of the low incidence of referrals.

The implications of these findings were that single-sex education may be an effective instructional strategy for facilitating math and reading improvement for female students. Also, based on the findings of this study, single-sex education may have a positive impact on attendance for males and females. Future research on single-sex education is necessary before a definitive conclusion can be reached regarding the academic or non-academic impact on student performance in public education. Researchers must seek to identify best practices for single-sex research and standardize research methodology so that the end result, high quality, research-based evidence, may be obtained.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M. ADMINISTRATION/HIGHER EDUCATION .....University Room**

**A Qualitative Study of Developing Visionary Leaders: Principals' Voices**

Janene W. Hemmen and John R. Slate, Sam Houston State University

In this study, the researchers interviewed 12 practicing principals who graduated from Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC)-recognized or ELCC-denied building level programs regarding their views toward developing visionary leaders. The focus was on their perceptions regarding the experiences needed to develop visionary leaders in principal preparation programs. What were the experiences of principals from ELCC-recognized and denied principal preparation programs regarding the development of visionary leaders?

A sample of 12 recently-graduated practicing principals was studied. The sample consisted

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of six participants from the three Texas public universities that received ELCC recognition for their principal preparation programs and six participants from the one Texas public university that was denied ELCC recognition for its principal preparation program. Interview questions concentrated on opportunities provided to develop visionary leaders during the coursework, as well as the internship of the principal preparation programs. Eight metathemes were evident in the interview data: (1) activities, (2) professors, (3) discussions, (4) involvement, (5) cooperating administrator, (6) on-the-job training, (7) guest speakers, and (8) coursework/internship. Each of the metathemes focused on methods of learning and the development of skills that visionary leaders possess. Each of the metathemes found in the interview data focused on active learning on the part of the aspiring principal.

Conclusions from this study may have implications for potential students of principal preparation programs in Texas. Aspiring principals know the challenges that face them upon graduation, and they must take the responsibility of ensuring that the principal preparation program they enter provided the support for them to develop the skills of a visionary leader who is prepared to lead schools through the change process on a regular basis. Recommendations for principal preparation programs as well as implications of the findings were discussed.

### **Using Survey Data to Inform Writing Across the Curriculum Program Development**

Kelly Birchfield, Elizabeth Woodworth, Jennifer Good, and Jeff Barksdale,  
Auburn University at Montgomery

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs strive to improve student writing skills in discipline-specific areas through embedding writing assignments - and increasing writing frequency - during content instruction. However, many content-area instructors have limited definitions of what constitutes writing assignments. As administrators begin to consider WAC program development and define criteria for upper-level writing-intensive courses, Sandler (2000) recommends involving faculty immediately and warns administrators against top-down mandated programs. In order to involve faculty in program development, however, conceptions and understanding of writing instruction must be explored, because many faculty consider "school writing as primarily research papers, essay exams, and laboratory reports" (Magnotto and Stout, 2000).

One hundred fifty-five instructors (38%) from all five schools across this university responded to a 26-item survey through online and paper survey distribution methods. In addition to collecting demographic information for comparison, the survey included items regarding nine types of writing assigned in upper and lower division courses and open-ended questions regarding students' writing strengths and weaknesses. Frequencies of responses to types of assignments were yielded and compared at the division level. Survey results revealed that writing that critiques information and writing that synthesizes information were most frequently assigned by instructors, regardless of course division. The frequency of assigning writing increased in upper-level classes, suggesting that faculty at this university already have a degree of comfort with embedding writing instruction into coursework.

Patterns from open-ended responses were discussed. This initial understanding of faculty views of writing has implications for program development. First, it dispels the myth that upper-level faculty rely on composition instructors from lower division courses as the primary providers of writing-intensive instruction. In addition, expectations of writing vary depending upon course division. For future exploration, upon redistribution, the survey data were disaggregated at the discipline-level to ascertain the specific content-area expectations of discipline-based faculty.

### **Using the Net Present Worth Method to Evaluate the Potential of Expanding the Academic Curriculum Offerings of a Liberal Arts College**

Daniel A. Doss, University of West Alabama; Vinson Thompson, Memphis City (TN) Schools;  
and Curt Fields, William H. Sumrall, and Don W. Jones, Belhaven College

This paper considered the case of a liberal arts institution of higher learning that is hoping to improve its market competitiveness through the addition of either a graduate certificate program in human resources or the addition of a full graduate degree in human resources. An examination of net present value calculations was the quantitative tool through which the two alternatives were examined with

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respect to estimated student enrollment data over a period of five years. The net present worth outcomes indicated that the full degree program is the preferred alternative. Therefore, it was recommended that the institution consider the implementation of the full degree program as a viable method of increasing its revenues and enhancing its competitiveness.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M. RESEARCH/STATISTICS ..... King Room**

### **Essential Books in the Field of Instructional Design and Technology**

Jenelle M. Ouimette, David A. Hall, and Dan Surry, University of South Alabama

This article described the results of a study to determine the books that instructional design and technology professionals believed were most important to the current field. Participants for this study included 77 professionals from all different areas of the field, including education, business, and government. The purpose of this study was to examine the current foundation of the field of instructional design and technology as well as to build a list of valued books for instructional design and technologists. A survey was conducted asking the participants to rank each book on a four-point scale according to the books importance to the field. The data were then analyzed and the results were presented.

Results showed the importance of a book ranges on differentiating factors such as area of interest in the field, degree level, and age. But overall, there are books that were found to be statistically significant in this field, encompassing most of the ideals the field is based upon. These books were on every instructional designer or technologist list of must reads.

### **Testing Measurement Equivalence Through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Item Response Theory (IRT)**

Jungkyu Park, SungKyunKwan University, Korea, and Jwa K. Kim, Middle Tennessee State University

In order to validate a test or questionnaire, one important part of item analysis is measurement equivalence across different populations or groups in each item level. If this process is unsatisfactory, the phenomenon is called Differential Item Functioning (DIF). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Item Response Theory (IRT) were utilized to investigate the Type I error rate and power of detecting both uniform DIF and non-uniform DIF items under various conditions. A total of 16 polytomous item responses were generated through Wingen (Han, 2004) in the IRT frame. Types of DIF items, sample size, and size of DIF were manipulated. In a CFA perspective, the dependant variables were continuous variables. Factor loadings and item intercept invariance were investigated to identify measurement equivalence by LISREL 8.8. When the dependant variables were ordinal variables (e.g. Likert-scale items), the invariance of threshold (location parameter) was investigated.

In an IRT frame, among several DIF tests, the likelihood ratio test (LR method) was utilized because it was the most closely related to CFA in terms of the baseline model and nested model. In the uniform DIF condition, CFA showed lower Type I error rate than IRT, especially when small sample size was small. However, in the non-uniform condition, IRT had lower Type I error rate than CFA. The invariance test of intercept had higher Type I error rate than the threshold tests. The power of both CFA and IRT were high and reached almost 1.

This study made a significant contribution to the field considering that only a few studies have tested the threshold invariance, although there were several studies concerning DIF-detection in the CFA and IRT frames.

### **Danger: Using Stepwise Variable Entry May Lead to Misinterpretation of Your Regression Results**

Melanie S. Clark, University of North Florida

Stepwise variable entry methods have been used with multiple regression and other related statistical procedures for some time. These methods use a variety of procedures for determining what order to enter variables from the predictor set into the regression equation. It has been as argued that the

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stepwise variable entry procedures frequently yield invalid and misleading information regarding the order of importance of the variables in a regression analysis.

Stepwise procedures seek to determine which predictor variable in the regression analysis serves as the best predictor of a given criterion variable. Determination is then made about the predictor making the second best contribution once the variance explained by the first predictor is removed from the analysis, the third best contributor once the variance explained by the first two predictors is removed, and so on. As an alternative to this “forward” stepwise procedure, the “backward elimination” method puts all the predictors into the model and then removes them one at a time based on the variable that makes the least unique contribution to the analysis at any step of the procedure. Frequently, researchers utilize stepwise routines that combine both of these procedures.

Stepwise methods are problematic for many reasons and have often been criticized by reflective methodologists. Stepwise methods use miscalculations of degrees of freedom, lead to increase Type I error rates, foster misunderstandings about order of variable importance, and yield atheoretical findings relative to variable relationships. Concrete data analytic examples were presented to illustrate several problems with stepwise methods and to present the case about why educational researchers should seriously consider abandoning stepwise procedures and consider other more reliable methods (e.g., regression structure coefficients) for determining variable importance.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M.      TEACHER EDUCATION.....Governor Room**

**Individual Contributory Factors in Teacher Job Satisfaction  
and Math Teachers’ Overall Job Satisfaction**

Shujie Liu, University of Southern Mississippi

There have been no consensus conclusions regarding the factor structure of teacher job satisfaction, as well as individual factor’s contribution, to teacher job satisfaction. The research questions for this study were as follows: (1) What factors influence teacher job satisfaction? To what extent does each factor contribute to overall satisfaction? and (2) What is math teachers’ job satisfaction in contrast to other teachers? Is gender related to overall satisfaction?

Data for this study were from the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. Specifically, 32 items were employed for this study with 31 items (Q10) asking teachers to what extent they were satisfied with the school where they were currently teaching and one item (Q11a) regarding a teacher’s overall job satisfaction. The sample used for this study included 3,639 current teachers, among which 291 were math teachers. In terms of gender, 2,669 female and 972 male teachers participated.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. A principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the 31 items, with multiple methods used to determine the number of factors underlying the data (e.g., eigenvalue-greater-than-one, scree plot, and parallel analysis). Seven factors were retained for the final solution. Multiple regression was conducted to identify the individual factor’s contribution to overall teacher job satisfaction, with the seven factors revealed from the EFA as the independent variables.

The preliminary results showed that the first three strongest predictors of the overall teacher job satisfaction were Administration and Professional Development, Student Characteristics and Parent Support, and Classroom Autonomy. Suggestions for policy makers were discussed regarding how to address teachers’ needs and improve their job satisfaction level.

**Perceptions of Alternative Certification Teachers Toward the Inclusion of Students  
with Exceptionalities in the General Education Classroom**

Philip L. Garner, Thillainatarajan Sivakumaran, and Dorothy Schween, University of Louisiana at Monroe

The study compared the attitudes of alternative certification students towards the inclusion of students with exceptionalities to find out: (1) What are the alternative certification teachers attitudes towards inclusion of special needs students? (2) Do alternative certification teachers feel prepared to make accommodations and modifications for students with exceptionalities? and (3) What are the

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perceptions of alternative certification teachers of the training and resources for the instruction of the inclusion of students with exceptionalities received in their program?

The Alternative Certification Program is a Master's in the Arts of Teaching Program at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. This program allows those who have been awarded a bachelor's degree from an accredited university that meet certain criteria to take courses for teacher certification and receive a master's-level degree. Eight students in the program were surveyed using demographic and questions pertaining to the research questions in a pre- and post-study of their attitudes towards inclusion prior to and after participating in a class teaching methods for teaching students with exceptionalities in the general education classroom.

The results of the survey were analyzed quantitatively by comparing the pre- and post-course results. Conclusions from the study were used to evaluate student confidence in the teaching of students in the inclusive classroom and compared with those of undergraduate students in a longitudinal study in order to improve preservice and alternative certification teacher education.

### **A Comparison of Basic Subject Areas Content Exams for Four Consecutive Semesters**

Ava F. Pugh and Jerri Washington, University of Louisiana at Monroe,  
and Fred Groves, Missouri State University

One of the new requirements of NCATE is that preservice candidates demonstrate knowledge in basic subject areas: science, social studies, reading/language arts, mathematics, health education, the arts, and physical education. For this action research only four subject areas (science, social studies, reading/language arts, mathematics) were used with a sample consisting of 80 preservice candidates enrolled in the Professional Block semester, the semester prior to student teaching. Candidates were administered a content exam totaling 100 questions at the conclusion of each semester.

The four areas of question, science, social studies, and reading/language arts contained 80 total questions and were used for comparing the mean scores for four consecutive semesters. Scheffe's comparison indicated a significant difference where the mean for mathematics was greater than the means in the other three areas. A one-way ANOVA analysis indicated no significant differences across four semesters between fall and spring semesters. A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant interaction between means for semesters and subject matter. For semesters alone, a significant difference was found for the Spring 2007 semester. Students did not perform as well in the other three semesters. A possible reason for the difference in scores could be that this particular semester contained candidates in the old elementary program where fewer classes in mathematics and reading were required.

**11:00 – 11:50 A.M.      READING .....Capitol Room**

### **The Reading First Program and Statewide-Mandated Assessment: A Longitudinal and Comparative Study**

Monica Wong-Ratcliff, Texas A and M University – Kingsville,  
and Sherlyn Powell, University of Louisiana at Monroe

Reading First (RF) is the largest and the foremost federal initiative in improving the reading achievement of struggling students in the United States. The program focuses on implementing proven methods of reading instruction in K-3 classrooms. This study investigated the impact of the Reading First (RF) Program on student performance as measured by statewide-mandated English Language Arts (ELA) assessment programs.

A matching procedure was used wherein three RF schools and three non-RF schools from two rural school districts in north Louisiana were matched. A longitudinal study was conducted to examine the ELA test scores of 882 third-grade students and 909 fourth-grade students in the Grade 3 integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program and Grade 4 Louisiana Educational Assessment Program between 2006 and 2008. Dependent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA procedures were conducted in analyzing the data.

The findings indicated that the RF students performed better than the non-RF students for these three years. The study provided evidence that the federal initiative of disseminating research-based

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reading instructional strategies into high-poverty, low-performing schools were successful.

### **People or Machines? Measured Reading Comprehension from Different Reader Types**

Timothy W. Conner II and Lola Aagaard, Morehead State University

Educators who teach reading to students with disabilities often struggle to find ways to assist students in improving their reading skills. One method for assisting these students is to provide a “reader” modification. The assumption is that, although students might not be able to independently read the text, they might be able to comprehend the reading selection if read to them. One popular type of “reader” modification is the use of a computerized text reading program. Research on the effectiveness of these programs, however, does not fully support their widespread use (MacArthur, Ferretti, Okolo, and Cavalier, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between reading comprehension and three different reading modification types (human reader, tape-recorded reader, and text reading program on a computer). The sample, selected from two school districts in Kentucky, consisted of 10 (mean age = 12.6 yrs.) students with disabilities who read on a third-grade level. Three reading passages and associated reading comprehension test questions were selected from the Level 3 Pearson’s Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (“GRADE”) test. Passages were randomly assigned to be read by a human, recorded by the same human voice to be played from a tape, or typed in a word processing program to be read by a text reader on a computer located at each school site. After each passage, four reading comprehension questions were orally read to students by the researchers. Nonparametric statistical analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in reading comprehension based on reader type.

Although it was not the focus of this study, there did appear to be differences in reading comprehension as related to student disability type (i.e., learning disability, other health impairment, and mild cognitive disability). Implications of findings and suggestions for further research were discussed.

### **A Professional Development Model for Urban Literacy**

Tracy Harris, Stephanie Davidson, and Nikisha G. Ware, Jackson State University

This paper described a professional development (PD) model for improving literacy in an urban school district experiencing low reading achievement. The model resulted from collaboration among Mississippi’s only urban university, the state educational agency, a private foundation, and a local school district that addresses urban literacy issues. The model was implemented by the Mississippi Learning Institute (MLI), a literacy collaborative that focuses on the needs of P-12 teachers and students, especially on early childhood education and reading as a part of literacy development. MLI aim to improve student achievement through sustained PD.

Research highlights the need for ongoing PD for inservice teachers in order to impact instructional practices and to ultimately improve student achievement. The cornerstone of the MLI Model is high-quality, ongoing PD, and its framework is two-fold: practice and performance, and policy and support. PD sessions are implemented throughout the academic year on Saturdays and during the summer through mini-institutes. Teachers collaborate and engage with literacy coaches and administrators in order to question and refine their instructional practices in ways that build on scientifically-based reading research and best practices in teaching. This focus on high quality PD constitutes the practice and performance arm of the model.

The second arm, policy and support, was implemented through services provided by the state agency, university entities, and a collaborative team of local school administrators and university research faculty. The MLI Model, the only nationally recognized public school-university partnership in Mississippi, has demonstrated promising results by improving student outcomes in an urban, predominantly African-American, local school district where 85% of its students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The presentation provided a detailed description of the model, outcomes experienced by the teachers, and a report of student achievement.

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**11:00 – 11:50 A.M. TECHNOLOGY .....Academy Room**

**Students' Perceptions on the Use of Social Networking in Learning**

Steve C. Yuen, University of Southern Mississippi

The study examined students' perceptions on the use of social networking in learning. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following: (1) How did students feel regarding the use of a social networking site in learning? (2) What were the effects of using a social networking site in a course on the sense of community among learners? and (3) Were there differences in the use of a social networking site and the sense of community among different learners (age and gender)?

The participants were 30 students enrolled in educational technology classes from two universities. Two social networking sites were designed for private use with a similar layout and identical features and components and were implemented in two courses. Each site allowed students to create their own profiles; upload photos, audio, podcasts, and videos; create and join discussion groups; and publish blogs and presentations. A questionnaire was developed to evaluate the use of social networking in teaching and learning and assess its effectiveness on the sense of community among learners.

The findings of the case study indicated that students had positive experiences using a social networking site in learning. They found that the class social networking site was user-friendly and gave them a sense of belonging. Participants in both courses felt that social networking is a great tool for class communications and can be used for professional development. They indicated that the class social networking site can encourage learner-center activities, provide collaborative learning opportunities, and promote knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the study revealed that using a social networking site in a class could build a sense of community among learners.

**Preservice and Inservice Training, Gender, and Years of Teaching Experience**

Rebecca R. Lutonsky and Margaret L. Rice, University of Alabama

The researcher in this study investigated how preservice college credit computer training, inservice training, gender, and years of teaching experience influenced teachers' computer skills as measured by the Basic Technology Competencies for Educators Inventory (BTCEI) and interviews. The study investigated what basic computer skills participants had, what skills participants thought teachers should have, and how inservice and preservice training and years of teaching experience helped teachers to learn computer skills. The study inquired about what teachers wanted to learn more about regarding basic computer skills and investigated how teachers currently use the technology that they have.

Participants were 402 teachers from 12 school systems in the central and western regions of a southeastern state. Nine of these respondents then participated in qualitative interviews. Three participants were randomly selected from each category of low, medium, or high scores on the BTCEI to participate in the interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using a three-way analysis of variance, and qualitative data techniques were used to code participants' interview responses into themes.

Results indicated that teachers who had preservice and inservice training had skills that teachers who did not have this training did not have. Results indicated that teachers wanted to learn more technologies through inservice training and that inservice training and technology access were most helpful in aiding participants in learning basic computer skills. In conclusion, professional development in the form of inservice training needs to be offered to teachers so that they can have at least 20 hours of training or more. Seven to nine preservice college credit hours are needed for teachers to indicate high computer competency skills.

**The Effects of Cross-Age Mentoring in an Online Collaborative Environment**

Gail L. Johnson, Louisiana State University

This mixed method research was designed to examine the effects of cross-age mentoring in an inter-institutional, online learning community. The research questions focused on the impact of mentoring on high school students' confidence in their information seeking skills, perceptions of their

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information seeking standards, and the application of these standards to an information seeking task. Also of interest was the dialogic interaction between the students at the two sites, the impact of the facilitator on the process, and the university students' perceptions about their experience.

The participants included 26 students (mentees) enrolled in an American history class at a rural high school and 18 preservice teachers (mentors) enrolled in an introductory educational technology course. Mentoring groups comprised of four to five high school students and three to four preservice teachers interacted twice weekly for five weeks via a synchronous online courseware system. The Information Commitment Survey and Confidence Survey were administered pre- and posttest to evaluate students' performance on information seeking tasks. The qualitative data consisted of mentoring themes, challenges, and benefits of online mentoring.

The results of multiple paired t-tests revealed that there was no change in the high school students' confidence in their information seeking abilities. A simple linear regression analysis of the six evaluative standards revealed that students placed greater emphasis on evaluating the accuracy of information. A positive correlation was found between evaluating the accuracy of information and the use of an advanced search strategy. Performance on the information seeking task was positively influenced by conceptual scaffolding provided by the facilitator (question prompts) and preservice teachers (feedback). Conceptual feedback was found have to be most effective in an online environment.

The findings from this research contributed to the literature on cross-age mentoring between higher education and K-12 students and provided insights about high students' abilities to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information.

**2:00 – 2:50 P.M.                    INSTRUCTION..... Paramount Room**

**Individual Differences In Distance Education Learning Environments:  
Should Instructional Designers Take Individual Differences into  
Account in Distance Education Learning Environments?**

Jenelle M. Ouimette, University of South Alabama

Individual differences and the role they play in learning have long been up for debate in the education community. For the most part, educators seem to have accepted that individual differences do play a role in traditional classroom learning at least on some level. In the age of designing virtual classrooms and completely online societies, once again the question is raised: Should individual differences be taken into account in distance education learning environments? This question is particularly important for instructional designers to consider because of the large role they play in the designing, developing, and implementing of distance education learning environments. It is important for instructional designers to determine the role that individual differences play in distance learning environments because the answer could affect not only the design of the online instruction but also the implementation and appropriate use of the instruction.

This issue has two basic sides: to take individual differences into account or not to take individual differences into account. Some instructional designers do not believe individual differences make a significant difference in how people learn in a distance learning environment. They feel, and some evidence supports them, that, if instruction is designed well, anyone was able to understand it and learn from it. Other instructional designers believe that part of designing well-made instruction includes taking individual differences into account, no matter the learning environment. Evidence and research continues to add fuel to the fire, not providing any hard evidence that clearly points to one side over the other. Instead, the evidential outcomes are mixed and the debate rages on. Now one is faced with this remaining question. This paper looked at both sides of this controversial issue and took a position: to consider or not consider individual differences in distance learning environments.

**Dissimilar Learning Styles, Academic Stress, and Student Coping Behaviors:  
What Higher Education Faculty Ought to Know**

Chevanese L. Samms, Louisiana State University

Given the diversity of stressful situations that students come across in the academic setting,

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this paper examined coping behavior as a response to stressful encounters generated by dissimilar learning styles between faculty and students (Sternberg, 1994; Kirton, 2003; Friedel, 2006). The literature supports that this dissimilar learning style may lead to student stress (McCrae, 1984; Folkman and Lazarus, 1985; Carver and Scheier, 1994), and motivation is required of the student to maintain coping behavior to learn from the instructor (Struthers, Perry and Menec, 2000; Kirton, 2003).

Interest in the relationship between dissimilar learning styles, academic stress, and student coping behaviors warrants the attention, especially, of the faculty citizens of the academic community. These current themes may have strong implications for enhancing their teaching and learning experiences, including instructional design, instructional techniques, and assessment. Instructors who demonstrated an understanding of Kirton's A-I theory and measure of learning style may be more willing to accommodate the dissimilarities in learning styles between themselves and their students, which may reduce student stress. Students may then become more motivated to learn and remain in classes, resulting in a reduction in dropped courses, academic withdrawals, incomplete courses, and improved academic performance (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 1997; Struthers, Perry and Menec, 2000; Kiguwa and Silva 2007).

Furthermore, this position paper, apart from making professors and students and other interests aware of their adaptive or innovative problem solving preferences, could offer insight to faculty, so much so that they may better assist students with strategies that would help them cope more effectively with the courses they teach. Students could benefit from an understanding of their own learning style, as well as that of their classmates and instructors, which may help them to navigate the course content with less anxiety and adverse consequences (Pritchard, 2003; Sittler, 2009).

### **The Importance of Learning Science by Formal Settings**

John Bosco O. Namwamba, Southern University and A&M College

Formal learning can be defined as planned learning involving activities within a structured learning setting. In this type of learning, the learner has to enroll in a program of study, attend classes, and follow a curriculum for the programs enrolled in. Such a program offers the learner limited flexibility. It also has spelled out expectations and time limit. At the completion of formal learning, the learner is evaluated through criteria specified by curricula. Informal learning on the other hand does not require the learner to be enrolled in a program. It involves learning acquired through daily life activities, often in an experiential manner. This may likely be as a result of opportunities providing situations for learning purely by chance. Informal science environments and experiences can trigger and maintain long-term interests in learning science, resulting in the learner attaining sophisticated levels.

The process of producing a scientist or engineer involves learning science from the basic principles to advanced levels. Most people may find it difficult to understand some of the theories and principles built as some sections of science develop from one stage to another. It then becomes very necessary to have an instructor and a structured setting. The author strongly supports the former (formal learning setting) type of learning because the learner has no choice but to learn what is offered and meet specific set objectives. The objective of this position paper was to convince the reader why the author believes that a formal setting for science learning is very important in the present world.

**2:00 – 2:50 P.M.                      PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ..... Louisiana Room**

### **One Size Does Not Fit All**

Sumita Bhattacharyya, Nicholls State University

There is a call for the improvement of instruction to address students' diversified needs. During the last three decades the configuration of our school population has become more and more pluralistic. Not all students are alike. Consequently, we are moving away from the concept One Size Fits All.

Based on this knowledge, differentiated instruction is getting more attention in the classroom wherein students have multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas. Different instructions for different students do not mean that teachers make it easy for students. When teachers

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know students' strengths and weaknesses, it becomes easier to customize their instruction. When the instruction best fits students' needs they find learning most compelling. The instructional concepts were broad based and not focused on minute details or unlimited facts. Teachers must focus on the concepts, principles, and skills that students should learn. The content of instruction should address the same concepts with all students but be adjusted by the degree of complexity for the diversity of learners in the classroom.

This session offered an opportunity to experience a clip of a courtroom trial created entirely by undergraduate method course students in a teacher education department. This show was specifically designed to accommodate different students' learning styles in a classroom.

### **Implementation Strategy of B.Ed. Teaching Practice in Real School Classrooms: Issues and Challenges**

Mhammad Y. Sharjeel, Iqra University

Teaching practice is the core component of all preservice teacher education programs. Through teaching practice, a novice teacher is assumed to have inculcated a supposedly viable pedagogic experience to transfer the core competency of the subject knowledge to students in a real classroom situation.

This study encompassed the challenges and issues that the novice teachers experience at the post-training level of their B.Ed. program of studies. The investigations also enlightened the gaps that the trained teachers have shared with the researchers. The study highlighted the extent to which the on-training components of teaching practice was reflected in the attitude of the trained teachers while implementing the set of learned skills in real classrooms. Study participants comprised randomly selected n = 120 student-teachers who had obtained their bachelors' degree in education in 2008.

SPSS v16 independent sample t-test was used to measure the difference in the mean perception scores of the two groups of teachers. The tested hypotheses indicated that the mean scores of the two groups of sampled teachers were not significantly different. Student-teachers' interviews revealed that teaching practice in the B.Ed. program was ineffective from the implementation perspectives. Teaching methods and techniques employed during the coursework were only lecture-based and did not help novice teachers implement innovative classroom teaching techniques. Experiences of the two trained groups of teachers showed no significant difference on the basis of B.Ed. teaching practice objectives and its implementation in professional teaching contexts.

### **Infusing Environmental Themes into Existing Inservice Teacher Education Program in Science**

Shahid Hussain Mughal, Government Elementary College of Education (Men),  
and Najmunnisa Khan, OMYS Academy Gulzare Hijri

Environmental education has become an important and growing area of educational research. An environmental perspective allows students to understand the importance of science for the society and the environment, to develop a sense of inquiry, and to think creatively about the solutions to environmental problems. Teachers have a vital role in ensuring that environmental education is implemented effectively. One of the purposes of this research study was to explore the opportunities for environmental infusion in the existing science teacher education program and to understand the perceptions of a science teacher educator, of how she experienced the possibilities and challenges of environmental infusion in her teaching of science topics.

The research was designed in a qualitative paradigm. Within this paradigm, action research was employed. The primary sources of data were interviews and classroom observations, together with secondary sources such as document analysis and unstructured conversations. Major findings from the study revealed that the science curriculum of inservice teachers' training program contained a fair amount of environmental content in it. This included information about the relationship between living and non-living things (Simple Food Chains); factors determining weather, rate of evaporation; exploring ways in which living things adapt themselves to their natural environment (migration, hibernation, camouflage); erosion; and forms of energy as a sources of electricity. These concepts are loaded with the basic information rather than the skills needed by the learners to enable them to have a positive approach

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towards the environment, for the purpose of resolving, or helping to resolve, environmental issues.

The study further indicated that infusing environmental content in science was very challenging because environmental issues are complex. Building a sufficient knowledge base of science teacher educators is very essential while discussing and handling environmental issues. In the light of the findings, the study recommended the infusion of environmental concepts in all subjects of teacher education. The study also recommended the training of teacher educators in environmental education on a massive scale. Science-based environmental education is required at every level of education to take informed, effective, and on-the-spot decisions. The study recommended the incorporation of skills in science textbooks that would help learners to take initiatives about the solution of environmental problems.

**2:00 – 2:50 P.M.                    SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT .....University Room**

**Perceived Social Support Among University Graduate Students**

Heather L. Moore, East Tennessee State University

The desire to understand a person's need for affiliation dates back to at least the early 20th century. According to the third level of Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation, humans have an innate and fundamental need for supportive relationships (Maslow, 1943). Furthermore, a person's primary motivation will continue to be the search for love and belonging until an innate and personal level of emotional satisfaction is acquired. Understanding a graduate college student's perceived level of social support is thought to be a key component for predicting success at the college level. In this study, the author examined perceived social support among college graduate students based on four key dimensions: (1) family, (2) friends, (3) work, and (4) school.

The author analyzed the perceived level of resilience by graduate students and compared students' levels of resilience with their perceived social support scores. Using multiple regression analysis, the author also assessed the ability to predict resiliency using the four dimensions of social support as predictor variables. Previous research indicated a need for a study to expand the understanding of graduate students' perceived level of social support from various support networks (i.e., family, friends, work, and school). Because graduate students are facing increasing challenges, universities may find that making a conscious effort to understand social support networks could positively impact their graduate-level retention and success rates.

For this study, the author surveyed over 2,000 graduate students (master's, Ed.S., Ed.D, and Ph.D.) at a regional four-year university. The survey consisted of three sections: (1) social support, (2) resilience, and (3) demographics and was administered electronically over a three-week period. It was hypothesized that students with higher levels of perceived social support would also have high levels of resilience.

**Higher Education In a Stringent Economy**

Donna O. LaCaze and John Fulwiler Mihir, Southeastern Louisiana University

Education and economy are two key components that are independent (considering scope and functionality) but are interdependent (considering the community as a whole on a continuum of life) on each other for a sustained and healthy society. They complement each other and significantly impact growth and influence potential outcomes of the society. As they are interdependent, their association raises concerns about specific issues that may or may not have significant impact, however, may influence the operational definitions thus impacting outcomes. Recent financial fluctuations have impacted educational institutions.

The current situation should open doors to: research and the discussion of economic means to educate students, preparatory programs to address and prepare learners to sustain in a globally changing economy, and maintaining quality with compromised resources. The extent to which economy should influence academic preparation, educational outcomes, and institutional orientations to sufficiently prepare learners for a globally changing economy should be understood. Participants in this study were student teachers, chosen randomly from Southeastern Louisiana University. A survey tested for identified

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factors, reliability, and validity was sent to the students to reflect their perspectives of education, and educational initiatives in reference to the current economy.

While the literature review elaborates on what higher educational institutions across United States have done during the economically depressed years, the study outcomes shed light on how learners in the geographic region of Southeast Louisiana perceived current economy and their academic preparedness. The study may leverage viable solutions to teachers, administrators, and legislative personnel – to direct new educational initiatives in stringent economic situations specific to Southeast Louisiana.

### **A Probit Model with National Data: Post-Secondary Outcomes for Emerging Adults**

Lauren A. Menard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

It takes longer for emerging adults to complete school these days (Arnett, 2004). Ruben and Komanie (2007) link the lack of a college degree to unemployment and poverty. Furstenberg, Kennedy, McCloyd, and Rumbaut (2003) note that a decent standard of living now often requires a college degree. An array of conditions is frequently associated with differences in educational attainment (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison, 2006; Roemer, 2002; Rothe and Berger, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008).

This study answered the following research problem: What predictors are associated with obtaining a bachelor or masters' degree for emerging adults between the ages of 25 and 30? Variables from the 1972-2008 General Social Survey data file were analyzed using the probit regression function of the Survey Documentation and Analysis program. The dependent variable, highest degree earned, was recoded as a dichotomous variable, with one category including those who obtained a bachelor or doctorate degree and a second category for all other responses. The model included several predictor independent variables.

Results for the probit model found a Pseudo R-sq = .489,  $p < .001$  ( $n = 1,056$ ). General educational development was the strongest predictor, and vocational preparation was a reliable predictor. Constructivist ideologies link "learning with experience and context" to increased motivation and meaning (Huffman and Hipp, 2003, p.xvi). Age wed was the second strongest predictor, even more significant than parent's educational level. Postponing marriage until school is completed and financial security is achieved is an example of how societal complexities and conflicting adulthood pathways contribute to delays in achieving classic milestones of adulthood, such as finishing school (Lloyd, 2005; Furstenberg, Rumbaut and Setterson, 2004; Shanahan, 2000). Year of survey, comprehension skills, industry of employment, health, father's education, mother's education, and number of children were other reliable predictors. Findings have implications for the support of post-secondary educational and vocational preparation initiatives.

### **2:00 – 2:50 P.M. HOW TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE AND INTERACTIVE LEGAL TRAINING FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS: ADMINISTRATORS AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF (Training) ..... King Room**

Jennifer M. Miles and John W. Murry, University of Arkansas

Most senior student affairs officers recognize the need for staff training regarding legal issues. Legal issues may affect any number of situations and cut across functional areas. Because of the ever-changing legal landscape and the amount of contact among student affairs staff members and students, faculty, parents, governing agencies, accrediting bodies, potential employers, and the greater public, staff members must be familiar with legal issues. These issues directly impact how they perform their jobs as well as how they interact with various constituencies. In this one-hour training session, the facilitators shared key legal issues that all student affairs administrators face.

The session centered on several key areas which impact all student affairs administrators and staff regardless of their area of expertise. Participants received an understanding of why legal training is necessary and how effective training can be conducted. They were introduced to several sample training modules with practical case scenarios and other learning activities.

The objectives of this session were to introduce participants to the importance of legal training and demonstrate three key areas where legal training is essential for student affairs professionals

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in today's higher education environment. Included in the training session were the following: (1) the need for regular legal training, Training Module 1: Student privacy rights, (2) FERPA b c, FOI Laws, (3) Training Module 2: Campus safety and security a, Clery Act b, Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act c: Negligence, and (4) Training Module 3: Avoiding Discrimination a, Sexual discrimination, Students with disabilities. This session included group discussion and interactive activities using case studies, quizzes, and practical examples. The participants were actively involved in the learning process.

**2:00 – 2:50 P.M.                    TECHNOLOGY (Displays).....Governor Room**

### **The NSF Tri-Regional Information Technology (Tri-IT) Research Project**

LaDonna K. Morris, Florida Community College at Jacksonville

The Tri-Regional Information Technology (Tri-IT) research project is a \$1.5 million grant funded by the National Science Foundation. It is a partnership involving two community colleges and one HBCU. One hundred eighty ninth-grade girls in six high schools in North Florida were engaged in after-school technology experiences with 12 teachers for three years (10/1/2008 – 9/30/2011) and compared to a control group of 180 girls who were not in the program with regard to their behaviors, motivations, dispositions, and perspectives about technology. The target population included girls in high schools with high minority representation and low socioeconomic status.

This display session focused on a description of the project and lessons learned during the implementation stage. The significance of the project was that few girls and even fewer girls of color were interested in information technology, which is a potentially lucrative career that is in high demand. Girls also tend to lack confidence in their abilities.

The purpose of this study was to increase girls' interest, skills, and confidence in technology. Students in the treatment group received 280 hours of instruction, including three 40-hour summer camps (global information systems/global positioning systems, video mobile devices, and IT web applications) and 40 hours of instruction each fall and spring semester. Qualitative data were collected via interviews, focus groups, and class observations. Quantitative data were collected via pre- and posttests for each curriculum module as well as these instruments: Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Computer Attitudes Questionnaire, and the TechLiteracy Assessment.

### **A Template for Teaching the Chi Square Technique**

Robert L. Kennedy, University of Arkansas for Medicine

A template is a pattern that might be used for building mosaics, for sewing a quilt, for constructing a dog house, or for guiding the gathering of information for a report. Over the past couple of decades of teaching, this teacher has found that the use of templates for instructional purposes has been advantageous for communicating relatively complex topics efficiently and clearly. Any number of ways of teaching the chi square test might be tried. Examples that have been derived from the literature include graphic display calculators, videotapes, interactive scattergrams, animation, web pages, and simulations. All are reasonably effective tools for teaching the chi square test and other statistical techniques.

However, another tool for teaching that is widely marketed is the template. Templates are distributed and/or sold for worksheets, calendars, organizers, surveys, gradebooks, rubrics, and online tests, as well as for other purposes. They save time, not only for the less-experienced (or even experienced) teacher using them, but can also benefit students by allowing a more efficient approach to learning. They may be available as open source documents, freeware, trialware, demoware, commercial software; immediately downloadable from a website or available on CD through snail mail, and in common word processing or PDF formats.

In particular, the template presented in this session was directed toward the chi square technique. The primary components included an abstract of the scenario to be investigated, the reference or citation for the source of the scenario, number of cases, variables, data, rationale for the statistical technique chosen, null hypothesis, assumptions to be tested, steps in testing the assumptions, reading

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and interpretation of the findings, and a conclusion relative to the hypothesis. Because of the data files, the materials were available on computer media.

**Students' Perception of Light Wave Phenomena Through Inquiry Learning in an Informal Environment**

Ken R. Ford, Southern University

This pilot study involved: (1) identifying students' perception of light phenomena and (2) determining if students learned scientific concepts of light presented to them through their interaction with an exhibit called the Light Island in an informal setting. This study involved a sample of 20 subjects in a college program at a university located in the southern region of the United States.

The participants in this study consisted of a sample of high school students obtained through the process of convenience sampling. Using the Light Island exhibit, the participants were involved in the activities of reflecting a source of white light off of the surface of concave and convex mirrors, refracting white light through converging and diverging lens, and passing white light through a prism, thereby making observations of what happens in the process. After making these observations, the participants were given a pretest, and over a time period of a week they were given a posttest by the researcher. Scores from these tests were collected and input into SPSS using a mixed method analysis.

Results from the analyses confirmed that the high school students involved in the study were successful in gaining knowledge through their perception of light phenomena and grasping the science concepts by interacting with the Light Island exhibit using scientific inquiry in an informal science environment.

**Dissertation from a Distance: Using Online Instruction for Guiding the Dissertation Process**

Kyna Shelley and Peggy Jasperson, University of Southern Mississippi

The large percentage of doctoral students who complete coursework, yet never finish the dissertation, is reported by many to be approximately 50%. Researchers have concluded that factors such as previous graduate level research experiences – the coursework, the practical application, and the advisor/advisee relationship – directly impact student reactions to the dissertation writing process and the likelihood of completion. Guides to writing the dissertation abound, each with a unique approach to making this sometimes overwhelming task more manageable for students. Likewise, some university programs offer courses to assist with the dissertation process.

Over the past decade, extensive research on the effectiveness of online courses versus traditional face-to-face methods has been conducted and shows mixed results in the overall success of students. Related to providing graduate students with online access to specific components involved in the dissertation process, several resources are available, including, for example, webinars to teach writing skills, online templates for guidance, and online "web-based" scavenger hunt-type programs.

The research focused on online learning, however, has not examined the effectiveness of using an online course for teaching the dissertation process. This project examined the attitude changes and reported learning that occurred when using an online instructional tool, BlackBoard, as the primary teaching device for a three-hour dissertation process course. Pre- and post-course surveys were conducted. Additionally, student writing was evaluated by comparing successive draft documents submitted by students. Finally, student satisfaction with this method of course delivery was assessed.

**EXACT: A Computer Program for Performing a Variety of Exact and Resampling Tests**

David T. Morse, Mississippi State University

Traditional, parametric statistical tests require strong assumptions in order for the calculated p-values to indicate accurately the likelihood of the results under the (assumed) null hypothesis sampling distribution. Even nonparametric tests, such as the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test, require strong assumptions (e.g., homogeneous variances) though textbooks often fail to mention this. Exact tests have

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been around for over 70 years and do not require such strong assumptions. However, they have been relatively slow to come into widespread use because: (1) they are computationally more intensive than standard tests, (2) common statistical packages typically do not include exact test choices, except as an extra-cost option, and (3) when exact tests are available, it is often for a limited repertoire of tests.

EXACT is a Windows-based program, developed by the author and available without charge, that can perform a wide range of comparisons including means, variances, ranges, mean absolute deviations, medians, and two variations of distributional overlap, the proportion dominance and A-statistics. Correlations may be tested as well. As a teaching tool, EXACT can be helpful for presenting the concepts of exact and resampling tests in statistics or research methods classes. For a given data set, the program reports the number of data combinations or permutations (for correlation) to be processed; if the number is excessive, the user may specify a chosen number of resampling trials to run instead. Directional and nondirectional results and probabilities under the null hypothesis are provided, based on the observed distribution of outcomes instead of a theoretical and potentially inappropriate sampling distribution. With EXACT, researchers no longer need pray for robustness against violations of assumptions or rely on large-sample or asymptotic approximations of statistical significance. Examples of program use were provided, and copies of the program were available.

**2:00 – 2:50 P.M.                    READING ..... Academy Room**

**Fuzzy Cognitive Maps Theory: Epistemological Implications**

Gerald J. Calais, McNeese State University

Cognitive maps (CMs) are directed graphs that simulate interrelationships or causalities among concepts, formally model political and social systems' decision-making processes. However, when the concepts and paths reflect a lack of a positive or negative total effect, indeterminacy dominates because CMs cannot accommodate knowledge-based building since causality itself tends to be fuzzy. Fortunately, fuzzy cognitive maps (FCMs) were introduced to augment a CM's power by overcoming this intrinsic weakness.

Information gleaned from articles and empirical studies was selected from theoreticians and researchers, including, but not limited to, the following: Gopal Achari, Guillermode Aspuru, Robert Axelrod, David Brubaker, Sumita Fons, Voula Georgopoulos, Peter Groumos, Bart Kosko, Chrysostomos Stylios, and Timothy Ross. FCMs, typically dependent upon experts' input, associate fuzzy values with each of its concepts and employ fuzzy degrees as the metric for designating the interrelationships between concepts. Moreover, they are significantly more flexible, valuable, and efficient than CMs because they can model cyclically dynamic systems, thrive on feedback, and connect various FCMs to propagate knowledge bases. Basically, it is a FCM's memory capabilities that enable it to demonstrate how a change in one concept's value affects the entire FCM by keeping track of the concept's old and new values following each of the FCM's new cycling, runtime, or simulation. A typical simulation of a FCM entails experts' input, initialization and simulation of the system's behavior, the free interaction of the concepts, and reaching, or failing to reach, equilibrium.

Although applied extensively in the physical and social sciences, FCMs could be integrated in intra/interdisciplinary content area classroom reading assignments: art, literature, mathematics, music, social sciences, and science. Having students articulate their rationale for selecting specific concepts, determining their causal relationships, and assigning weights to the concepts simultaneously enhances their understanding and retention of the material and their problem-solving skills.

**Using Interactive Video Conferencing for Professional Development  
in Reading: A Review of the Literature**

Andrea M. Kent, University of South Alabama

The emphasis on reading instruction has become an enormously high priority as evidenced by the revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2000. As a result, literacy coaches have become prevalent in elementary schools, and reading intervention teachers are often present in middle and high schools. Rapid expansion of new positions often leaves the professional development of

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the people acquiring these positions lacking. Interactive video conferencing (IVC) may be one tool to provide excellent professional development in which literacy coaches can interact with an experienced coach through purposeful observation and guided reflections, along with the opportunity to discuss the observation with the literacy coach, under the guidance of a facilitator.

Articles were selected based on: (1) respected journals in the field representing varying types of research including empirical and non-empirical studies and action research, (2) content pertaining to current use of IVC in general, and (3) current implementation and effectiveness of IVC with inservice teachers for the purpose of professional development.

Though the literature review, it has been found that video conferencing is currently being used in many professional development settings. For example, the technology is being used for various interactions between universities and preservice teachers, distant learning opportunities, webinars, and guest lecturer-type conferences. However, little use of IVC to provide true interaction of participants with the "expert" is being used as a means for professional development of inservice teachers.

Literacy coaches and specialized reading teachers have an enormous responsibility. Raising test scores and decreasing the number of struggling readers are among the top priorities for most schools across the nation. As literacy coaches and reading teachers lead their schools in facing this challenge, it is important that institutions of higher education, state departments of education, and school districts equip the coaches so that they are prepared to successfully meet the demands of this position. Using IVC may be one way to effectively provide the needed professional development.

**African-American Adolescent Readers' Strategy Awareness and Comprehension Performance with Narrative and Science Texts**

Kathleen C. York and Dana G. Thames, University of Southern Mississippi

Even though strategic reading is widely accepted as one way to improve middle-school students' comprehension of different texts and reading achievement scores, many adolescent readers do not learn how to be in metacognitive control. Further, African-American readers are underrepresented in the reading research focused on metacognitive strategic reading, especially at the middle and secondary levels. This mixed method study explored the relationship between metacomprehension strategy awareness and reading comprehension performance with narrative and science texts.

One hundred thirty-two African-American middle school students were asked to identify helpful strategic behaviors from six clustered subcategories (predicting and verifying, previewing, purpose setting, self-questioning, drawing from background knowledge, and summarizing and applying fix-up strategies). Participants also read and answered comprehension questions about narrative and science passages.

Quantitative findings revealed statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) differences in two of the six subcategories, indicating that students preview and set purpose more often with science than narrative texts. Findings also indicated that overall narrative and science metacomprehension awareness and comprehension performance scores were statistically significantly ( $p < .01$ ) related. Qualitative findings, based on analyses of video-taped interviews and think aloud, revealed that better readers engaged in metacognitive verbalizations infused with goal, self, and narrative talk, whereas struggling readers engaged in dissonant verbalizations infused with disclaimers, overgeneralized, decontextualized, and literalized responses.

**3:00 – 3:50 P.M.                    AT RISK/MINORITY/GENDER ..... Paramount Room**

**Examining the Legal Framework and the Practical Implications of Affirmative Action in American Higher Education**

Celeste A. Wheat, University of Southern Mississippi

Since its inception in the 1960s and 1970s, affirmative action has played a crucial role in contributing to greater diversity within the walls of academe. Over time, affirmative action "has signified a variety of strategies designed to enhance employment, educational, or business opportunities for groups, such as racial or ethnic minorities and women, who have suffered discrimination" (T. H. Anderson, p. 3,

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2004). Unequivocally, affirmative action policies have created inroads for women and minorities in higher education, both in college admissions and employment contexts.

In examining the role of affirmative action in achieving greater diversity and equity in American higher education, the goal of this study was twofold. First, the researcher conducted an in-depth examination of the concept, history, and legal framework of affirmative action policy through the lens of affirmative action jurisprudence in American higher education. Specifically, this research involved a review of the literature concerning the major Supreme Court cases that have set the legal framework for affirmative action policy in college admissions including: (1) Board of Regents of University of California v. Bakke (1978), (2) Gratz v. Bollinger (2003), and (3) Grutter v. Bollinger (2003). Second, the researcher examined the practical implications for informing affirmative action policy in college admissions and employment contexts.

The results of this research indicated: (1) while race conscious policies are allowed, they are not required, (2) admissions policies and practices must be able to pass the highest level of legal testing and strict scrutiny, and (3) definitions of diversity were more broadly defined to include economic status, as well as race/ethnicity or gender. Additionally, this research revealed a number of strategies for achieving diversity through race and gender neutral policies. Finally, this study pointed to the future direction of affirmative action, which is increasingly shifting from the legal arena to the political arena.

### **Powerful Language in Online Threaded Discussions**

Crystal A. Thomas, University of South Alabama

This paper critically examined communicator perceptions of powerful language in university course online discussion threads. While online learning is often liked by students (e.g., in terms of virtual access to course content), online discussion threads present a unique set of challenges for anyone desirous of appearing competent to her or his peers or instructor. Whereas a student can make immediate adjustments to content or delivery when transmitting a message in a face-to-face setting, research has indicated that receivers characteristically make the same global judgments of communicator competence despite a decreased number of nonverbal cues present in a discussion thread posting. Consequently, language plays an increasingly important role in online discussions in that classmates interpret one's competence, gender, and power based on word use and sentence construction.

Drawing on interdisciplinary peer-reviewed instructional research, this literature review extended Barrett and Lally's (1999) work by clarifying how students interpret competence and gender based on language use in an online learning environment. The themes identified in this review should help students take steps to appear more competent and alleviate gender biases in discussion posts. Ultimately, by avoiding hedgers, qualifiers, hesitation forms, and disclaimers, students and instructors can work together to enhance learning in this fairly new learning environment.

### **Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory and Their Significance for English Classrooms of the 21st Century United States**

Tammy C. Cook, University of Montevallo

The literature review explored Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) to identify the theory and its application to education, as well as its relevance specifically for high school English classrooms. Resources chosen represented a range of documentation from some of the earlier pioneers of CRT to more recent work from educational researchers. Findings suggested that one of the tenets characterizing CRT is that "it names and discusses the daily realities of racism and exposes how racism continues to privilege whites and to disadvantage people of color" (Edwards and Schmidt, 2006, p. 405).

Using CRT as a lens through which educational practices and politics can be investigated has the potential to help educators in the classroom create safe places for adolescents to make their voices heard about social injustices and silent discrimination. A connection of CRT to classroom instruction is explained through Ladson-Billings' (1995b) ideas of effective pedagogy which helps students "to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469).

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Cultural diversity is an everyday reality for schools across the United States, perhaps more in the 21st century than any other time in the history of the nation. Statistics have indicated that minority students comprise one-third of the student population, and estimations propose that by 2020 one-half of the student population will be composed of minority students. In order to successfully teach the growing number of minority students, the growing number of mostly white English teachers whose social and cultural backgrounds are quite different from their students will need to find different strategies from those they use to teach their white students. One issue prevalent in these classrooms is the identification and application of best practices for teachers to follow.

**3:00 – 3:50 P.M.                    SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ..... Louisiana Room**

**Student Perception of Performance in Short-Term Intervention  
Related to Conditional Probability Instruction**

Gholamreza Tashbin, Kelly C. Woodford, Treena Gillespie Finney,  
and Alan F. Chow, University of South Alabama

This study reported the perception of students who participated in an experimental study related to conditional probability instruction where participants received different short-term intervention methods. The study examined how easily mathematics and statistics students were able to transfer frequency solutions to conditional probability problems in novel situations. Students studied either a problem solved using the traditional Bayesian probability format or using a natural frequency format. In addition, the example problem and the target problem presented for solution had matched or mismatched context. Following the study, participants were asked a series of questions related to the usefulness of the example and their own perception of how well they had performed. Responses to these questions related to perception were evaluated in relation to the actual performance of each participant.

The results of this evaluation showed consistency with the actual performance, with students who felt more confident in their own performance actually scoring better than those who felt that they had performed poorly. Some cautions are necessary though in concluding that student perception is an indicator of student performance.

The perceptions of the participants expressed in the responses to the Post-Study Questions indicated a level of superficial learning that did not extend to a level or learning adequate to transfer the learning to other problems. Participants may perceive that they are learning at a higher level than they really are, and their inability to transfer that learning to the multiple choice target problems may support this concept.

**The Role of Private Sector in the Development of School  
Education in Pakistan: Lessons from the History**

Nasim Qaisrani, Iqra University, Karachi

Successive governments in Pakistan reacted differently to the role of the private sector in the educational development of this country. From 1947 until 1971, private sector was very much active in the promotion of education in this country. But it was also criticized on several grounds; some of these allegations include: (1) low status of teachers, (2) low academic standards, (3) unequal distribution of educational facilities among various sections of the society (i.e., between male and female, urban and rural, and (4) more emphasis on liberal arts subjects as compared to scientific and technical programs. Keeping in view these factors, the Educational Policy of 1972 recommended the nationalization of private schools, and a complete ban was imposed on the establishment of new schools in the private sector. After a period of seven years, the Education Policy of 1979 again recommended the establishment of educational institutions in the private sector. At present, many institutions from primary to university level are working in this country.

The study was concerned with an historical descriptive analysis of various procedural trends and developments that emerged in Pakistan for private education. The purpose was to understand the past in order to avoid the repetition of mistakes in the future. This study also attempted to review and

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examine the National Education, plans, policies and programs, existing provisions, and strategies that have been adopted to develop private sector in the system of school-level education in Pakistan.

### **Doodling: Distraction or Benefit**

Byra L. Ramsey, David Bell, and June Lawson, Arkansas Tech University

Generally, instructors view class doodling as disrespectfulness and/or a distraction. This study explored the possible benefits of doodling for students who were attending lectures and/or viewing taped information. Collected data from doodlers and non-doodlers were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA with an alpha of 0.05. The findings showed a marked difference between scores of students who were engaged in doodling when compared to those who were not doodling. A pre/post test was given to participants, as well as a short questionnaire. The participants came from a convenience sampling of students who were randomly selected from four separate face-to-face courses in the College of Education at Arkansas Tech University.

This research found similar results as those found by Andrea (2009), from the School of Psychology at the University of Plymouth, England. Andrea discovered that doodling can actually help improve students' concentration and raise assessment scores by stimulating the brain into making connections with pertinent information. As the issue of doodling is explored through scientific research, hopefully, educators will view classroom doodling through a new lens. Thus, they will alleviate a current paradigm that tends to be in opposition of student doodling while listening to lectures and/or taped information.

### **Mentoring that Increases the Retention of African-Americans at Predominantly White Universities**

Lakitta D. Johnson, Jackson State University

African-American students continue to endure a myriad of problems at predominantly white universities. They complete their degrees at lower rates than white students at predominantly white universities, which decreases the amount of personal and professional choices for them. To address the plight of African-American students in higher education, many universities have implemented retention programs. Despite these efforts, their success rates at predominantly white universities continue to be low.

This purpose of this study was to examine the academic, social, and cultural problems experienced by African-American students at predominantly white universities by exploring a retention program that has documented success. The author highlighted the benefits of the mentoring programs on increasing the retention of African-American students. Specifically, the author discussed the effects of the level of dedication and commitment the faculty and staff who participated in the retention program exhibits as well as the students' perception of this commitment. With qualitative research methodology, the author utilized an analytic and descriptive case study to explore a retention program at a southern, predominantly white university.

Data were collected for this study through the use of interviews with students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, university documents were collected. The author coded the data employing constant comparative analysis and analytic memos. Results from this study revealed that the mentoring program was one of most effective components of the university's retention program. Students, faculty, and staff highlighted the dedication and commitment of the faculty and staff and mentors to the personal, professional, and academic growth of the students. Implications from this study included the importance of having a retention program operated by people who were genuinely invested in the success of its students and it reiterated the effectiveness of mentoring programs and the continued need for retention programs to assist students in reaching their academic, personal, and professional goals.

**3:00 –3:50 P.M. RESEARCH IN PROGRESS (RIP) .....University Room**

**Presiders:** Michelle G. Haj-Boussard, McNeese State University,  
and Pamela M. Broadston, Arkansas School for the Deaf

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**Perceptions of Employability: The Influence of Captioned Video Review**

David J. Horgan, James A. Siders, Vivian H. Wright, and Kagendo Mutua, University of Alabama

The purpose of this study was to examine how an individual's perception of employability of people with speech impairments and cognitive impairments was altered over time through the use of captioning. These perceptions were compared using video review of one worker's description of his job, without video capturing, and later, the same description, when video captioning technology was employed. The review of literature included Census Bureau data, legislation, perceptions of knowledge and tasks, and captioning.

The participants completed a nine-item survey consisting of four Likert-type items and three questions (forced-choice) to obtain demographic data relating to gender, age, and the school/college that the student is currently enrolled, and two questions (fill-in response) to obtain identifying data: (1) course number with section, and (2) mother's maiden name to compare pre- and post-survey responses. Using a pre/posttest methodology, participants completed a survey after viewing a video of a cognitively impaired individual.

The data were analyzed using a two-paired sample t test and a univariate analysis of the covariance (ANCOVA). A significance level of .05 was used for each analysis. Additionally, item-to-total correlations and Chronbach's alpha were used to test for reliability and validity. No significant data were found in the present study. Recommendations for future research included surveying employers' attitudes and perceptions before and after they have participated in sensitivity workshops regarding the employability of individuals with cognitive and speech impairments.

**Birth Weight and Achievement: The Power of Parental Expectations**

Dolores E. Cormier-Zenon, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between low birth weight and achievement. Achievement levels of children born with birth weights as low as one pound to as high as 13 pounds were evaluated based on: birth weight, student success, and parental expectations. The results indicated a minimally significant relationship between the achievement levels and birth weight. The relationship between birth weight and achievement did become significant, however, when one controlled for parental expectations. It appeared that the higher the parental expectations, the stronger the relationship between birth weight and achievement.

The primary explanation is that when birth weight is low there are neurological consequences that militate against the beneficial effects of parental expectations. When birth weight is high, there are not neurological impediments to achievement, and expectations have an impact. It was found that there is a 10% difference between weight and achievement when parental expectations are high.

**3:00 – 3:50 P.M.            ENGLISH/READING ..... King Room**

**Using Poetry Learning Centers to Lower Inhibitions of English Language Learners**

Susan N. Piper and Thomas Heitman, University of South Alabama

This qualitative case study was designed to examine whether the affective filters of English language learners (ELLs) were lowered when in a junior high school setting a particular teacher of ELLs introduced her poetry activities, centered on aesthetic response and scaffolding transactions, to a group of English language learners. Ten ELLs from grades 8 and 9 who have different L1 backgrounds and who vary in fluency from non-English speaking to near-native English fluency participated in the study. The activities were developed based on an argument that transactions with particular poetry activities structured through centers will result in the lowering of students' inhibitions, thus accommodating access to the target language in the learner's environment and consequent target language acquisition in the academic domains.

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The results of the study demonstrated that transactions with particular poetry activities structured through centers indeed resulted in the lessening of participants' inhibitions, thus providing access to the target language in the learner's environment and consequent target language acquisition in the English language arts academic domain. Participant products, both tangible and oral, seemed to indicate that learners' transactions with these poetry activities lowered inhibitions and resulted in interactions with and among other participants, thus indicating a lowered affective filter. A quantitative analysis of occurrence of linguistic features was also included in this study.

### **Is Guided Reflection Necessary for Inservice Teachers?**

Shoudong Feng, Mary H. Mosley, and John Trice, University of Central Arkansas

Dewey believed that reflective thinking is critical for meaning-making and personal growth (Dewey, 1933) and was conducted in a systematic, rigorous, and interactive manner. Like professionals in other fields, teachers and other professional educators should reflect on their practice, identify strengths and problems, explain and interpret to understand the problems, assume responsibility, and make decisions on future actions that may lead to change in practice (Boody, 2008; Luttenberg and Bergen, 2009). Guided reflection has been found to be particularly effective for preservice teachers (Nolan, 2008; Welch and James, 2007) and is used in many teacher education programs. However, little research has been done on its effectiveness on inservice teachers.

This research intended to determine if the amount of experience inservice teachers possess would help them make better reflections and draw conclusions about the usefulness of guided reflection for inservice teachers. A group of preservice (50) and inservice teachers (50) was invited to participate in the study. They were asked to teach a reading lesson in a real classroom and compose a written reflection first without, then with guidance. A rubric was used to grade their reflections, and conclusions were drawn about the quality of their reflective work.

The results on guided and unguided reflections showed: (1) if inservice teachers made better reflections than preservice teachers without guidance, (2) if inservice teachers made better reflections than preservice teachers with guidance, and (3) if the two groups made similar gains with guidance. The findings of the research informed teacher educators whether experience affected the quality of reflection and if guided reflection benefited inservice teachers in the same way it has benefited preservice teachers. Graduate programs that train inservice teachers may also use the findings to decide if guided reflection is necessary for their candidates.

### **Using Metaphors to Understand Students' Attitudes Toward Writing**

Sally A. Zengaro, University of Alabama

In teaching academic writing skills, educators seek to develop skills that students can transfer from the classroom to practical writing situations. Yet teachers are continually impressed with the difficulty of this seemingly simple task. They know their goals for writing instruction, yet they are not always completely sure that students are learning to self-regulate their writing. In looking for solutions to this problem, many people have called for more explicit grammar instruction, longer class sessions, or a change in curriculum to include more examples of different types of academic writing. However, educators have frequently neglected looking directly at the students and what they understand of writing instruction. Both Paris (1988) and Lakoff (1994) emphasized the use of metaphors to explain abstract phenomena that are personal and difficult to describe.

This research attempted to solicit what students thought about writing and their abilities to write through metaphors. The participants were 30 undergraduate students in the southern United States enrolled in a required first-year writing class. The course used literature as the basis for six essays that were written over a 16-week semester. Data for the research were collected over six weeks through student journals and a questionnaire about writing beliefs. Students were asked to use metaphors to describe the way they see themselves as writers and learners in a writing class. Using constant comparison and simple descriptive statistics, the data were analyzed for themes.

The results suggested that students initially felt very apprehensive about writing, describing it as a painful process similar to surgery without anesthesia. However, by the end, they learned to be

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successful, noting feelings of triumph. Over the semester, students' self-efficacy increased as did their ability to write academic prose.

**3:00 – 3:50 P.M.                    IRRATIONAL REASONING FOR IMPROBABLE RESEARCH WITH IMPOSSIBLE REPLICABILITY AND IRREPRODUCIBLE RESULTS BY IRRESPONSIBLE RESEARCHERS--INEPTLY REPRESENTED AND INEXPLICABLY RENDERED (Symposium)..... Governor Room**

Walter M. Mathews, Evaluation Association of New York

Science, as it is known today, has grown out of the murk of sorcery, religious ritual, and cooking. But while witches, priests, and chefs were developing taller and taller hats, scientists worked out a method for determining the worth of their experimental results: Reliability, Validity, and Replicability. Seven years ago at MSERA/Chattanooga, we asserted that to be an outmoded standard. Instead of tediously demanding, "Is it reproducible?" the presenters boldly asked, "Is it funny?" While other "prestigious" research conferences continue to exercise the tyranny of validity, reliability, and reproducibility, we are proud that this annual session disdained them like original sin.

**3:00 – 3:50 P.M.                    MENTOR SESSION .....Capitol Room**

**Presenter:** Linda W. Morse, Mississippi State University

Hosted by MSERA Mentors, this session provided opportunities for attendees to collaborate with one or more long-term members of MSERA about attendees' existing or potential research projects, proposed or draft manuscripts, dissertation ideas, data analysis, program evaluation projects, and other research-related topics. These sessions have been offered primarily for new graduate students and professional members of the Mid-South Educational Research Association.

**3:00 – 5:50 P.M.                    INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS (Training) ..... Academy Room**

Luria S. Stubblefield, Joseph Meynsse, Kenneth Ford, and Bobbie Remble,  
Southern University and A&M College

This free, two-hour workshop focused on using inquiry-based teaching and learning methods in science and mathematics using exhibits and "snacks" developed by the San Francisco Exploratorium. The objectives of the workshop were to: (1) use research-based strategies that focused on using inquiry in the middle and high school, and college classrooms, (2) introduce workshop participants to exhibits and "snacks," and (3) demonstrate the bridging of formal with informal science and mathematics education. The Southern University (SUBR) College of Education and Departments of Physics, Mathematics, and Science/Mathematics Education Doctoral Program are in partnership with the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO) at Livingston, LA, the San Francisco Exploratorium, and the Louisiana Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. The purpose of this partnership is to significantly enhance preservice teacher training and inservice teacher professional development focusing on inquiry-based, science and mathematics teaching and learning using exhibits and "snacks." SUBR has five interactive exhibits and many "snacks" in its College of Education. These exhibits and "snacks" were a key component of this workshop.

**4:00 – 4: 50 P.M.                    MATHEMATICS ..... Paramount Room**

**Language Challenges on the State Standardized Mathematics Tests**

Lecretia A. Buckley, Jackson State University

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In this era of accountability, standardized tests have taken the forefront among the concerns of stakeholders in education, especially in the field of mathematics education. In Mississippi, the Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2), and the Algebra I Test, part of the Subject Area Testing Program, were recently revised to align with a newly-adopted theoretical framework employed to classify state learning objectives and mathematical tasks. With this adoption, more attention is given to conceptual understanding, which may require more reading comprehension than tasks designed to focus on procedural fluency. Mathematics discourse has been identified as problematic for students with limited experience with the way knowledge is constructed in mathematics, and students' understanding of language impacts their ability to make sense of the mathematics. This is a concern for English Language Learners (ELLs) and warrants research to ensure high quality mathematics education for all students.

The author reported on research in which the author analyzed test items released by the Mississippi Department of Education in order to determine the language challenges for ELLs. The author examined items at the third-grade, sixth-grade, and Algebra I levels in order to determine if challenges were more prevalent at a specified grade level of testing. The analysis employed an interdisciplinary approach combining mathematics education and linguistics. Each task, two representing each of the five content strands at each of the three identified levels, was analyzed with respect to cognitive demand and language challenges using the systemic functional linguistics framework.

Findings provided multiple insights. The author identified language challenges on standardized mathematics tests that highlighted the need for ELL and mathematics teachers to collaborate to ensure high quality mathematics teaching for all students, an equity issue that becomes more pressing as our nation's and state's population become more diverse.

**Rubrics as a Performance Assessment for Critical Thinking Problems  
and Their Development and Validation**

Gholamreza Tashbin, Alan F. Chow, and Kelly C. Woodford, University of South Alabama

Evaluating and assessing student performance can be challenging. Consistent scoring for all students adds to the burden on educators to assure fairness to each student. Developing and utilizing grading rubrics is not new. Educators have used rubrics for most types of student assessment, focusing on both the development and the validation of the rubrics to show its suitability. Rubrics should be developed with a specific purpose in mind, and the rubric assessed on its ability to do what it is designed for. When assessing student performance in problem-solving assignments such as mathematics or statistics problems, as well as in more critical thinking-based process problems, rubrics can provide consistency and reliability in assessing performance across all students within a class and students across classes.

This research focused on developing and validating rubrics for use in scoring student performance in problem solving. Rubrics were developed for scoring student performance in solving statistics problems and for scoring student performance in assessing analytical problem-solving in the form of essay questions. Each rubric was developed to assess various performance criteria in student answers. Within each criterion, performance levels were identified to assess to what level of mastery the student exhibited completion. The specific problem-solving rubrics were presented, along with the results of the validation studies. Additionally, further applications of the findings were discussed.

**4:00 – 4: 50 P.M.            COGNITION/ACHIEVEMENT ..... Louisiana Room**

**Validating Measures of Community Resources Developed from Coleman's Social Capital Theory**

Stephen K. Miller, Western Kentucky University

Coleman (1988) theorized social capital generally as relationships, contacts, and networks, both prevalence and intensity, that parents create and tap in passing human capital to their children. To date, little work exists on measures of Coleman's theory. This paper reported instrument validation for one portion of Coleman's framework: Community Resources. Literature on social capital reflects two views: Coleman focuses on structure and functions that constitute relationships, noting that middle class families have better skills and more efficient networks than lower income parents; Bourdieu and Passeron

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(1977) posit that individuals' norms and values are governed primarily by access to institutional resources, which are controlled by elites. Dika and Singh (2002) summarize the distinction: effectiveness (skills and networks for Coleman) versus power (limited access to resources and accompanying norms for Bourdieu and Passeron). Measures described--Peer Values, Oppositional Norms, Community Stability, Times Transferred, and Church Networks--were developed for a larger study of factors influencing students' college placement scores at five historically black colleges/universities (HCBUs).

After extensive data gleaning, descriptive statistics and psychometric analyses (including factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, inter-scale correlations, and criterion validity) were reported for the sample of 651. Four of five variables were scales. Factor analysis produced five components, explaining 60.2% of the variance with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .86. Inter-scale correlations among the final six variables ranged from .00 to .18, indicating essentially distinct constructs. When these variables were regressed on 13 demographic factors, all had very small effect sizes (essentially independent of social stratification, consistent with Coleman's theory). Only Oppositional Norms influenced students' scores.

Results provided considerable support for construct validity. Despite select sample (lower-scoring non-college students excluded from the population) with concomitant restricted range and reduced power, the findings were consistent with Coleman's treatise. Implications were discussed vis-à-vis social capital, equity, and black achievement.

### **Describing Digital Ethnicity - Development of a Scale**

Nan B. Adams and Thomas A. DeVaney, Southeastern Louisiana University,  
and Wilma S. Longstreet, University of New Orleans

The Digital Ethnicity Scale is based on the model for Ethnicity developed by Wilma S. Longstreet in 1978. According to Longstreet, ethnicity is that portion of cultural development that occurs before the individual is in complete command of her/his abstract intellectual powers and that is formed primarily through the individual's early contact with her/his immediate environment. Roles are learned early in cultural development and may be impervious to change, and a whole way of living is assimilated in the early stages of cultural development. Increasingly, this early learning environment includes myriad digital communication technologies. The five dimensions identified by this model are: (1) verbal communication, (2) nonverbal communication, (3) orientation modes, (4) social value patterns, and (5) intellectual modes. These initial dimensions have been slightly modified to address the changes brought about by the proliferation of digital communication technologies.

A pilot version of the Digital Ethnicity Scale containing 36 items was developed and administered electronically during Spring 2009. Longstreet's dimensions served as the basis for item development; however, verbal and nonverbal communication were combined to create a single communication dimension. The pilot survey was completed by 232 graduate students enrolled in online programs at a regional university in the Southeast. Factor analyses results identified items that were not related to the dimensions or may have been inappropriately assumed to belong to a different dimension.

Based on the results of the factor analyses and a conceptual review of the items, a revised version of the survey containing 20 items, with five items per dimension, was developed and completed by over 1,400 individuals during Summer 2009. Preliminary findings suggested that this version more closely measures the four dimensions derived from Longstreet's model for ethnicity.

**4:00 – 4: 50 P.M.            FIELD EXPERIENCES .....University Room**

### **TLC: Teachers Living, Learning, and Leading Through an Online Community**

Holly H. Hulbert and Kelley Samblis, University of Southern Mississippi

Through discussions and needs assessment surveys conducted in local school districts along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, Hulbert and Samblis of the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) discovered that many teacher assistants aspired to obtain an elementary education degree, yet desired to and must remain employed in their own community. Because they worked during the day, they were unable to take required college courses and were unable to complete required practicum experiences that

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are co-requisites with elementary education coursework offered at USM. These teacher assistants have rich daily experiences in elementary classrooms; therefore, USM faculty felt that an online format would be an appropriate arrangement for them to earn an elementary education degree. The program allows these aspiring individuals to obtain their elementary education degrees while living, leading, and learning in their own community.

To gain a perspective of how the online teacher assistants compared to face-to-face education students, data were collected to determine the skills, abilities, and knowledge of the participants in the program. This paper provided detailed information about the progress of the newly-developed online elementary education degree courses offered at the University of Southern Mississippi for teacher assistants. Utilizing teacher assistants' daily classroom experiences as a basis of practicum experiences, the curricula are presented through the online coursework. This paper discussed the challenges faced with utilizing virtual coaching, as well as the discoveries, needs, and successes for this ongoing online elementary education coursework.

### **The Nature, Origin, and Frequency of Interactions and Distractions in a Single-Sex Classroom**

Katherine L. Bradley, Southeast Bulloch High School

The focus of this descriptive research was to provide insights into the frequency, nature, and origins of interactions and distractions within a public all-boys' and all-girls' class. Also investigated, in an effort to determine the perceived level of enjoyment, was the atmosphere of the learning environment. This 10-hour collective case study focused on two single-gender classrooms (24 males and 18 females) at an elementary school in the southeastern part of the United States. The grade structure of the classes was such that both classes contained first- and second-grade students.

This descriptive investigation, which included an examination of atmosphere and frequency, origin and nature of interactions and distractions within the single-sex environment, also contained a comparative element, as this research isolated developing themes for comparison between the two classes. One researcher conducted all observations, writing, coding, analysis, and interpretation of all field notes. The instrumentation used in this research included a standard instructional rubric to provide a baseline for comparison between the classes.

The instructional components of the observation rubric included: teacher/student focused instruction, activity, subject, objectives or essential questions, student organization, assessment, and timeframe for sub-session. Also used in this research was an interaction rubric developed by the researcher to record interactions within class. The rubric included cells for recording the frequency of interaction, origin, and nature of those occurrences when applicable. Cell topics included instructional and non-instructional differentiations for student initiated interaction and teacher initiated interaction. Non-instructional interactions referred to conversational interactions, not including conversations related to the logistics of classroom operation. Other interaction data gathered on the rubric focused on atmosphere within the class.

Emerging themes and descriptive statistics revealed that the nature, frequency, and origins of interactions and distractions within the single-sex classroom were both intricate components and products of the environment.

### **Teacher Cognition and Teacher Planning in Preservice Teachers: A Multiple Case Study**

Franco Zengaro, Armstrong Atlantic State University

This multiple case study investigated how two preservice physical education teachers attending a university in the South understood the process of planning for instruction as they articulated through their own personal struggle and success. A second purpose of this study was to explore the connection between planning and teaching. Constructivist theories and theories of personal and practical knowledge provided the theoretical frameworks for this research. The following research questions guided this study: (1) What do preservice teachers learn about planning for instruction during their teaching practicum? and (2) Can prior knowledge and experiences function as potential catalyst in our understanding of why preservice teachers plan and teach as they do?

Data collection included interviews, field observations, and documentary notes. Data were

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analyzed utilizing constant comparative methodology. From coded materials categories emerged which created a network of ideas forming a thematic narrative throughout the cases. The following themes emerged from this case: motivation, stress, time, and getting to know the students.

The findings of this research are important because they have articulated several aspects in the ways preservice teachers see their roles as educators. While one believed that students did not want to learn regardless of what the lesson was, the other realized that the best way to deal with conflicts and frustration was to make a personal connection with the students. The purpose of this research was not to evaluate who was the more successful teacher. Rather, the findings addressed the need to reevaluate the importance of debriefing as a tool used in preparing preservice teachers. One student came away feeling that she could be successful only with certain ages of students, while the other student attributed his success to his ability to form a personal relationship with students.

**4:00 – 4: 50 P.M.            SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (Displays)..... King Room**

### **An Experiment in Professional Development Sites: Special Education**

William A. Rieck, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Two years ago, the Louisiana Department of Education selected three universities to develop professional development sites emphasizing special education. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette was selected and partnered with a low SES elementary school and a low SES secondary school. The overall goals included: (1) increased collaboration among stake-holders, including parents, (2) increased performance of special needs students, and (3) a reduction of the amount of time students with special needs students spend in exclusive settings.

Each school had a leadership team consisting of an administrator, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, two parents, a representative from Families Helping Families of Louisiana, a university faculty member, and a coordinator employed by the project. The monthly meetings were used to determine appropriate staff development activities, consider challenges, and where technical assistance from the university was needed. Each school also served as a location for special education teaching candidates to complete their student teaching. At least four staff development activities were planned for each school.

The activities were not always identical and were based on needs assessments conducted at the schools using a Likert-type indicator. At the end of staff development activities an assessment was made relative to basic understanding. Administrators, teachers, and, where appropriate, parents and para-educators were compensated for the successful completion of activities and attendance at meetings. Records were maintained about the success of staff development activities from a cognitive perspective, nature and types of interventions, and student time in various instructional settings. At the end of the first year the elementary school was removed from the program. To compensate for the loss, a different elementary school was selected, though it had a more eclectic population and was much larger than the original school.

### **The Steady Increase in the Arkansas Benchmark Examination Scores: The Effects of Enhanced Instruction and Learning or Variations in Item Difficulty and Performance Levels**

John D. Hall, Craig H. Jones, and D. Lynn Howerton, Arkansas State University

The No Child Left Behind Act and the accountability movement in public education have resulted in many states developing group administered, criterion-referenced achievement tests that are, in turn, administered to students in select grades. The resulting test scores are often used to make high stakes decisions that may affect both students and schools. In Arkansas, the Arkansas Benchmark Examination is the test that is used each spring as part of the accountability system to annually evaluate student achievement in an attempt to improve the education for all students.

In June 2008 the Arkansas Department of Education released annual data showing an overall steady increase from 2005-2008 in the percentage of students in grades 3-8 scoring proficient or advanced on the Arkansas Benchmark Examination in math and literacy. While this increase in overall student achievement may be attributed to enhanced instruction and learning, it may also be attributed to

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other variables such as teaching to the test and differences in the level of item difficulty and performance levels or cut scores across yearly editions of the test.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if the level of item difficulty and the performance levels or cut-scores reported in the Technical Reports for the 2005-2008 Arkansas Benchmark Examination varied across the yearly editions of the test and whether these variables may have contributed to the reported increase in student achievement. Recommendations based on these findings were provided.

### **Rethinking the Curriculum: Faculty Development and Online Courses in Summer School**

Brad M. Petitfils, Loyola University

Many universities have recently turned to offering summer courses online that allow both undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to receive university credit while they travel home or abroad; however, many teaching faculty have serious reservations concerning the academic rigor and educational experience these courses provide to students. Loyola University New Orleans has developed a faculty seminar that addressed these issues, which are most commonly cited by skeptics regarding the development and implementation of distance education courses. The translation of curricula from an on-campus model to an online model is not an easy task, especially for faculty members who have never before taught online.

Loyola's Online Summer Seminar requires professors to complete course proposals and participate in a semester-long course design workshop to ensure that the classroom experience is replicated as closely as possible. The course design model requires faculty members to develop instructional units that contain four main parts: learning objectives, lecture/presentation, student collaboration, and assignments/assessments. During the seminar, faculty learn best practices from instructional designers, educational technologists, reference librarians, media specialists, and their peers who have previously taught online courses. Upon completion of the seminar, faculty participants are paid a course-development stipend.

### **University Seminar: The First-Year Experience at Louisiana Tech University**

Julie A. Holmes, Louisiana Tech University

According to the American College Testing Program (ACT, 2008), there has been a sharp decrease in the percentage of first-year students at four-year public colleges and universities that return for a second year from 2006 to 2008. Of 14 Louisiana four-year public institutions, an average of 64.2% of first-time students enrolled in 2006 have continued with their college education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

What are successful public institutions doing to retain student enrollment? Many universities have implemented first-year freshman programs or seminars, as well as provided exceptional advising programs and support services to incoming freshman (O'Shaughnessy, 2009). The First-Year Experience at Louisiana Tech University focuses on giving the first-year student the resources and support needed to successfully transition to college. The First-Year Experience is led by the Office of Enrollment Management and the Bulldog Achievement Resource Center (BARC). The BARC's mission is to help students feel connected to the university by providing them with academic and co-curricular resources and by providing opportunities for university and community involvement.

In this display presentation, an overview of Louisiana Tech's First-Year Experience Program was given. Tenets of the program, such as the University Seminar course, the Common Reading Program, and the First-Year Convocation and Medallion ceremony were shown. Ultimately, these various components help to equip incoming freshman to succeed in completing a degree program while enhancing the overall student experience.

### **Combining Selected School and Teacher Variables to Predict the Likelihood of Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress in Title I Middle Schools**

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Dawn Owens, Mercer University

Student achievement was the primary focus of the accountability reforms of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The requirements of NCLB ushered in the concept of schools making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in order for every child to be performing at grade level by the end of the school term in 2013-2014. This study investigated the combined power of selected school and teacher characteristics to predict the likelihood of achieving AYP and reading absolute bar on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in Georgia's Title I middle schools.

For this quantitative study, the school characteristics included student population size, school territory (urban, suburban, or rural), and percentages of minority and economically disadvantaged students. The teacher characteristics included teacher degree level, years of experience, teacher retention, and teacher absenteeism. The sample comprised all Title I middle schools in Georgia with a school-wide program, housing Grades 6-8, and for which archival data were available. Binary logistic regressions were performed on data from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 to determine the power of the predictors on AYP and reading absolute bar. Absolute bar is the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO), the percentage of students that must meet or exceed the reading/English language arts and math proficiency levels for AYP.

The findings indicated a statistically significant predictive relationship between minimum teacher degree level and AYP and between the percentage of economically disadvantaged students and AYP. With each unit of increase in the percentage of teachers with a minimum degree level or each unit of increase in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, there is a decreased likelihood of the school making AYP. No statistically significant predictors were identified for reading absolute bar. The implications provided a means of predicting the likelihood of achieving AYP, thus allowing for informed decision making prior to assessment.

### **Food Preferences, Activity Level, and BMI: Impact on Elementary Students' Standardized Test Scores**

Peggy Jasperson and Kyna Shelley, University of Southern Mississippi

Various known factors, including socioeconomics, race, and gender, affect student learning. Although studies have discussed students' health, specifically obesity, and their performance in school, most simply imply that a connection between the two makes sense. Although national programs are being developed to improve the overall well-being of children, data have not yet established a direct relationship between childhood obesity and academic achievement. In fact, few studies have actually examined the relationship between a child's body mass index (BMI) and that child's overall achievement.

The current project examined the relationship among factors such as eating habits, food preferences, activity level, obesity, and standardized test scores. Sixty-five fourth- and fifth-grade students were weighed and measured, and their BMI scores were calculated. Students answered a researcher-designed questionnaire regarding their dietary intake, their activity level, and their body image. The most recent Language Arts and Math achievement scores were collected. Univariate and multivariate methods of analysis were used.

The combination of gender and race showed a relationship with BMI and with test scores. Caucasian males had a lower average BMI than African-American males, and Caucasian girls had a higher average BMI than African-American girls. Caucasian boys performed significantly lower in Language Arts than did African-American boys. Girls of both races consistently scored lower than boys of both races in Math.

Findings demonstrated an association between gender/race and BMI that is not typically observed in the literature. Findings of this study may enable physical education teachers to better understand their target population and to create more meaningful lessons that will increase the activity level of students. This, in turn, has the potential to impact academic achievement.

**4:00 – 4: 50 P.M.                    ACTION RESEARCH: FACT OR FICTION? (Symposium).....Capitol Room**

**Organizer:**                            Jeffrey Oescher, Southeastern Louisiana University

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**The Impact of Literature Circles Impact on Fourth-Graders' Reading Comprehension Skills**

Megan Bankston, Southeastern Louisiana University

**The Impact of Teaching Question-Answer Relationships on Students' Comprehension**

Deborah Brown, Southeastern Louisiana University

**Using Academic English to Improve the Mathematical Achievement of English Language Learners**

Elena Dieck, Southeastern Louisiana University

**The Impact of Fluent Reader on Students' Reading Performance**

Martha Herty, Southeastern Louisiana University

**The Impact of a Literacy Intervention on the Text Reading of a Hearing Impaired First Grader**

Lorrie Wax, Southeastern Louisiana University

In the last several years, great interest has been generated around action research and its use by teachers. Textbooks have been published, classes have been offered, and teacher preparation programs have embraced such projects as the capstone artifact in teacher candidates' portfolios.

The purpose of this symposium was to discuss the results of five well-planned action research studies in light of the researchers' intentions and the limitations of their studies. Their work is examined in the context of a simple question, What is fact, and what is fiction? All of the studies were used as the capstone project for the researchers' completion of a graduate degree in education. All of the research questions of interest to the researchers were causal in nature. That is, they all wanted to know the effectiveness of some intervention or strategy being used with their students.

All researchers used pre-experimental or single subject designs. Methodological issues such as sampling, instrumentation, and treatment fidelity, were handled appropriately. In fact, there were few if any flaws in their research with the exception of the use of an inappropriate design.

All of the researchers were teachers or specialists working with the children participating in their study. All were interested in the interventions they studied based on the specific needs of their students. For example, one researcher needed to find an effective way to teach text reading to a hearing impaired child. Her selection of the particular intervention was the result of becoming interested in specific strategies during her graduate work. A second had been exposed to literature circles in her graduate work and felt they had merit, given the current level of achievement, or lack thereof, of the children in her classroom. In essence, all five researchers wanted to examine the effectiveness of specific interventions in the context of their own classroom.

All of the researchers considered their work as action research. However, the desire of each of them for conclusive evidence on the efficacy of the intervention used was tempered by the constraints of examining the intervention in a very restricted context. Each researcher has resolved this dilemma to her/his satisfaction as reflected on thoughts and concerns in this regard.