

Thursday, November 8, 2007

9:00 – 10:50 AM

USING BEST TEACHING PRACTICES AS THE CORNERSTONE FOR DESIGNING AND DELIVERING CONSTRUCTIVIST-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR COHORT LEARNING GROUPS IN BLACKBOARD/WEBCT COURSES (2-Hour Training Session)Boardroom

Shelly L. Albritton, University of Central Arkansas

This training session presented the seven principles of best teaching practices (Chickering and Gamson, 1987) as the cornerstone for designing online course content and developing constructivist-based learning experiences for cohort learning groups enrolled in Blackboard/WebCT course management systems. According to the Penn State University (1998) Innovations in Distance Education (IDE) report, members of a cohort learning group "depend upon one another during at least part of the learning activity or experience" (p. 5).

This training session focused on cohort learning groups as opposed to independently enrolled students in online courses. The cohort design, coupled with an information- and technology-rich learning environment, lends itself well for the full application of the seven principles of best teaching (Chickering and Erhmann, 2003) in the design and delivery of constructivist-based learning experiences. Additionally, Chickering and Gamson (1987) assert that the principles "employ six powerful forces in education: (1) activity, (2) expectations, (3) cooperation, (4) interaction, (5) diversity, and (6) responsibility." With these forces in mind, and using the seven principles as the cornerstone for designing online courses, an ideal setting exists for collaborative learning, generative learning, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based learning, to name but a few constructivist-based practices.

Participants in this session: (1) revisited the seven principles of good teaching practices, (2) applied the seven principles to course design considerations in an online learning environment, (3) selected Blackboard/WebCT tools that facilitate the application of best practices for constructivist-based learning experiences, and (4) discovered tips to effectively manage the online course. Session participants were provided examples of course design tools and resources for building constructivist-based learning experiences in Blackboard/WebCT to illustrate the seven principles of best teaching and learning in action. Participants engaged in discussions and shared practices that have worked with online cohort learning groups.

9:00 – 9:50 AM

TEACHER EDUCATION..... Tri-Lakes

Presenter:

Daniel W. Surry, University of South Alabama

Teacher Motivation in Arkansas Schools

Tamekia L. Brown and Gail D. Hughes, University of Arkansas - Little Rock

This study compared perceptions of teacher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, dependent variables, among the independent variables of job type (teachers and administrators), years of experience (novice, experienced, and veteran), and gender. Teachers, N = 793, indicated their level of agreement with the motivation statements, and 90 administrators indicated what they believe motivates teachers. Because of a low correlation between the dependent variables and small cell sizes for the novice administrators, researchers conducted univariate, rather than multivariate analyses, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .017. Two independent t-tests compared teacher and administrator responses to the scales.

Results indicated that teacher ratings of intrinsic motivation items (M = 4.350, SD = 0.411) were statistically significantly more than (t (803) = 2.620, p = .009) administrators' perceptions of teachers' intrinsic motivation (M = 4.224, SD = 0.491). Extrinsic results indicated that teacher ratings (M = 3.460, SD = 0.612) were statistically significantly less than (t (112.508) = 5.311, p < .001) administrators' perceptions of teachers' extrinsic motivation (M = 3.757, SD = 0.449). Estimates of effect size, Cohen's d, were small at 0.300 and 0.357 standard deviations, respectively. Teacher responses were further analyzed with 2 x 3 ANOVAs for gender and experience on both the intrinsic and extrinsic scales. Interaction terms were nonsignificant for both analyses. The main effect for gender on the intrinsic scale was significant, F(1, 645) = 5.482, p = .020; with a very small effect size of = .008. Females indicated stronger agreement with intrinsic items (M = 4.371, SD = 0.397) than males (M = 4.249, SD = 0.410).

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Findings indicated a discrepancy between teachers' indication of intrinsic motivation and administrators' indication of extrinsic motivation for teachers. Furthermore, female teachers indicated slightly higher intrinsic motivation scores than males. Findings and implications for teachers and administrators were discussed.

What Research from the Business World Says About the Qualities of the Next Generation of Teachers: Gen Y

John L. Marshak, Virginia Commonwealth University

The need for teachers is exceptionally high. Baby boomers are retiring at an accelerating rate, and research indicates little success in retaining neophytes in the teaching profession. Clearly, it is the best interest of principals to work harder at keeping teachers new to the profession. To this end, understanding the "idealism, forward thinking and optimism" of recent college graduates, known as Generation Y, is essential. Because of this group's already significant presence in the work force, a researcher in the business world has taken note of the uniqueness of the attributes of this generation of graduates. An example would be that these new graduates are "digital natives." Unlike their "boomer" predecessors, they have never known a time in which such things as computers, iPods, and text messaging have not been around.

What are the implications for building leaders as they deal with teachers with some very different attributes from those of the present generation of teachers? It is too early in the phenomenon to have a "best practice" to recommend. However, it is imperative that principals be alerted to the fact that their newest faculty members have needs that, in some ways, differ from those of their current staffs. In addition to any retention-centered programs (e.g. mentoring), understanding and responding to the uniqueness of the members of this next generation is a necessity to stem the tide of new teacher attrition.

Teacher Retention: Why Do K-12 Teachers Remain in Teaching?

Rebecca R. Robichaux, Mississippi State University; A. J. Guarino, Auburn University; and Wade Smith, Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge

Studies indicate that nationally 25% to 60% of K-12 teachers leave the profession within three years, while 27% of teachers in the southeast leave the profession within five years. Because of the paucity of research on the factors related teacher retention, the purposes of this study were to assess the proportion of teachers intending to remain in the teaching profession for the next five years and to identify predictors related to teachers' intention to remain in teaching. A 26-item survey was developed to assess the following five domains: (1) Rewards of Teaching, (2) Perks of Teaching, (3) Parental Support, (4) Professional Demands, and (5) Teaching Preparation. One thousand ninety teachers from 39 schools in a southeastern school district were participants for this study.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents stated that they intended to remain in teaching for the next five years. Results of the binomial chi-square revealed that the teachers in this sample were statistically significantly greater to report staying in teaching than the national rate of 50%, $p < .0001$. Results of a forward likelihood-ratio logistic regression with the 18 predictor variables indicated that teachers scoring higher on Perceived Rewards of Teaching were 4.27 more likely to indicate that they would remain in teaching than those scoring lower, those scoring higher on Perceived Perks of Teaching were 1.58 more likely to indicate that they would remain in teaching than those scoring lower, and those scoring higher on Preparation were 2.22 more likely to indicate that they would remain in teaching than those scoring lower.

Results of this study suggested that school personnel should evaluate teacher candidates on the following dimensions: (1) Passion for Teaching and Intrinsic Motivation, (2) Confidence in Teaching Preparation, and (3) Perceived Perks of Teaching.

9:00 – 9:50 AM **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT Pageant**

President: Lavern Terrell, Christian Brothers University

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Environmental and Personal Factors Affecting the Development of Student Well-Being: A Case Study of a Midwestern Liberal Arts College

Debra S. Gentry, Cathy Ventura, Beverly Lewis, Kirk Prescott McKinley, Lekisha Alexander, and Tiffany Labon, University of Southern Mississippi

This study examined student development of well-being in a college setting to find out: (1) how student development of well-being varied across the 4-6 year span of the college years, and (2) how students defined ways their college environment promoted their own understanding and development of well-being. The framework that guided the study was found in theories of well-being including the physical, social, psychological, subjective, environmental, and spiritual dimensions; this framework was used to consider how theories help us understand the complex nature of well-being in the college student population. Social support theory and organizational theory were also considered to understand student well-being as an interaction between self and campus environment.

Qualitative data were gathered as part of a four-institution, mixed-method, pilot study for the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. This campus was chosen for its classification as a liberal arts institution. Data included 48 audio-taped, transcribed student interviews based on a random sample of freshmen, sophomores, and seniors, and approximately 11 audio taped, transcribed interviews with faculty and staff based on purposive sampling. Student interviews focused on student experiences and their interpreted meanings, while interviews with faculty/staff focused on their perceptions of campus life. Data were hand coded, and researchers followed a traditional case study format, looking for emergent themes or issues (Stake, 1995) and developing a holistic analysis of the case (Yin, 1989).

Results indicated well-being reported from student interviews as an interaction between the campus environment and their development of this outcome. There were no significant aggregate differences in well-being among freshmen, sophomores, and seniors; however, there were differences at the individual level. This research has implications for student affairs professionals and other faculty and staff at postsecondary institutions.

Disposition, Study Habits, and Achievement

Ronald L. Skidmore, Morehead State University

Dispositional factors that affect behaviors related to academic success and performance have garnered continued interest in the educational arena. The assumption is that an individual's general perceptions regarding the world (i.e., Life Orientation) affect their expectancy for success (i.e., optimistic orientation) or failure (i.e., pessimistic orientation). It follows that these expectancies should be related to the performance or non-performance of behaviors related to successful academic achievement (e.g., effective study strategies).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Life Orientation (i.e., dispositional optimism or pessimism) was related to study habits in a sophomore level course required for entrance into the Teacher Education Program at a regional state university in the Mid-South. The Life Orientation Test – Revised (LOT-R) was administered at the beginning of the semester prior to the administration of the first examination to 107 undergraduate students across four sections of the sophomore-level course. The LOT-R is a 10-item, Likert-type scale that yields subscales of pessimism and optimism and a total LOT score. Additionally, students completed a study habits survey at the time of each of the four exams taken during the course. All three LOT variables were analyzed for a relationship to study habits.

Greater pessimism was consistently related to students not preparing at all for tests, not preparing ahead of time for the tests, and not reading the notes taken in class. Students earning a letter grade of A in the course had significantly less pessimism at the beginning of the semester than those earning a letter grade of C. Although not significantly different from the A and C students, those earning a letter grade of D or F had the second lowest level of pessimism. Implications for further research and practical interventions that foster student development of effective study habits were discussed.

The Effect of Immediate Feedback on the Achievement of Introductory Chemistry Students Using a Student Handheld Response System

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Gordon R. Sutherlin, Harding University, and Autumn L. Sutherlin,
Abilene Christian University

One challenge to university instructors in science lecture courses has been lack of active participation by students in the learning process. While studies have shown the importance of immediate feedback, the use of technology for this instructional technique has not yet been shown to improve student performance on standard classroom assessment.

The learning benefits of immediate feedback using a handheld response system was studied in two sections of Introduction to General Chemistry at Abilene Christian University. It was hypothesized that students who received immediate electronic feedback on performance tasks would score higher on standard classroom assessments. Both sections were given review questions and in-class problems. The treatment group, responded using Qwizdom handheld response systems, while the control group answered using traditional classroom procedures. During the semester, both sections were administered the same four exams and 12 weekly quizzes. For Exams I and III the 8 a.m. section with 39 students was the treatment group and the 9 a.m. section with 50 students was the control group. The treatment and control groups switched for Exams II and IV. The treatment and control groups' scores on the assessments, university grade point averages, and the ACT/SAT math section scores were compared using descriptive statistics, correlations, and t-test. Students were also given pre- and post-study surveys to measure students' perceptions of the importance of participation and the benefits of technology use.

Preliminary results indicated no statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups' achievement as measured by classroom exams and quizzes. Surveys indicated that students showed improved attitudes toward the value of both technology and immediate feedback in the learning process.

9:00 – 9:50 AM READING AND SCIENCE Mt. Tower

President: Angela Webster Smith, University of Central Arkansas

Using Literature to Teach Social Studies and Science in Elementary Schools: 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, many teachers feel that they must sacrifice instructional time in science and social studies in order to meet the needs of students who have deficits in reading and other academic areas. Therefore, teachers may consider using content area text to teach both content objectives and reading objectives simultaneously.

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 teaching science and social studies in elementary schools, (3) using children's literature to teach science and social studies, and (4) the demands of meeting the needs of struggling readers in elementary schools.

Meeting the challenges faced by teachers and students for integrating content instruction with literacy can be overwhelming in today's classrooms because of pressures brought about from high stakes testing. One method to address these challenges is to incorporate reading strategy instruction in content area teaching in order to meet the standards in both areas. Teachers are required to introduce techniques for learning to read and comprehend through content area text. Therefore, teachers must not only be skilled in teaching reading strategies and techniques, but they must also be knowledgeable in several content areas in order to integrate teaching both.

Today's teachers are faced with countless challenges. Raising test scores and decreasing the number of struggling readers are top priorities for most school systems across the nation. As elementary educators face this challenge, it is important that they do not devalue or ignore teaching social studies and science. Research supports integrating the teaching of reading with content area texts to provide students with quality instruction in both.

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Increasing the Achievement of Fourth-Grade Struggling Readers and Students Who Have Been Diagnosed with Reading Disabilities in the Content Area of Science

Leah H. Kinniburgh, University of South Alabama

This study examined the use of a reading comprehension strategy, the Question Answer Relationship (QAR), during science instruction in a fourth-grade classroom. The purpose of the study was to find if the implementation of a reading comprehension strategy taught and used during science instruction with science text would increase the reading achievement of struggling readers and readers who have been diagnosed with a reading disability.

A mixed method design was used in this study. A fourth-grade classroom teacher and her students were the participants. The rural school used in this study is located in a large, south Alabama school district. The researchers trained the fourth-grade teacher on the use of the Question Answer Relationship reading comprehension strategy, which was the intervention. A science expository passage from an informal reading inventory was administered to each student before the implementation of the intervention and at the end of the four-week period of instruction that served as the pre- and posttest. All 15 students in the class had been identified as struggling readers or students with reading disabilities. The teacher used the fourth-grade science textbook and children's books of expository text on the same topics of study throughout the four-week intervention period. The teacher was observed 1-2 times per week over the four-week period to ensure fidelity of the study and for the purpose of taking field notes. Field notes were analyzed and coded for descriptions of: (1) the effectiveness of strategy instruction, and (2) the use of the strategy by the students. Planned interviews were conducted with the teacher before and after the intervention of the strategy.

The findings of the study showed that reading achievement increased as a result of the intervention of the reading comprehension strategy during science instruction.

Interviews with Second Graders about the Nature of Science

Edward L. Shaw, Jr. and Gahan Bailey, University of South Alabama

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore second-grade students' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes about learning science, the nature of science, and working in the field of science. This study also explored where these students see, learn, and experience science; how they view the relevance of science in their everyday world; and, if boys or girls are better equipped learning science and becoming scientists.

Participants in this study were 18 second-grade students in a public elementary school in the southeast. Students were placed in six groups of three: three groups consisted of all girls, two groups of all boys, and one mixed group had two boys and one girl. The Interview Method, used for this study, focused on 11 predetermined questions, and each small group interview lasted 35 – 45 minutes.

Data were analyzed according to the qualitative method of coding responses into categories then grouping the categories into themes. The data results revealed students' knowledge of various concepts of the nature of science and the many ways of learning about science. Additionally, the results revealed that the students see the relevance of science more in their future than directly affecting their everyday lives in the present. Whereas all students thought science was fun, one student did not like learning science (it takes too long to teach), and two students had no desire to work in the field of science when they grow up. This study also produced a variety of interesting and humorous anecdotal comments made by the students, especially regarding the question if males or females are better at learning science and becoming scientists.

9:00 – 10:50 AM

IRRATIONAL REASONING FOR IMPROBABLE RESEARCH WITH IMPOSSIBLE REPLICABILITY AND IRREPRODUCIBLE RESULTS BY IRRESPONSIBLE RESEARCHERS (2 Hour Symposium)..... Desoto II

Organizer:

Walter M. Mathews, Evaluation Association of NY

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MSERA Memorable Moments: Real and Imagined
James E. McLean, University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

Personnel Evaluation: Examples of Instruments Designed to Produce Specific Results
Harry L. Bowman, Council on Occupational Education

**Inspiration from the Educational Research Community: How Past Presidents of
MSERA Inspired Me to Retire**
Richard Kazelskis, University of Southern Mississippi

Aunt Marguerite's Tobacco-Spitting Research
Carolyn Reeves Kazelskis, University of Southern Mississippi

**Philosophical Jargon and Twisted Humor in the Research Community:
An Evaluation of Utter Nonsense**
George Gaines, Synovate

The Use of the Colon in Scholarly Titles: 125 Years of Progress: 1880-2005
Jerry Robbins, Eastern Michigan University

Five years ago "Irresponsible Research" was presented, four years ago "Irresponsible Research with Irreproducible Results;" three years ago "Improbable Research with Irreproducible Results by Irresponsible Researchers;" and last year, the presenters were certified by the MSERA Board to be irresponsible, and their presentations demonstrated characteristics of Improbability, Irreproducibility and, of course, Impossibility.

This year the researcher tried to shine light on IR [pronounced 'error'] with a cast of characters that promises to continue the vainglorious tradition. Institutions listed should not be held responsible for the presenters, since, in most cases, they have been reassigned to different kinds of "institutions."

The presentation highlighted a number of happenings at MSERA over the past 30 plus years. Humorous elements of the events will be featured. Personnel Evaluation: Examples of Instruments Designed to Produce Specific Results Representative instruments designed for personnel evaluation will be considered. The instruments could be described as non-scientific psychometric tools that are structured to produce preconceived outcomes. Inspiration from the Educational Research Community: How Past Presidents of MSERA Inspired Me To Retire. Aunt Marguerite's Tobacco-Spitting Research Aunt Marguerite's oration on tobacco spitting was presented, along with its implications for researchers. A handout of ways to avoid becoming a tobacco-spitting researcher will be shared in the format of "You might be a tobacco-spitting researcher, if you . . ." Philosophical Jargon and Twisted Humor in the Research Community: An Evaluation of Utter Nonsense This paper probes the depths of depraved academic thought and futile attempts at humor found in the research community. Having combed through countless archives, the paper reveals the best and worst of the genre. The Use of the Colon in Scholarly Titles: 125 Years of Progress: 1880-2005 Expanding and updating J.T. Dillon's groundbreaking 1982 work on "titular colonicity," this paper demonstrated how the colon characterizes published scholarly titles but not unpublished scholarly titles or published unscholarly titles. There was a demonstration of how education traditionally lagged other fields in colonic titles, but is on a trend line such we are only months away from >100% use. Finally, there was speculation as to why the colon has exceeded the use in titles of other possible interesting punctuation marks, and what societal trends have caused this phenomenon.

10:00 – 10:50 AM TECHNOLOGY Tri-Lakes

President: Sumita Bhattacharyya, Nicholls State University

Online Course Delivery—Not An Option!!!: Bringing Your Staff On Board

Kathleen Friery, Donna F. Herring, and Nancy Fox, Jacksonville State University

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Although technology skills are stressed as a must for students before granting them a diploma or certification, faculty members sometimes lag behind the learning curve as new technology environments are thrust into our colleges. Yes, all faculty members have computers, but there are those who still thrive in other environments. Because of their own feelings of insecurities, they may not provide an online component to coursework and may not require students to demonstrate a technology knowledge base through course requirements.

This session described how professors were required to deliver an online component to all courses taught and provided numerous ways to bring faculty members on board with technology integration without browbeating them. Techniques for delivering “just in time” training and strategies for integrating eLearning into academic courses were also shared.

Web Page Production Among University Faculty

Lesia C. Lennex, Morehead State University

Faculty at Regional State University produced some interesting Web pages between 1995 and 2005. At least one page was linked to a golf course and not any information about faculty or program. Other pages flashed “under construction.” Of the 303 full-time, tenured and tenure track faculty in 2005-2006, one-third had Web pages on the university server.

One hundred one Web pages were analyzed for the following content and/or hyperlinks: (1) departmental page, (2) e-mail to the faculty member, (3) current office hours, (4) HTML-based or downloadable syllabi, (5) area resources, (6) anonymous sender form for feedback, and (7) a departmental link to the faculty page (Krug, 2006; Johnson-Eilola, 2002). In August 2006, the university launched a new faculty server. The research in this study included both information on pages prior to and after August 2006.

A two-tailed t analysis by rank and gender revealed no significant differences among either in presence of Web pages. Web pages were analyzed with TIDY (2005) and focus groups for usability. A group of 25 diverse endorsement undergraduate teacher education candidates was invited to review the “new” RSU server Web sites (Johnson-Eilola, 2002, 51-52). Usability of Web pages is foremost because it shows a first view of the university as crafted by faculty. The TIDY review showed 8% of all faculty ADA compliant. The candidates evaluated the sites for usability of three levels: (1) individual courses and programs, (2) instructor contact information, and (3) overall usability for students. More than half (56%) stated that it was “very important” to have information about courses on a Web page. Nearly half (44%) considered it “very important” to have program information on faculty Web pages. Regional University’s Office of Marketing (2006) claimed that 9 out of 10 incoming freshmen listed the Internet as their primary research tool for choosing a college.

The Wikis Are Coming!: How Wikis Will Change the Future of Education

Ra Shaunda V. Sterling, University of South Alabama

Wikis, hypertext documents that can be edited by anyone, are at the forefront of a movement toward collaborative, web-based communication. Currently, there is little empirical research on wikis’ impact on cognitive and instructional processes; the available literature, much of it anecdotal, is gleaned from trade journals and popular magazines. However, the information presented thus far has been convincing. Rigid, print-based modes of expression are being used less frequently, while newer methods of communicating via electronic devices (wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS, etc.), labeled the Web 2.0, appear to be on the rise. Because of their relative ease-of-use, inexpensive set-up, collaborative capabilities, and supposed instructional and cognitive benefits, wikis are growing in popularity as a method of creating, editing, analyzing, and disseminating shared bodies of knowledge for large groups of people, whether students, researchers, or employees.

In this paper, the researcher discussed the history of wikis, described the most popular wiki engines and wiki hosting sites currently available, and explained how wikis can be used to facilitate communication and collaboration. Additionally, the researcher enumerated the advantages and disadvantages of wide-spread wiki adoption in educational institutions and enterprises. This information is

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most beneficial for educational policymakers, researchers, teachers, or anyone who recognizes the problematic aspects of conventional communication methods that often result in missed deadlines, misplaced information, and poor feedback.

10:00 – 10:50 AM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION..... Pageant

Presider: Eddie Shaw

Language Development Levels of Low-Income Four Year Olds: A Local-National Comparison

Kathleen A. Martin, Scott SnyderKay Emfinger, Marcia O'Neal, University of Alabama - Birmingham

This study examined the language development of three cohorts of an Early Reading First project and compared that development to a national sample. Peabody Picture Vocabulary (PPVT-III) pretests for the project cohorts, both treatment and comparison, revealed large numbers scoring in stanines 1-3. Children in the project treatment group were almost exclusively enrolled in income eligible preschool programs and were assumed to be low income. The comparison group children were assumed to be higher income, because they were enrolled in fee-for-service child care. Project directors wondered if this low level of expressive language was a local phenomenon or if it was typical for low-income four year olds.

PPVT-III results for three annual cohorts of four year olds (approximately 200 children) were compared to data available through a national database. Local PPVT-III data were collected both fall and spring as part of a larger battery of assessments. Data were analyzed to determine if an extensive early literacy intervention had resulted in change. For the present study, project data were also compared to data from the national database. For example, comparison of Year 3 fall project data for treatment group four-year-old children with four year olds in the national database revealed that the scores of local children were lower (local standard score of 78.73 versus the national database standard score of 88.30 – an effect size of .66). Spring data also revealed lower scores for the local group (85.34 locally versus 91.73 nationally – an effect size of .46).

Findings suggested implications for school districts, as well as state and local policy makers, regarding the need for high quality early education that emphasizes language and early literacy development.

Do Young Children Use Language of Different Complexity in Different Contexts? A Natural Language Approach

Shoudong Feng, University of Central Arkansas

This study applied Lee and Canter's (1977) Developmental Sentence Scoring (DSS) procedure to unsolicited language generated in natural contexts among preschool children to: (1) determine the syntactic difficulty of the language of each participant, (2) assess the impact of context on the level of syntactical difficulty, and (3) compare the syntactic level established by using natural language with that established by using elicited language.

Four preschool children participated in the study. Their interaction (16 30-minute sessions in total) at four different learning centers, i.e., science, art, computer and block, was recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Lee and Canter's DSS was used as the analytical framework to interpret the data. Specifically, the researcher perused the transcripts to look for the presence of the eight syntactic categories (noun modifiers, personal pronouns, main verbs, secondary verbs, negatives, interrogative reversals, conjunctions, and wh-questions) in the framework and assigned appropriate scores accordingly. Each participant's center-specific and overall syntactic level was thus determined. Results were also tested to see if there was any significance across individuals and across centers.

Findings suggested that the same participant showed different syntactic levels at different centers, but statistical tests did not suggest a significant difference in the majority of the contexts examined. However, differences in syntactic levels between individuals were found to be significant. Findings also revealed a gap between the syntactic level established by using natural language and that established by Lee and Canter by using elicited language. The author argued that natural language better

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The content of student teachers' reflections focused on the Improvement trait. They reflected on four aspects of improvement: (1) how the lesson could be changed to make it better if it were to be taught again, (2) what parts of the lesson were successful, (3) what parts of the lesson were unsuccessful, and (4) how the students reacted to the lesson. The results indicated that the depth and content of a participant's reflections were not changed by the student teaching experience.

Making Assessment Real for Future Teachers

Jennifer M. Good and Karen Berry, Auburn University

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) assert that understanding and appropriately using assessment to guide instruction is a critical skill for future teachers. Colleges of Education have improved assessment methods to demonstrate individual candidate growth (Olson, 2005), yet often teacher candidates do not make the connection between assessment methods used in their programs and those that could be adopted in their future classrooms.

This presentation shared a model for promoting good assessment practices to teacher education candidates at the beginning of their academic careers. The model, used during a required college orientation class, included a guest lecture by the college's coordinator of assessment, student self-ratings on the college's inventory of candidate proficiencies, interaction with observation tools based on a teaching video, and instructor ratings of a work sample related to the video, using a common rubric which the students will encounter again, prior to program completion. Because the orientation course was comprised of students (N=190) of varying academic standing, it was possible to validate students' understanding of the assessment ratings, assuming that upperclassman would have a better grasp of the college's required skills for program completion than their counterparts.

The mean ratings on all items per assessment were compared, with observably lower ratings yielded for freshmen and gradations of increase by academic standing on every item. In fact, 13 of the 15 self-ratings and 1 of the 4 instructor-ratings yielded significantly ($p=.05$ or better) lower mean ratings for freshmen. Effectively explaining assessment systems to teacher candidates through a structured model has important implications for other colleges of education: (1) to provide students with sufficient opportunity to interact with high-stakes program assessments early in their careers, (2) to model good assessment practices for adoption in the K-12 classroom, and (3) to provide opportunities to collect ongoing assessment data to track teacher candidate growth.

10:00 – 10:50 AM RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING (Symposium)..... Desoto III

Organizer: Asghar Iran-Nejad, University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

Discussant: James E. McLean, The University of Alabama

Overview of the Relationship Between Knowing and Understanding Asghar Iran-Nejad, University of Alabama

Bloom's taxonomy and mainstream education hold that knowledge is a prerequisite for understanding and that understanding is a more advanced or higher order form of knowing (see first presentation below). The presentations reported data comparing the alternative viewpoints that: (1) understanding is a prerequisite for knowing, (2) knowledge and understanding processes are fundamentally different, and (3) knowing and understanding processes are the same, and understanding is a more advanced or higher level form of knowing. This overview discussed the theory behind the radically different way of looking at understanding and its implications for current and future research, today's classrooms for knowing/understanding, and alternative classrooms for understanding. The symposium was seen to be of interest to researchers and practitioners in education generally and higher education specifically.

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What the Literature Says about the Relationship between Knowing and Understanding Terrance K. Harrington and Asghar Iran-Nejad, University of Alabama

This study conducted a literature search on the relationship between knowing and understanding to determine which of the two assumptions held prevalence among researchers, namely: (1) understanding is a more advanced extension of knowing, and (2) knowing and understanding involve fundamentally different processes. Based on the sources identified in the literature search, strict guidelines were used for categorizing the sources and a final decision was made on the basis of the solution to the Arrow's Paradox. The final decision, that experts in the field hold that understanding is an extension of knowing, was supported by an absolute majority, which May's Theorem claims will result in one definitive choice among many.

Some Fundamental Differences Between Knowing and Understanding Processes Asghar Iran-Nejad and William H. Stewart III, University of Alabama

This study used undergraduate Ss to compare predictions of biofunctional science with mainstream information processing theory. The notion was tested that knowing and understanding involves different processes. Subjects read knowing/understanding statements like "I know that I pay attention/understand even though I do not really know how to pay attention/understand," and rated them on a disagree-agree scale. Sentences like the above two knowing/understanding statements have the feature of making an assertion and subsequently negating it, thereby declaring a contradiction. Consistent with the prediction that knowing and understanding are fundamentally different human capacities, results showed that knowing statements behaved differently from understanding statements. The findings in light of the original theory and their educational implications were discussed.

Differences in Knowing and Understanding Processes Between Undergraduate and Graduate Students William H. Stewart III and Asghar Iran-Nejad, University of Alabama

This study sought to replicate the findings of the above knowing/understanding study and extended them to possible differences between undergraduate and graduate Ss. The procedure was identical to the earlier study, except that this study compared undergraduate and graduate Ss. The differences between the two conditions along with educational implications were discussed.

10:00 – 10:50 AM MENTOR SESSION Guest Suite (Room TBA)

President: 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 were offered primarily for new graduate student and professional members of the Mid-South Educational Research Association.

**11:00 – 12:50 AM COLLECTING RESEARCH AND ACCREDITATION DATA WITH LIVETEXT
(2-Hour Training) Boardroom**

Donna F. Herring, Jacksonville State University

Some of the most useful tools in the LiveText toolbox are those designed for data collection. These include, but are not limited to, forms, surveys, and rubrics. This session provided hands-on activities for creating forms, surveys, and rubrics as well as generating reports for each. Uses by college of education professors to collect data for research were shared. Ideas for use to collect data to support various accreditation agencies were discussed. Sample reports were shared along with tips for

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disaggregating the data. Steps necessary for collecting data on conceptual framework standards were shown. Pros and cons for the use of forms, surveys, and/or rubrics were discussed.

11:00 – 11:50 AM **COGNITION** **Tri-Lakes**

President: James H. Lampley, East Tennessee State University

College Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness and Value in Reading a Text

Linda W. Morse, Mississippi State University; and Tiffany Culver, Delta State University

This study investigated college students' perceptions of: (1) how they read and use a text for understanding course material, and (2) the perceived value of using various activities related to a critical reading of a college text. Participants included 210 volunteers from a variety of undergraduate behavioral sciences courses at two universities in the mid-south. Each participant responded to a 21-item questionnaire that included questions on: (1) basic demographics, (2) perceptions of text usefulness, (3) opinions about textbook aids, (4) perceptions of how instructors encourage reading of the text, (5) the types of activities they engage in as they read the text, and (6) their opinion on the course difficulty.

The results indicated that only 73% reported their instructors presented information from the text, while 71% indicated that their instructors encouraged them to read the text. Sixty percent indicated that they did not read the material in the text after a lecture, while 26% indicated that they read before the lecture. Perceived usefulness of various text aids found that the most often used aids were: (1) recommended readings, (2) chapter outlines, (3) chapter summaries, and (4) list of key concepts. Nearly 65% indicated that they highlight important terms in the text. A high percentage (83%) indicated that they did not revise their knowledge base after reading, and 95% said that they spent less than four hours a week reading the text. For the students who completed this survey, 71% indicated the course they were taking (and related text) was average in difficulty.

While most college instructors would indicate that a critical reading of a text would be important, the results from this study indicated that college students' perceptions on the usefulness of a text and how they read a text may not be conducive to course achievement. Additional research is needed to link such student practices to actual course outcomes.

The Influence of Metaphor and Plan of Development Introductions on the Evaluation of Student Essays

Sally A. Zengaro and Asghar Iran-Nejad, University of Alabama

Based on research by Townsend, Hicks, Thompson, Wilton, Tuck, and Moore (1993), this paper examined the influence of the type of introduction on the evaluation of student essays. It was guided by the following research questions: (1) Will students rate essays with manipulated introductions higher than those with original introductions even though any errors in the essays will not be changed? and (2) Will students think essays with metaphor introductions are the best essays?

Four student essays on teaching were chosen from a collection written in educational psychology classes, and two of these were selected for manipulation while the other two served as fillers. Two different introductions were written for the essays to be manipulated: (1) one that included a blueprint or plan of development (PoD) introduction, and (2) one that included several metaphors on teaching. The same introductions were used for both target essays that were chosen to be manipulated, except that the last phrases of the PoD introduction differed to reflect the development of each individual essay. All essays, including the fillers, were checked and slightly altered to include one sentence structure error, one spelling error, and one logic error where one sentence was awkward to read.

Eighty-eight undergraduate students in first-year writing classes were asked to read and to evaluate the essays according to which they thought was best and what grade it should receive. One-way ANOVA tests were conducted on the data resulting from the questionnaires. The essays with metaphor introductions received higher grades and were considered the best. These results seemed to follow Iran-Nejad (1987) on the causes of affect and liking; namely, that presenting a "clue" leads to greater interest than presenting all the information first and then elaborating.

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College Students' Behavior on Multiple Choice, Self-Tailored Exams in Relation to Metacognitive Ability and Perceived Item Difficulty

Jasna Vuk, Mississippi State University

The study examined: (1) students' behavior on five self-tailored multiple choice exams, (2) students' metacognitive ability to distinguish between their correct and incorrect answers, and (3) students' perception of item difficulty in relation to item difficulty indicators. The participants were college undergraduate students enrolled in an educational psychology course in spring semester 2007. Ninety-five students signed the informed consent, and 84 students completed the procedure. There were 75% female and 28 % male students from 24 different majors. After answering 50 questions on a multiple choice exam, students marked on the back of their answer sheet up to five questions that they wanted to be excluded from their scoring. Students repeated the same procedure on five consecutive exams throughout the semester. The adjusted score for each student was calculated by the researcher.

The study attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) How did the self-tailoring procedure affected students' scores on five exams? (2) Did students improve their metacognitive ability to distinguish between correct and incorrect answers over five consecutive exams? and (3) Were the items that students selected as their incorrect answers related to item difficulty indicators?

The preliminary data analysis revealed the following results. Difference scores between original and adjusted scores for each exam were calculated and assessed by MANOVA. The changes between original and adjusted scores were statistically significant across five exams $F(79)=48.5$, $p < .01$. Ratios between incorrect and total number of responses omitted on each exam were calculated and assessed by repeated measures of ANOVA. The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference among ratios on five exams $F(4,188) = 2.77$, $MSE = .059$, $p < .05$. Additional data are available for further statistical analysis. The current results indicated that students improved their scores by self-tailoring their exams. The study has implications for improving learning, exam construction, and teaching in college classrooms.

11:00 – 11:50 AM READING..... Pageant

President: Meiko Negishi, University of North Florida

Scaling Writing Proficiency via Prominent Features of Essays

David T. Morse, Mississippi State University; Sherry Swain, National Writing Institute; and Richard L. Graves, Auburn University

Direct writing samples are frequently used to assess student literacy or proficiency in language composition. The scoring is frequently holistic only, and the information or feedback offered by this scoring is minimal for concerned audiences. This paper detailed development of a proficiency scale for student writing that can describe the types of skills the student has or has not yet demonstrated. Thus, the scale offers the potential benefits of: (1) constructive feedback, (2) richer description of writing skill, and (3) sensitivity to changes in writing skill or maturity. The approach taken was to appraise the presence or absence of prominent features in students' work, then to scale these features using the Rasch item response theory model. Prominent features are aspects of writing that knowledgeable readers would flag when asked, "What stands out to you?" or "What do you see going on in this paper?" These elements can be positive, such as being well organized or having supporting details, or negative, such as changes in verb tense.

Two studies were conducted. In the first, 464 essays written by seventh graders in response to the same prompt were analyzed for the presence or absence of 33 prominent features. Though two of these features showed slight problems with fit, the set of elements appeared to form a coherent scale of writing performance. In the second study, 551 students' essays in grades 3-5 were similarly analyzed. Again, only two features of 40 showed slight fit problems. Both times, the individual elements tended to order comparably: lower (easier) elements to attain involved avoiding negative features whereas higher (more difficult) elements were generally the positive features. These scores were correlated with various holistic scores; the values were generally moderate (e.g., .50s). Thus, there is promise for using prominent features as the means to quantify writing skill.

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“This Ain’t No Ghetto Class”: A Study of the Social Context of Ninth-Graders’ Participation in Oral Reading Fluency Activities

Christian Z. Goering, University of Arkansas - Fayetteville

This participatory action research study provided a qualitative examination of the social context of a single ninth-grade class as students participated in dramatic oral reading activities to understand: (1) which social factors inhibited participation, (2) which social factors promoted participation, and (3) which social factors could be manipulated. The research site was purposefully selected because of its proximity to a major U.S. government installation. This classroom of students represented the international diversity provided by such location, a social context rich in economic and racial diversity.

Fourteen students, a student teacher, and a classroom teacher participated in this study. Of the 14 students (six male, eight female) participating in the study, four were African American, three were Korean-American, two were Hispanic-American, two identified as multiracial, and three were Caucasian. Additionally, the student teacher was an African American female, and the classroom teacher was a Caucasian male. The researcher assumed the role of a teacher during the study in collaboration with the classroom teacher and in cooperation with the student teacher. Together, these teachers led the students through the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Poetry Out Loud Project.

By collecting data through videotaped performances, student interviews, and teacher interviews, the researcher sought to determine if oral reading fluency activities, oft reserved for elementary school students and fringe classes such as forensics and debate, could work in the socially diverse and jeopardizing context of a high school English classroom. The data were analyzed with a grounded theory approach. Open coding and axial coding developed three central contingent themes. Tentative conclusions were drawn that suggested implications for future research and classroom practice.

Implementing the Comprehensive Curriculum: The Effects of Mandated Curriculum Change

Katherine A. Adcock, University of Louisiana – Monroe

The study examined the implementation of the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum achievement as it focused on: (1) the advantages and disadvantages of state-mandated curriculum, (2) the different ways schools implemented the Comprehensive Curriculum, (3) how different schools monitored the implementation of the Comprehensive Curriculum, and (4) how might the Comprehensive Curriculum be improved.

Data were collected by both interview and observation. Two senior English teachers from the same school in the same parish were interviewed. A high school administrator was interviewed, as was a high school freshman English teacher from a nearby parish. Open-ended research questions were presented to all participants who were also observed on several occasions.

The researcher concluded that the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum did have problems, yet adaptations could be made the best fit the individual teachers and students. The forced implementation and pace proved to be problems that could be corrected if teachers and administrators reviewed the curriculum and revised the activities. The researcher found that effective activities should be kept and ineffective activities should be eliminated. No activity should be mandatory, and teachers should be given the freedom to modify and substitute as needed. The number of activities in each unit should also be reasonable. The activities in the curriculum should be used as a reference and a resource. The district and state must keep in mind that all students do not learn on the same level and all activities are not suited for all students. Teachers need to be trained about how to implement the curriculum, and the state and individual districts must realize that a new model curriculum takes patience and time.

11:00 – 11:50 AM PRESERVICE Mt. Tower

President: Regina Patterson, Southern University - Baton Rouge

Disciplinary Action Committee

Charles E. Notar, Gena W. Riley, and Roland A. Thornburg, Jacksonville State University

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The Disciplinary Action Committee (DAC) was created in summer 2007 after deliberation on students' inability to adhere to state and federal laws and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (KSDs) of the College of Education and Professional Studies of Jacksonville State University. The DAC has the responsibility for the possible immediate removal of a student from the College of Education and Professional Studies and its programs. This presentation discussed the background, development of the program, and its structure. DAC policy, procedures, and forms were provided.

Examining Teacher Candidates' Classroom Management Capabilities

Anne E. Sylvest, University of Southern Mississippi

Database decision making of a university's undergraduate teacher education program with specific attention to preparation of classroom management skills and expertise in implementing successful strategies for handling special learning needs were the focus of this paper. Clear and detailed data reported that effective teachers incorporate a variety of strategies and procedures that facilitate productive classroom operation. Based upon this information and because of the challenges that new teachers face, the 2004 Mississippi legislature mandated that a stand-alone classroom management course for all university teacher licensure programs be adopted.

This study was designed to gather perceptual information from teacher candidates regarding their competency in classroom management, as well as an ability to accommodate instruction for individuals. Quantitative data were compiled from 130 teacher candidates in 17 areas of teacher licensure during the spring 2007 semester. There were 88% female and 12% male; 73% were junior college transfer students.

Pearson correlation coefficients were aggregated regarding all groups' perceptions and each gender's perception of whether or not they could effectively implement classroom management procedures. Within the reported 17 teacher licensure programs comprising the educational unit, statistical significance was determined for teacher candidates of Elementary K-4 and Instrumental Music. A strong relationship between managing student behavior in the classroom and accommodating the instructional needs of students was statistically significant for both male and female. A second analysis indicated that each gender was statistically significant in developing and implementing classroom management procedures. While this single survey indicated significance among several variables, the findings also suggested that future study of curriculum design regarding all students in classroom management courses is needed.

The Evolution of PRIME: Process for Remediating Identified Marginal Education Candidates

Charles E. Notar, Cynthia H. Harper, Lynetta A. Owens, and Gena W. Riley, Jacksonville State University

Jacksonville State University's College of Education and Professional Studies graduates the largest number of teachers each year in the state of Alabama. The College ranks 10th in the southeast and 38th in the United States in the production of highly qualified teachers. Therefore, the College of Education and Professional Studies has an obligation to ensure that only well-prepared individuals receive education degrees. The ability to teach involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions (KSDs). Jacksonville State University's preservice teachers follow a Conceptual Framework that provides the necessary KSDs to develop excellent teachers.

The purpose of the Process for Remediating Identified Marginal Education Candidates (PRIME) program is to identify, remediate, and counsel teacher education candidates who exhibit weakness in KSDs as early as possible in their preservice training. Teacher education candidates who fail to meet the expectations and requirements of the College are referred to the PRIME program. In the event of a referral, a PRIME Candidate Support Team is assembled to develop an "Action Plan" for remediation. This presentation discussed the 15-year evolution of the program, its structure, and results to date. Procedures and forms associated with PRIME were provided.

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President: Edward Reeves, Morehead State University

Exploring Gifted Literature: Searching for Evidenced-Based Practices

Megan R. Parker, Kelli Jordan, Sherry K. Bain, Kathleen Miller,
and Emily R. Kirk, University of Tennessee - Knoxville

The researchers examined four premier research journals in gifted education: Gifted Child Quarterly, Roeper Review, Journal for the Education of the Gifted, and Journal of Secondary Gifted Education, over the publication years of 2001-2006 to analyze the types of articles being published and whether or not diversification in research activities is needed in this field. The researchers noted if articles were narrative, correlational, or experimental in type. The researchers were specifically interested in the prevalence rates of evidence-based interventions. They also examined rates of publication for first authors and the prevalence rates of source institutions publishing in these journals. In general, results indicated the need for more empirically-based research in gifted education, as well as a need for an increase in scholars entering this specialty area.

Psychometric Analysis of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership Standards from Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement

Lonnie E. McKinney, Consultant on Organizational; D. Clayton Smith, Western Kentucky University; and Stephen K. Miller, University of Louisville

The standards-based accountability movement is premised on the belief that students should learn and schools should teach the essential knowledge of a given content area, as embodied in disciplinary standards (Bolon, 2000; Fuhrman, 2001; Linn, 2001; Smith & O'Day, 1991). Kentucky is the only state that has extended this principle to whole school reform, nine Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI). Alabama has adopted this model and several other states are interested. Schools are assessed by externally trained teams on the Scholastic Audit, rating some 88 indicators spread across the standards. Because the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has done no formal psychometric investigation of this model, that issue was addressed in this paper. Part of a larger study on instructional leadership, only Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership were examined here. This study utilized a secondary data base from KDE composed of Scholastic Audits from 181 elementary schools from 2000-2005, across a range of achievement levels. Each standard has its own set of indicators, assessed on a 4-point behaviorally defined scale (4 high).

Psychometric analyses included Factor Analysis, Cronbach's alpha, inter-scale correlations, and criterion validity (multiple regression against the Academic Index, AI, obtained from Kentucky Performance Reports)—performed separately for each standard. All three sets of indicators produced a single factor, explaining 56.9%, 51.0%, and 54.6% of the variance for Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .915, .872, and .857, respectively. Inter-correlations ranged from .595-.693. Adjusted R² for the multiple regressions against the AI were .36 for the combined effect of Curriculum and Instruction and .26 for Leadership.

These results demonstrated exceptional psychometric quality; indicators for Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership are both valid and reliable measures. Their presence and use in the Scholastic Audit provides an empirically tested and pragmatic resource for school improvement efforts in Kentucky's elementary schools.

Changing Trends in Learning Disability Research

Taylor K. Pelchar, Sherry K. Bain, Emily J. Fuller, and Daniel F. McCleary,
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Given the high prevalence of students with learning disabilities, the authors were interested in analyzing the trends in the learning disability literature. In a pilot study, the authors reviewed articles published in 1995, 2000, and 2005 in the Journal of Learning Disabilities. In 1995, the majority of the

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articles focused on general learning disabilities. A shift in the trend in the literature indicated more articles focusing on specific learning disabilities between 1995 and 2000. They found that there was not much of a difference in the literature trends between 2000 and 2005 and thus decided to further examine the trend of the literature between the years 1995-2000.

The authors reviewed all articles published in the Journal of Learning Disabilities during that 6-year time period. The authors noted several aspects of the articles, including type of learning disability, type of study, and author affiliation. The authors entered data into a spreadsheet for statistical analysis purposes and found that there was indeed a shift from general to specific learning disabilities during this time period. Also, most of the studies were empirical in nature. The majority of the authors were affiliated with American universities.

In the summary, the authors endeavored to establish timeline-related links between the publication trends displayed from 1995 to 2000 and historical events, such as reauthorization of public laws, educational reform in the 1990's, and recent focuses on evidence-based interventions. Interested participants heard summaries that included tabled information on types of disabilities and types of research. Participants were encouraged to use the tabled information to guide their own investigations into interventions for specific learning disabilities.

12:00 Noon – 12:50 PM TEACHER EDUCATION..... Tri-Lakes

President: Melanie L. Shores, University of Alabama - Birmingham

A Comparison of Alternative Certification Candidates and Experienced Teachers in the Choice and Application of Curriculum Philosophy

JoAnna Dickey, Delinda Lybrand, and Michael Martin, Eastern Kentucky University

Studies have found that alternative certification candidates choose or favor a curriculum philosophy only to feel that they must abandon that philosophy after entering into authentic school cultures. Experienced teachers also make philosophical choices. However, do they make the same types of choices as alternative certification candidates, and will they be more persistent when applying their philosophy to learning opportunities?

To answer these questions, this study collected curriculum philosophy data from activities completed by elementary alternative certification candidates and experienced elementary teachers. While fulfilling requirements in separate sections of an elementary school curriculum course, participants were asked to: (1) identify one of four curriculum philosophies that best represent their own philosophy, and (2) choose a learning opportunity that they would actually use in an elementary classroom and identify the philosophy that matched that learning opportunity.

Data from each group were collected, descriptively analyzed, and compared. A comparison of the types of philosophy model choices made by the alternative certification teachers as compared to the experience teachers demonstrated little similarities. A comparison of the types of philosophy model choices identified in the match to a learning opportunity also demonstrated little similarities between the two study groups. When observing if there was a change in philosophy model choice between the original choice and the learning opportunity match, a large majority of alternative certification participants made changes, while experienced teachers persisted and did not change from their original philosophy choice. The differences found between the alternative certification candidates and experienced teachers indicated that more studies are needed to find information about how curriculum philosophy choices are made and why they change. Such information can help develop alternative certification programs that prepare alternative certification candidates to enter authentic school cultures more effectively.

The Relationship Between Undergraduate Grade Point Average and Scores on the PRAXIS Series Exams for Students in an Alternate Route Teacher Education Program in the Mississippi Delta

Lindon J. Ratliff, Cheryl Cummins, and David Jay Hebert, Delta State University

The study examined the relationship between undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) applicants with their PRAXIS 1 scores in reading, writing, and

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mathematics. The Mississippi Department of Education has created programs in which persons holding 4-year non-education degrees, who have not completed traditional teacher education programs, can, if they wish, become certified teachers. One of the most popular programs is the MAT program. In this program, qualified applicants who meet requirements, such as passing the Praxis I and Praxis II exams, may attempt to gain admission into a participating graduate school in order to receive a certificate. The candidate also begins the process of working on their graduate degree. The MAT program at Delta State University accepts applicants each spring. Because of the popularity of the program, a diverse population applies for acceptance.

Because each candidate has a differing undergraduate degree and experience, it was determined that there was a need to conduct a correlational analysis between GPA and the Praxis I scores. The researchers received permission from the university, as well as Institutional Review Board approval (protocol # 06-029). Each MAT applicant's information was stored in an Excel spreadsheet by the MAT coordinator. Upon IRB approval, the data were released to the researchers for analysis. Each data set was analyzed using the SPSS software package. Matrices displaying data obtained from the two data sets were developed and used to identify possible relationships.

The findings of this study have opened future research possibilities concerning alternate route teaching candidates' testing data, as well as success within the classroom. Specifically, the MAT coordinator is examining future research dealing with GPA and PRAXIS scores of non-traditional teachers with data sets obtained through principal evaluations received after their first year of teaching.

Exploring Relationships Among Academic, Assessment, and Nationally-Normed Data of Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Candidates

Antony D. Norman, Western Kentucky University

Without question, teacher preparation programs across the nation feel the pressure to demonstrate that their candidates meet national and state standards purportedly connected to PK-12 student learning. This pressure has led most institutions to develop key assessments to evaluate their candidates' proficiencies. However, few assessments have been in place for sufficient periods for programs to ascertain their relationship to other standard candidate data (such as state required teacher preparation admission criteria) or to judge their ability to predict candidate success on teacher certification tests (such as Praxis II). In 2000, Western Kentucky University adopted the Teacher Work Sample as a culminating assessment for all its teacher preparation programs. Survey research at the time revealed strong faculty commitment to this assessment as a sufficient measure of most, but not all, of the state's teacher standards. In addition, early research provided some indication that this assessment was related to other academic measures. However, lack of full implementation, small sample size, and concerns about scoring reliability left more questions than answers.

This study reexamined these relationships based on data from 353 candidates enrolled in student teaching during the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters. Data collected from candidate records included ACT scores, Teacher Preparation Admission GPA, Overall and Major GPA prior to student teaching, Praxis II and Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching scores, and Teacher Work Sample Analytic and Total scores. Furthermore, implementation of the Teacher Work Sample across all programs and work to establish scoring reliability allowed for greater confidence in the generalizability and replicability of relationships.

Some results held to earlier findings, but others revealed variations based on now available candidate and program characteristics. Preliminary conclusions about the Teacher Work Sample's relationship to other candidate measures and its ability to predict candidate success in PK-12 classrooms were drawn.

12:00– 12:50 PM SCIENCE EDUCATION Pageant

President: Kaston D. Anderson, McNeese State University

Are Our Teachers Ready to Teach? A Case Study Approach to Student Teacher Confidence to Teach Science

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Sumita Bhattacharyya, Nicholls State University

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between preservice elementary teachers' science teaching beliefs and their ability to effectively implement inquiry method in teaching science. Recent research has made it obvious that many teachers are actually not utilizing the inquiry method in teaching science because they lack the confidence to do so (The National Science Foundation, 1996, National Research Council, 1996). The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education requires a restructuring of the science teacher training curriculum so that science teachers would not only possess science content knowledge but also the ability to utilize the inquiry method in their teaching. Thus, teachers trained in content areas and in the pedagogy of inquiry would possess confidence in science teaching (Cannon and Scharmann, 1996).

Quantitative data were collected and analyzed by administering pre- and post-context Beliefs About Teaching Science along with Science Teaching Efficacy. The qualitative analysis included case studies about the seven subjects in the experimental group. It involved: (1) observation of classroom teaching, (2) assessment of lesson plans using the criterion established by Horizon Research, Inc. (1998), and (3) personal, open-ended interviews of the participants' beliefs about their teaching science.

Findings lent support to the idea that the inquiry method, as a mode of instruction, can be beneficial to build capability belief of preservice elementary teachers. As regards context belief, however, no significant impact was found. The analysis of qualitative data suggested that the perception of the inquiry method differs from person to person and that difference is associated with different self-confidence levels. The result is incorrect classroom practice. Second, the science teaching self-confidence also suffers from lack of science content knowledge. Finally, a highly overlooked factor is the level of support from the cooperating teachers and the teaching/learning environment in the schools.

Science Laboratory Safety Training for 7–12 Arkansas Teachers

Tillman Kennon and Ann Ross, Arkansas State University

The Arkansas Science Teachers Association (ASTA) and the Arkansas Math/Science Centers working with Jack Gerlovich and Dennis McElroy, nationally known science laboratory safety experts, have developed a science lab safety program specifically designed for Arkansas. This training program is providing safety training for a minimum of one 7-12 science teacher from every school district in Arkansas. Training began in the summer of 2006. A major component of this program is a safety CD. The Arkansas safety CD is a comprehensive safety tool designed to aid Arkansas science educators in locating and applying applicable federal and Arkansas laws, codes, and standards; performing and documenting safety audits; disposing of hazardous chemicals; and establishing and managing chemical storerooms.

In this presentation, the audience was given an opportunity to view the safety CD. The authors of this software prepared a pre-training science safety status survey and workshop evaluation forms to assess the status of safety in Arkansas schools and the effectiveness of training. Results of the pre-training and post-training surveys were announced at the 2007 NSTA National Conference and will be presented. In this presentation, the audience viewed the safety CD, as well as the results of the pre-training and post-training surveys.

Teaching-Specific and General Factors Influencing College Students' Perceptions of Science Teaching as a Career

Linda C. Kondrick and Wilson J. Gonzalez-Espada, Arkansas Tech University

Many factors make the recruitment of highly qualified prospective science teachers and the retention of trained teachers more difficult each year. Although several studies have examined the perceptions of teaching as a career among school and college students, few studies have focused upon attitudes of students at any level of education toward the prospect of teaching science in particular, and no study has explored the beliefs of first-year, undergraduate science majors about teaching as a career. The purpose of this study was to determine what factors freshmen physical science majors considered most important when choosing a career, what factors are perceived by students as most characteristic of

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a teaching career, and whether a relationship existed between these factors. The authors were also interested in measuring whether a one-hour presentation on science education as a career alternative could change students' perceptions about the teaching profession.

It was concluded that the top five factors students consider as most important in career selection are: career enjoyment, job security, pleasant working environment, good starting salary, and high earning over time. In contrast, the top four factors students perceived to be characteristic of a teaching job are its ability to work with people, to contribute to society, to have long holiday and summer vacations, and job responsibility.

Statistical analysis revealed that there is an inverse relationship between the ranking for the categories "career importance" and "importance in teaching." In general, top rankings for "career importance" match low rankings for "importance in teaching" and vice versa. This relationship remains unchanged even after a one-hour presentation on science education as a career presented by an experienced physical science educator. Unless teaching can be promoted as an attractive career choice for physical science majors, the shortage of suitable qualified and experienced science teachers promises to worsen.

12:00– 12:50 PM NOVICE/EXPERT TEACHERS Mt. Tower

Presenter: Tamekia L. Brown, University of Arkansas - Little Rock

Coaching Talk: Providing The Communicative Context To Support Analysis

Anne C. Lindsay, University of Arkansas - Little Rock,
and Jody Edrington, North Little Rock (AR) School District

This presentation was based on a study of the classroom discourse of coaching. The study was done with PreK teachers, but as the conversation studied takes place between adults, the results should be generic to coaching at any level. The literature on coaching emphasizes the importance of the analysis of teaching and provides examples of some ways teacher-coach "conversation" can be structured to facilitate such analysis. However, the same literature also discusses other aspects of the coaching relationship and their importance to the success of the coaching process but provides only limited suggestions for how these conversations should be structured.

The purpose of this study was to identify explicit structures for coaching strategies that support analysis and to identify additional strategies that further support coaching conversations. The authors examined the conversations of a coach and the 10 PreK teachers with whom they worked over two semesters. Conversations were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The coach's talk was analyzed and coded using the constant comparative method.

The results provided a variety of explicit examples about how a coach could structure conversation to support the analysis of teaching. However, they also revealed a broad range of other strategies related to analysis as well as the identification of strategies that enact the other aspects of the coaching process mentioned in the literature but not explicitly described. The results also provided a range of explicit examples of how these strategies can be structured. The study revealed a much broader range of strategies used by a coach than generally indicated in the literature. It also provided explicit examples of how coaches can enact all of these strategies and discussed the reasons why these strategies may be effective.

A Participant Observer Investigation into the Development of Expertise in Teaching

Jeffery Knighton, Gordon College

While one can identify a number of traits of expert teachers, little is known about their development. Researchers have proposed stages of development of expertise, but these stages do not provide information regarding how teachers progress from one stage to another. In addition, little or no research has been conducted to determine how communities of practice assist teachers in the development of expertise.

In order to document the developmental path of expertise in teaching, the researcher spent

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12 years teaching a standardized health curriculum, 10 of which were spent within a community of practice of expert trainers of the curriculum. The researcher progressed from novice teacher to expert teacher. Using qualitative research methods, particularly case study and grounded theory, experiences of the researcher and other teachers within the community were documented using the constant comparative method. It was determined that the path toward expertise in teaching is not a direct, upward path.

Rather, teachers experienced a decline in ability once they reached the competency stage and entered into the community of practice of expert trainers. The mentors in this community assisted the new trainers in reversing the decline in ability and progressing toward expertise by providing the new trainers with safe opportunities to practice and take risks, feedback on their performance, and familial caring. In order to reverse the decline in ability, the new trainers had to surrender to the fact that they were not perfect and could learn from their mentors, and they had to accept that they did not have to be perfect. Once an expert teaching level had been reached, "flow" and a solidified trainer identity motivated the expert trainers to continue developing their skills.

The Impact of Teaching Experience and Building Level on Professional Commitment and Professional Relations and Interactions

Luria S. Stubblefield, Southern University and A&M College; and John Rugutt and Caroline C. Chemosit, Illinois State University

New teachers want to be part of a larger professional learning community – one that supports their development as accomplished educators. Key to new teacher retention is an environment of professional commitment and professional relations and interactions where novice and experienced educators work together on problems of teaching and learning.

The measure used in the study was a revision (Olivier, et al., 1998) of the original School Culture Elements Questionnaire (SCEQ) developed by Cavanagh (1997) for use in Australian schools. The original SCEQ consists of two sections: actual and preferred. The actual survey addresses "how I and my school actually are" and requires participants to respond to statements according to how they see factors, events, and conditions actually occurring in their schools. The preferred survey measures teachers' perceptions of how they would prefer things to be in a school in which they "wish" to work, thus detailing their preferences for characteristics of an ideal school.

Using survey data from a sample of 1,500 K-12 teachers from a midwestern state, this study examined relationships between teachers' years of experience and building level on the combined effect of professional commitment and professional relations and interactions while controlling for collegial teaching and learning. The MANOVA results indicated no significant interaction between teacher teaching experience and school building level (Wilks' $\lambda = .998$, $F(8, 2668) = .279$, $p = .973$). The main effects of teacher teaching experience (Wilks' $\lambda = .988$, $F(4, 2668) = 3.905$, $p < .004$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .01$) indicated significant effect on the combined dependent variable. Further, building level (Wilks' $\lambda = .992$, $F(4, 2668) = 2.595$, $p = .035$) indicated significant effect on the combined dependent variable. The covariate significantly influenced the combined dependent variable, Wilks' $\lambda = .510$, $F(2, 1334) = 640.067$, $p < .001$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .490$.

12:00– 12:50 PM BUILDING TEACHER CAPACITY: MATHEMATICS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Symposium)..... Desoto II

Organizer: **Talana Vogel**, Christian Brothers University

Celia Rousseau Anderson, University of Memphis, and Talana Vogel, Christian Brothers University

The papers included in this symposium reported on three aspects of the Delta Mathematics Project. The project was a result of a consortium among three universities and served a nearby school district in the Mississippi delta. The papers in this symposium described the efforts and perceptions of the team from the University of Memphis to improve mathematics education in the Tate County school district (a pseudonym). These efforts included a professional development program for junior and senior high

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school teachers that involved three weeks in the summer of 2005 and monthly meetings during the 2005-06 school-year. In addition, the teachers received monthly follow-up observations and instructional support in their classrooms.

The papers examined this project from three different perspectives and with different foci on mathematics professional development, inclusion and a comparison and contrasting of policies between urban and rural schools. The first paper in the symposium described the professional development program of the Delta Mathematics Project, that was specifically tailored to the needs of the target population. In particular, the designers used data from state assessments to determine topics and approaches for the professional development sessions. The teachers also were consulted for input on topics and strategies that they believed would be most beneficial. In addition to the focus on rural mathematics education, participants identified concerns about "inclusion." The first year of the project was also the first year of the district's implementation of inclusion in mathematics. As a result, students with identified learning or emotional disabilities who had previously been "pulled out" to the resource room from the mathematics classroom for special education classes are now included in the regular mathematics classes. In an effort to ensure that these students' needs are being met, special education teachers are assigned to work with a teacher in the regular classroom. Inclusion has demanded that the classroom teachers adapt their instructional methods to meet the needs of a wide range of students and required the special education teachers to collaborate more closely with the classroom teacher and engage additional types of expertise in the content area (Salyer, Curran, & Thyfault, 2002). One of the goals of the Delta Math Project has been to help bridge this gap by including both special education and mathematics teachers in the professional development program.

In the final paper, the authors considered these issues of definition of rural education versus urban education and reflect on their experiences as "urban" faculty working in a rural setting. They examined their own preconceptions in undertaking the project and changes in their attitudes and beliefs as a result of working with the Tate County schools. They noted the similarities and differences between Tate County and the large, urban district with which they typically work. The authors concluded the paper with possible implications of their experiences for other efforts to improve mathematics education for African American students.

1:00 – 1:50 PM INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION.....Boardroom

President: Gordon R. Sutherlin, Abilene Christian University

Teacher Stress in Chinese Middle Schools

Lingqi Meng, Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge, and Shujie Liu, University of Southern Mississippi

Since Kyriacou and Sutcliffe first proposed the term "teacher stress" in 1977, studies about teacher stress have become voluminous (Cole & Walker, 1989; Cox & Brockley, 1984; Dunham & Varma, 1998; Kyriacou & Chien). However, most of the existing research has been the product of western countries; very few studies have been conducted in the People's Republic of China (hereafter called China), one of the major developing countries.

This study investigated the general level of teacher stress, the sources of teacher stress, and the copying methods used by teachers, their schools, and the government to reduce teacher stress in China. A stratified random sampling was used to select 200 middle school teachers, including 100 urban and 100 rural teachers, in Changchun, the capital of Jilin Province, China. These selected teachers were asked to answer a 55-item, four-dimension (the general level of teacher stress, the sources of teacher stress, the copying methods used by teachers, and school/government intervention strategies) teacher stress questionnaire. Before analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire, the score reliability/validity (e.g., internal consistency, construct-related validity) was assessed.

The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) technique was used in this study to examine the differences between rural and urban teachers, between female and male teachers, and the possible interaction between urbanicity and gender, on the four dimensions of teacher stress. The significance of this project lies in its adding new information to the study of teacher stress. It is believed that the addition of Chinese sample to teacher stress database will do much to internationalize the field.

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An Environmental Education Program in Western Kenya

Linda H. Thornton, Harding University

The purpose of this study was to describe the development of an environmental education program for P-16 students and teachers in western Kenya. In this part of Africa, environmental education is an important factor in reducing the severe poverty caused by environmental mismanagement. Many of the students are orphans because of the high incidence of AIDS in this part of central Africa. The program, located in Mibta, near Lake Victoria, is a dynamic program developed by Donald Richards, director of Environment and Resource Stewardship School. Since 1995 the program has been a 1- 4-day camp-based experience in which students from many area schools came for instruction to a camp at Kiboko Base for water studies, soil studies, bird studies, observation and critical thinking activities, and instruction in ecology and conservation. Instructional methods included scavenger hunts, team games for solving such problems as erosion and pollution, and stations along an ecology trail. The curriculum was an experiential process model based on the work of Dewey (1916), Piaget (1948), and Kohlberg (1969).

Assessment activities included student-created skits and “art in the field” activities. Ongoing data collection methods were primarily qualitative, including interviews and analysis of documents and visual media. The data revealed some success and some challenges. The developer has plans to expand the program to include an element called Environmental Education Across the Curriculum, a year-long, integrated, hands-on program for 12-year-old students based on the academic standards for all subjects students normally study, developed by Richards in the Zululand game preserves of South Africa (Richards, 1985), and also to upgrade the physical facilities to create opportunities for Asian, European and American universities to bring students to study Kenyan ecology and make the program self-supporting. This program may serve as a model for environmental education programs in other developing countries.

The Portrayal of the Middle East in School Textbooks From 1898 to the 1990’s

Hani Morgan, University of Southern Mississippi

The portrayal of the Middle East in school textbooks was reported to be inaccurate and negative in the mid-1990’s by the few researchers who investigated this topic. Several major studies showed that school textbooks written between 1970 and 1994 contributed to existing stereotypes that Americans have towards people from this region. But how were Middle Eastern people portrayed in school textbooks before this time?

This paper evaluated school textbooks that date back to 1898 and compared them to those written in later years. This qualitative study surveyed four time-periods: 1898-1920, 1920-1940, 1945-1965, and 1970-1994. It follows a research methodology similar to previous studies of this nature which consists of a textual analysis of school textbooks. There has been much more attention to the Middle East as a result of the events of 9/11/2001 and the current war in Iraq. The need for accurate knowledge about this area is more important than ever. Analyzing errors that were made in previous years will help educators to recognize negative stereotypes in the future and to assist them in avoiding selecting books with similar errors. Previous studies that investigated textbooks written between 1970 and 1994 focused on the culture, religion, politics, and photographic representation of the Middle East.

This study also used this thematic organization and evaluated the way these topics were discussed in textbooks written between 1898 and 1965. A discussion of the findings of the studies done between 1970 and 1994 by other researchers was also presented. The findings of this study discussed that, although there were vast improvements in the portrayal of the Middle East in the later periods, inaccuracies that misrepresent the culture, religion, and politics of the region were still made. In general, the earlier textbooks had many more inaccurate passages than those written in later years.

1:00 – 1:50 PM MATHEMATICS EDUCATION Tri-Lakes

Presenter: Debra S. Gentry, University of Southern Mississippi

A Component Analysis of Math to Mastery

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Jennifer M. Edwards, Anthony Doggett, Adrian Griffin, Angela Wicker,
Carlen Henington, and Curtis Wicker, Mississippi State University

Math to Mastery is an intervention package that was developed for the school environment to increase mathematic computational skills in a brief intervention. The components of Math to Mastery include the empirically supported strategies of repeated practice with immediate corrective feedback, previewing combined with modeling, and contingent reinforcement. Previous research indicated that these strategies have been beneficial in increasing both reading and mathematic skill deficits. This study included a multielement component analysis of Math to Mastery and a comparison of possible effects on different skill domains. A brief experimental analysis of the intervention components was also performed.

Six elementary students (two females, four males) who were at least one grade below grade-level expectations in mathematics participated in this study. All participants were African American. Each intervention session consisted of three counterbalanced, individually administered components: previewing, repeated practice, and a contingent reinforcement. Two identified skill deficits were alternated between sessions for each participant. An Alternating Treatment Design (ATD) was used to compare the effectiveness of the intervention package on specific skill domains.

Preliminary results indicated the participants significantly increased digits correct per minute in each skill domain measured, and there is no significant difference between individual improvement on any specific domain. Preliminary, brief experimental analysis results indicated contingent reinforcement yields the biggest gains in digits correct per minute for all participants. The comparison components of the intervention package, as well as the comparison of the effects of the intervention on specific skill domains, were presented graphically, and implications for Tier II and Tier III interventions to be used in the school environment were discussed based on the component analysis and comparison.

The Effects of Teacher Mediation on Kindergarten Students' Computer-Assisted Mathematics Learning

Lisa H. Burkette, Milligan College

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of teacher mediation on the mathematics learning of kindergarten students in a computer-assisted learning environment. Nir-Gal and Klein (2004) found that stronger interpersonal ties between students and teachers were necessary for computer technology to be an effective educational tool. They examined the learning outcomes of kindergarten children using computer software and found empirical evidence that teacher involvement improved computer-assisted learning outcomes.

The theory of mediated learning was used as a basis for describing and planning the requisite teacher/student interaction. Mediated learning experiences were first described and enumerated by Feuerstein (1986). Mediated learning occurred with children when the learning environment was altered by the intervention of an adult (teacher). The modifications were made to adapt the environment to the learner's needs, interests, and abilities, and were a direct result of the adult mediation.

A sample of 26 students was randomly selected and assigned into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was mediated by a teacher during the computer-assisted learning activity. The control group received no teacher mediation. Data were collected for both groups for activity enjoyment and mathematics learning experience at the end of six weeks. Data were analyzed using independent t-tests at a .05 level of significance.

The results indicated a significant difference between experimental and control groups on levels of activity enjoyment. The experimental group showed higher levels of enjoyment compared to the control group. No significant difference was found in mathematics learning between the experimental and control group. The results on mathematics learning were not congruent with literature review. Further research was recommended.

Examination of PASS Cognitive Processes Relating to Academic Intervention

Daniel J. Krenzer, Mississippi State University

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This study investigated the PASS theory of cognitive processes in relation to academic performance on tasks involving mathematics. The instrument used was the Cognitive Assessment System (CAS). The purpose on this study was to identify which math intervention worked best for a specific cognitive profile.

Participants of this study took part in a five-week summer academic clinic and received daily academic intervention services. The participant group consisted of elementary school-aged children that were Caucasian and African American. Throughout the duration of the clinic, the CAS was administered to the participants. The test protocols were scored after all intervention data were collected to avoid observer bias. Math interventions that the participants received included previewing, contingent reinforcement, and repeated practice paired with immediate corrective feedback. Curriculum-based assessment was used to determine the current grade level of math skill. After reaching a grade and skill level, baseline sessions were conducted prior to intervention. Math interventions were counterbalanced and implemented on a daily basis.

Data analysis included digits correct per minute for the baseline and intervention phases. The second analysis included calculating a percentage change in digits correct per minute. Additional analysis was conducted to examine which participants displayed differential improvement based on their cognitive profile. Cognitive profiles were divided into low and high scores for each of the PASS processes. Contrasts were analyzed to determine individual processes with low or high scores and which intervention was most effective. Tables were developed to display the results of the CAS and academic interventions. Results, limitations, future research, and practitioner use were discussed.

1:00 – 1:50 PM EVALUATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION Pageant

Presider: Margaret Mary Sulentic-Dowell, Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge

Evaluation of Summit III: Charting a COE's Future

John R. Petry, University of Memphis

The COE's purpose for Summit III was to decide about which Big Ideas would be implemented in 2007-2008. Of the 177 registrants attending, 125 (or 71.2%) submitted a copy of the evaluation form. Participants were either faculty members, staff members, and students in the COE or stakeholders. Each item asking for an opinion (items 1-7) ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree was answered except in a few instances (nine). Comments were sought for items 1-6 and for item 8 (suggestions for future Summit meetings) and item 9 (additional comments).

Respondents rated item 1, registration, highest with a mean of 4.62. Item 5d, dealing with the process enabling the discussion and sharing of diverse viewpoints, followed with a mean of 4.41. Item 6, "The process used to select the Big Ideas was effective," was ranked lowest with a mean of 4.01. One of five persons chose from among "Undecided," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree" to express an opinion about the voting process. Concerning the Shared Conversation: World Café experience, respondents were in close agreement about items related to it. They ranked 5d first, followed by "My voice was heard" (4.40), and items about the rounds process (item 5c, 4.34) and time allocated for discussion of Big Ideas (item 5b, 4.34). More than 80% of the responses for each item were in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories, ranging from a high of 95.9% for item 1, registration, to a low of 81.2% for item 7, the process for voting for the Big Ideas. The average for each item was 90.7%; the average for each category, 45.6%.

The level of agreement was indicative of the mood and morale of the group. It was overwhelmingly genial, cooperative, and participatory. The lack of negativism allowed for the promotion of good will, understanding, and collegiality.

Closing the Loop in Program Improvement: Using Advisory Groups to Strengthen Teacher Education Programs

Cynthia Harper, Jacksonville State University

Colleges of education have been under fire in recent years concerning candidates' degree of preparedness as they complete teacher education programs. Finding a path to ensure better teacher

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quality has become an essential element as colleges of education strive to maintain their credibility. Education units that have achieved national accreditation often seek advisory group input through various professional involvements. Advisory groups are charged to review candidate and program data as these colleges seek input from outside the realms of the educational system to assist in determining program quality. In addition to faculty from education and arts and sciences, advisory group membership might include individuals from different professions including P/12 teachers, principals, superintendents, graduate and undergraduate students, and members from business and the community at large. Advisory groups that bring together faculty from colleges of arts and sciences and colleges of education can provide a forum through which the experts with content and pedagogy knowledge can communicate. Through this open communication faculty are encouraged to view how the other side operates and make suggestions toward program improvement. Both colleges work collaboratively to provide programming for candidates enrolled in teacher education programs.

This session demonstrated how collaborative efforts among professionals to strengthen and improve teacher education programs can impact teacher quality. Participants learned how to use candidate and program data gathered from varied sources to improve and/or change educational programs for teachers. Unit developed booklets used in advisory group meetings was made available for review. Specific data used to promote program change were provided.

Playing it Forward: The NCATE Visit from a Variety of Perspectives

Melissa E. Zacame and Eric Luce, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith,
and Margaret Mary Sulentic Dowell, Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge

The educational world is in the midst of profound shifts in theory, practice, and evaluation. Some might even call it a revolution! The changing requirements and demands of teaching impact how colleges of education and colleges holding secondary education programs structure programming and provide field-based experiences in order to prepare preservice teachers for the difficult job of teaching.

NCATE orchestrates the platform that guides the curricular and assessment processes affecting teacher education programs. For many institutions, the efficacy of their programming in teacher preparation can truly be judged by their success with the NCATE accreditation process. New guidelines for accreditation have recently been instituted for all Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), including all programs from early childhood education to special education to English education; in short, passing the SPA's is one major step in retaining accreditation.

New requirements can often be viewed two ways: (1) roadblocks to maintaining traditional approaches, or (2) ways of preparing teachers with genuine opportunities to improve the strength of programming by creating more authentic field components that better prepare teachers for increasingly complex demands. Every faculty member involved in teacher education should participate in the process by knowing what the actual accreditation requirements entail by conspicuously structuring courses and experiences to best prepare teachers, as well as by understanding the intricate elements of an NCATE institutional review. The stakes are high, but passing an NCATE review most assuredly results in a quality program that serves students as a means of coming to the educational arena informed and equipped.

1:00 – 1:50 PM ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING Mt. Tower

President: John J. Marshak, Virginia Commonwealth University

Mirror, Mirror: A Phenomenological Study of the Role of Reflection in the Teaching in Elementary School

Amy F. Morgan, Jerry Aldridge, and Nataliya Ivankova, University of Alabama - Birmingham

In this era of increasing accountability in education, teachers are being asked to move away from the role of intuitive guide to being a more deliberate, reflective practitioner. The need exists to understand the experience of reflection and its meaning from the perspective of practicing teachers. Existing studies describe an effective teacher as one who reflects upon her/his teaching. However, they do not illuminate the perspective of teachers to assist other teachers in knowing how to reflect effectively.

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Guided by works of Dewey (1909/1933) and Schon (1983, 1987), this phenomenological study explored the reflective experiences of practicing teachers in order to understand, from the perspective of teachers, the meaning of reflection in teaching. The central research question was: What is the meaning of reflection in teaching? The purposeful sample included 11 female teachers and 1 male teacher, currently teaching in grades K through 5, with 3 to 29 years of teaching experience.

The data were collected through focus group interviews and subsequent follow-up individual interviews with each participant. The data analysis followed the procedures outlined by Moustakas (1994). After transcribing interviews verbatim, invariant horizons, or statements significant to the central phenomenon and reinforced by more than one participant, were pulled from the transcripts. The statements were organized into seven themes pertaining to reflection: (1) ongoing learning process, (2) way to solve problems, (3) way to deal with change, (4) sharing with others, (5) evolving with experience (6) being formal and informal, and (7) taking place in a nurturing environment. These findings can help school administrators hear the voices of practicing teachers so that they can better establish, monitor, and evaluate effective reflective practices. As teachers begin to understand the meaning of reflection for themselves and other teachers, they become empowered to use time in the classroom more efficiently.

My Soul Looked Back and Wondered: The Supervisory Styles of Two African American Principals of Segregated Schools in Georgia

Charlotte K. Eady and Isreal Eady, Jr., Jacksonville State University

The supervisory styles and dispositions of two African American principals of segregated African American schools in Georgia were examined in this study. Segregated southern schools provided the contextual framework for the study. A qualitative case study was conducted to gain an understanding of the supervisory styles and dispositions of the two principals. During a twelve-month period, three interviews were conducted with two (retired) principals who served during the era of segregation. The two principals lived and worked in small communities in middle and South Georgia. Within-case and cross-case analysis was conducted.

The methodological framework is defined in the existence of an African American epistemology or the knowledge and cultural artifacts produced by African Americans based on African American cultural, social, economic, historical, and political experience. The participants in the study were purposefully selected. Many of the African American principals of the era of segregation are deceased. The two principals interviewed for this study were physically frail, but mentally lucid and strong. A semi-structured interview protocol was used.

Even though the primary goal of this study was to understand the dispositions and supervisory styles of the two principals, the implications from the data may serve to inform the practices of prospective principals, current principals, and those who teach educational leadership. Additionally, data derived from the interviews have historical significance and interest.

Toward a Pedagogy of Opportunity and Inclusion: A Case Study

Franco Zengaro, Middle Tennessee State University,
and Sally Zengaro, University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

This research examined the physical education and sports experiences of one student athlete with a physical disability. The purpose of this research was to present the perspective of a female wheelchair basketball student athlete on the challenges, motivations, and outcomes in pursuing participation in sports and activities organized around human interaction. This research was framed under a critical reflective approach. Two research questions guided this research: (1) What were the physical education learning experiences of this student? and (2) Did these experiences shape in her view of education? The participant was a young female wheelchair college student attending a major university in the south.

The researchers used standard non-participant observation methods. Data collection included multiple semistructured interviews and field notes collected during the course of one semester. Data were analyzed using constant comparison. Categories were combined into themes, and material

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was coded as themes emerged from the data analysis. Through the use of interviews and field observations, a case study was developed.

Two main points emerged from the research. First, the participant was not allowed to participate in physical education in middle school. Second, the participant came to appreciate physical activity in her life for the cardiovascular and psychological benefits it gave her. Being involved in adaptive sports, she has gained a higher sense of independence and self-efficacy. She said, “[Participating in sports] proves to yourself that you can do anything.” Her construction of reality has also taken on a critical perspective in calling for more integration and inclusion. She realized that her experiences in school were a reflection of society’s views that people with disabilities are limited in what they can do. She stated, “I want other children with disabilities to have those opportunities because I didn’t have them growing up.”

**1:00 – 1:50 PM RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
AND ACADEMICIANS GET ON THE SAME PAGE
(Symposium).....Desoto II**

Organizer: Beverly Moon, Delta State University

Marcie Moore and Tracy Mims, Delta State University

This symposium presented three papers on a collaboration effort at Delta State University that brought assessment analysis and academic research together in an effort to determine what factors influence students in a particular population to “stop out” of college.

The first paper: “Recognizing the Need for Collaboration: The Mandate for an Institutionalized Assessment Plan.” In an overview of the particular project, the presenter discussed the need for institutionalized assessment plans and for seamless integration of institutional research functions into the larger academic functions of an institution. The further application of the methods used, the instrument developed, and the implications of the results were suggested.

The second paper: “What Factors Influence the Academic Persistence of Males at Delta State University?” A striking reality on the nation’s campuses of higher education has been both the increase of the American college student population and an increasing inability to persist to graduation. The purpose of this study was to explore the affect of institutional and personal factors on the persistence of males who identified as white or black at Delta State University. Specifically, this study was to determine if a difference exists between ethnicity, personal factors and institutional factors regarding white and black males at Delta State University. Participants completed the Academic Persistence Survey.

The third paper: “Developing the Definitive Survey: How Institution and Research Come Together.” This paper presented the methods and process used to conduct a random sample of Delta State University’s student population for the study of academic persistence. More specifically, the process illustrated how the Institutional Research and Planning office assisted in the study of academic persistence and possible solutions to help identify how students can decrease some of the factors that may prevent them from completing their degree requirements.

The assessment analyst refined the initial draft survey: questions were combined in order to determine what factors inhibit students from completing college; contingency questions were asked throughout the survey to ensure accuracy. The sample was gathered by targeting those courses within specific areas of study determined by the primary researcher. This study could be expanded to include graduate students to measure what factors contributed to their staying in school and obtaining a graduate degree.

Audience participation was in the form of questions and answers at end of session, with the audience encouraged to pose questions relating to their home institutions and to share their successful collaborations.

**2:00 – 2:50 PM PROMOTING FACULTY CONTRACT AND GRANT PRODUCTIVITY
(Symposium).....Boardroom**

Organizer: James E. McLean, University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

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Jamie F. Satcher, Rochelle Dail, David Hardy, and Lisa Scherff, University of Alabama,
and James E. McLean, University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

Faculty members have many demands competing for their time. In most universities, these include various tasks that accompany their missions of teaching, research, and service. However, university budgets often fund only the teaching component. Thus, it becomes important for faculty to find other ways of supporting their research and service activities and even enhancing their teaching. The purpose of this symposium was to describe a program at one institution designed to prepare faculty for this aspect of their positions and to report results from this program. The program was described from both an administrative perspective and from the perspective of three different program participants who are in two different departments. The results of the program were also described.

The first paper, titled "Vision and Rationale for the Faculty Grant Development Program," described the program and the rationale for its development. It also included information about practical matters such as its goals, cost, and its potential cost benefit. The paper discussed funding costs for starting and continuing such a program.

The second paper, titled "Doing Grant Writing the Right Way—Funded or Not," was presented by a fifth-year faculty member in curriculum and instruction who participated in the program. This paper focused on how the program has provided her with the skills to write and submit her "first" federal grant. Additionally, the paper described how this process assisted those new to one university, but not new to the profession.

The third paper, titled "Grant Mentoring: Gateway to a Million Dollar Grant," was presented by a faculty member in higher education administration who leveraged what he learned in the program in concert with his background and knowledge into a one million dollar grant. The paper described the author's experience as a participant in the program and how he was able to take this new knowledge to a new level in an environment of decreasing resources.

The fourth paper, titled "From Idea to Project: The Role of Mentoring," described the opportunities that participation in this program afforded one recently appointed assistant professor. This candid discussion included advantages and disadvantages linked to her involvement in this program and how it both supported her departmental work and sometimes strained relationships with colleagues.

A final paper, titled "Short and Middle Term Results of the Faculty Grant Development Program," presented evidence about the success of the program including a summary of reactions from all the participants. Members of the first two cohorts (20 participants) submitted 17 grant proposals. Seven of these were funded for over 1.1 million dollars with three pending for over 3.5 million dollars. Only seven have not been rejected, and most of these will be revised and resubmitted.

2:00 – 2:50 PM TECHNOLOGY Tri-Lakes

President: Rebecca R. Robichaux, Mississippi State University

Factors Influencing K-12 Technology Integration and Their Relationship to the RIPPELS Model of Technology Implementation

David C. Ensminger, Loyola University - Chicago

This paper provided a review of the literature related to technology integration within K-12 settings. Emphasis was placed on the literature within the last 10 years. Variables related to technology integration were identified and classified into factors. Additionally, this paper explored the relationship between the K-12 technology integration factors and the RIPPELS model. The RIPPELS model identifies seven areas that influence the successful implementation of the technology. Although the model was originally designed to explain technology implementation in higher education settings, this paper explored the feasibility of using the RIPPELS models as a foundation for technology integration at the K-12 level.

Parent Perceptions of Their Child's Computer Use at Home as a Result of Technology Use in the School

Carol S. Uline, Charles E. Notar, and Jordan Barkley, Jacksonville State University

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The primary goal of the Education Technology Grant was to train preservice teachers to use technology in their K-6 classrooms. In a state-of-the-art technology lab, preservice teachers were instructed how to: (1) create learning environments using advanced technology to teach content standards, (2) design technology-connected lessons to enhance learning, (3) implement technology for use with children of diverse learning needs, and (4) create educational websites accessible to students and parents. Assessment data gathered to determine the degree to which the above objectives were met and included data collection from preservice teachers, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, outside evaluators, K-6 students, and students' parents. A parent survey was the means for obtaining information about the K-6 students' use of computers in their homes. Parents of children taught by the student teachers responded to 10 questions focused on interest, access, and increased use of technology during the three-year grant period.

Results of the parent survey were analyzed. During the grant period, 2004-2006, K-6 students, who were taught by the preservice teachers engaged in grant activities, enhanced their interest and use of technology. According to parental survey responses, both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking K-6 students increased their interest and access to computer use. Parents spent more time on the computer with their children, to include viewing the student teachers' websites. Children spent more time on the computer with siblings and friends. Some parents purchased or updated computer equipment, and some added internet access. Findings of this project indicated that by enhancing the skills of preservice teachers to use advanced technology in the classroom, the children taught by these student teachers increased their interest in using technology.

Rethinking Paivio: Using Digital Audio to Enhance Student Writing

Andy K. Stanfield and V. Dempsey, University of South Alabama

Three pilot studies were conducted in the 2006-7 academic year using several sections of British literature. The focus of the study was to establish a process where students could use digital audio recording to create content for podcasts rather than relying on using podcasts for reception learning. Students, using outlines, created digital audio files as first drafts of papers. Collaborative peer groups then listened to the files, giving written feedback. After this, focus groups were recorded, using the Critical Incident method. These questions were organized into four categories: editing, recording, process, and feedback. It was found that the method of gaining feedback should be expanded, in order to give the listeners several chances to take in the content of the podcasts. Participants agreed that time is a factor, which should be taken into consideration if conducting peer-review workshops. Because participants felt that listening to podcasts gives different perspectives on grammar than traditional methods, it might be helpful to mix traditional and audio drafts. Writers might find it beneficial to use audio drafting beginning the writing process to brainstorm or generate content. Many participants related that they felt unencumbered by worries of grammar or traditional rules. This method could possibly be used by beginning writers to create content without worrying about traditional rules of grammar and composition.

Data analysis revealed that language was being processed differently between written and spoken words, despite the teachings of Dual Code theory. Educational sensory input appears to be mostly limited to visual: images and written words, auditory, artificial and natural sounds and spoken language, and kinesthetic/tactile. This input model contradicts Paivio, who stated there are only verbal and visual channels. Dual Code theory does not account for the different ways language may be processed.

2:00 – 2:50 PM READING, ACHIEVEMENT, AND AT-RISK STUDENTS Pageant

President: Ronald L. Skidmore, Morehead State University

Using Written Retellings of Narratives as a Method of Assessing Struggling Readers Reading and Writing Development

Rita C. Boydston, Jacksonville State University

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The purpose of this study was to share the use of written retellings as an assessment tool to gain insight into troubled readers' literacy development and to increase teacher's awareness that struggling readers are more competent readers and writers than shown by traditional assessment methods. This study investigated the value of using written retellings to evaluate Title I children's ability to write a coherent story and orally read their version of the story.

This was a qualitative study in which a second-grade classroom teacher worked with six struggling readers during the Title I reading block. This study was conducted over an eight-week period. After analyzing the children's written retelling by examining each child's sentence structure, grammar, and spelling, it was determined that all of these children were more competent readers and writers than was evidenced by traditional assessments. The children's oral reading of their own retellings was evaluated by using miscue analysis.

This evaluation revealed that each child was reading for meaning, self-correcting their own mistakes, and making legitimate miscues when reading their own written retellings. It was apparent that their literacy development had been underestimated by traditional measures of their reading and writing ability. The results were discussed in terms of changes that could be initiated by classroom teachers to enhance the accuracy of struggling readers' literacy assessment and implications for improving the children's self-esteem.

Impact of the Use of Informational Text for Remediation of Reading Difficulties

Corlis L. Snow, Delta State University

This study examined the impact of the use of informational text to remediate reading difficulties in the areas of letter-word identification, passage comprehension, word attack, and vocabulary. Fifteen 1st through 10th-grade students from the Delta area schools participated in the sessions; however, 12 (seven males, five females, six African Americans, six Caucasians) received the full 14 weeks of remedial instruction. Parents cited transportation difficulties as the reason for attrition among the sample size. Each student was assigned to a graduate or undergraduate student majoring in elementary or special education and received 60 minutes of instruction per session for 14 weeks.

Eleven students were instructed three days per week, while one student received instruction two days per week. Each session followed a predictable format that included a review of previously-taught skills, word-study instruction, guided reading instruction using informational text, fluency practice, and writing pre- and post-assessments utilizing the following subtests of the Woodcock Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery (WJ III DRB) were used to evaluate reading achievement among the 12 students who received the full 14 weeks of remedial instruction: Letter-Word Identification, Passage Comprehension, Word Attack, and Reading Vocabulary.

The findings indicated that the students made the following average gains in school months: 4.75 months in letter-word identification, 5.6 months in passage comprehension, 7.7 months in word attack, and 8.2 months in reading vocabulary. Statistical analysis utilizing SPSS indicated that mean differences in three of the four subtests were statistically significant: Letter-word Identification ($M = .516$), Passage Comprehension ($M = .625$), and Reading Vocabulary ($M = .900$). The findings suggested implications for the use of informational text during remedial instruction.

Fourth-Grade Reading Achievement in Kentucky: An In-Depth Look at 2005 NAEP Data

Beverly M. Klecker, Morehead State University

The purpose of this paper was to take an in-depth look at Kentucky's fourth-grade reading scores using the recently-released 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data. The Kentucky Board of Education included increasing NAEP scores in their strategic plan (KBE, 2006). A look at the overall 2005 Kentucky data found that the fourth-grade reading scores had not increased since the 2003 test. Statistically significant ($p < .01$) gaps by all NCLB demographic groups were unchanged from 2003. This in-depth look was taken to examine relationships to plan further research and strategies to increase reading achievement in the state.

Darling-Hammond (2000), Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002), and Wayne and Youngs (2003) found strong links between the NCLB-defined teacher quality variables and student achievement.

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Additional researchers found that the quality of the teacher was the most important schooling factor predicting student outcomes (Ferguson 1998; Goldhaber 2002; Goldhaber et al. 1999; Hanushek et al. 1999; Wright et al. 1997). Since 1969, NAEP has been the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know in various subject areas. In addition to student scores, the fourth-grade 2005 NAEP data included school, student, teacher, and community variables. The 2005 dataset included teaching-reading strategies, many identified by Snow (2002).

Differences in Kentucky's fourth-grade reading scores were examined by demographics, teacher quality, and teaching strategy using one-way ANOVAs and multiple regression analyses. The unique sampling properties and matrixed nature of the NAEP data were accounted for in the analyses (NAEP, 2005). Results with effect sizes were reported. No statistically significant differences were found in Kentucky's fourth-grade reading scores by NCLB-defined teacher quality variables: (1) undergrad major/minor in elementary education, (2) graduate major/minor in reading and education, (3) highest academic degree, (4) type of teaching certificate, and (5) years of teaching experience. Discussion included implications for teacher education in Kentucky.

2:00 – 2:50 PM RESEARCH IN PROGRESS (RIP)..... Mt. Tower

Presiders: Sherry L. Shaw, University of North Florida, and Michelle Georgette and Haj-Boussard, McNeese State University

Personal Characteristics of Sign Language Interpreters: Perspectives of Graduates from Interpreter Education Program

Hemali McJunkins, University of Arkansas – Little Rock

Interpreter education research has shown that students face a challenge when transitioning from language courses within their program of study to interpreting courses. This study built upon two foundational studies that were conducted on student perceptions of critical personal characteristics (i.e. confidence, resilience, self-motivation, patience, persistence, goal-orientation, assertiveness, flexibility, curiosity, ambition) that were relevant to their success in interpreting programs (Shaw & Hughes, 2006; Shaw, Grbic, & Franklin, 2004). Thus far, no research has attempted to determine if these characteristics are still imperative to the working conditions of interpreters who graduated from these programs within the last five years.

This study focused on graduates and evaluated how their perceptions of critical characteristics may have changed as they worked as professional interpreters. Data about their perceptions of critical personal characteristics were collected from the interpreters (graduates of Interpretation programs within the last five years) through the means of a self-report questionnaire. Analysis of these data informed Interpreter Education programs about critical factors for graduates entering the workforce.

Curriculum Integration of Anger Management Strategies in Alternative High Schools

Delores Brazzell, Tennessee State University

Anger is often found at the root of the behavior problems for many of these students. Among the most powerful factors for school violence is anger, especially sudden rage. Students who have not learned to manage their anger are at-risk for aggression, perhaps even violent explosive behavior (Skiba & McElvey, 1999). This study examined the effectiveness of curriculum technology integration of academics and anger management strategies in alternative high school settings. Students, parents, educators, and society as a whole are the beneficiaries of anger management strategies that are effective and allow the educational process to progress. Included in this study was an examination of several areas of the anger experience and an analysis of the degree of effectiveness of technology integration of curriculum with anger management strategies on students in alternative schools. The areas include anger, school hostility, positive coping skills and destructive expression. Anger management strategies that are effective will open channels of communication for students, parents and educators. Curriculum integration of technology involves the infusion of technology as a tool to deepen the learning experience.

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Exposing the Teachers and Scientists of Tomorrow: The 21st Century Community Learning Science Education Camp

Andre´ M. Green and Phillip Feldman, University of South Alabama

High school students rarely consider teaching or science as a viable option for a career choice when entering college. Furthermore, students who demonstrate an aptitude for science often do not consider teaching science as a career choice. Many plausible explanations exist as to why this phenomenon is occurring, and part of that problem is rooted in the fact that students are not properly exposed to the education or science profession. To address the problem of exposure, the College of Education at the University of South Alabama hosted a 21st Century Community Learning Science Camp for 30 students in grades 10 through 12.

The six-day camp used science as an avenue to encourage the participants to consider careers in education or science as viable career choices. To meet this goal, part of each day of the summer camp was used to enhance the participant's interest in reading, math, science, and art. A second ambition of the camp was to encourage the participants to set a goal of attending college. Activities were designed to expose participants to different aspects of college life. Participants were also asked to journal and discuss issues pertinent to them as African American students. The participants were given pre- and post-assessments of the camp, as well as an overall evaluation of the camp.

The experiences of the participants, the effectiveness of the science camp, and the thoughts of African American high school students about issues that affect them as youth were discussed in this presentation.

African American Preservice Candidates Perceptions of Elementary Education

Robert Z. Carr and Tony Latiker, Jackson State University

This study was inspired by the lack of relevant research pertaining to African American, male, primary teachers. After an extensive review of the literature, it was discovered that African American, male preservice and inservice elementary teacher candidates are almost always excluded from the discussion concerning increasing the male population within the field of elementary education. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American male preservice candidates concerning African American males teaching in elementary school settings.

Qualitative research methods such as document analysis, participant observation, interviewing, and shadowing were used in order to provide an in-depth examination of their perspectives. The analysis of data was an ongoing process that utilized the constant comparative research method. Themes were derived from the data by writing memos during field observations, creating displays from coded data sources, and by labeling collected data into categories.

This study yielded eight overall themes. The themes consisted of challenges facing African American male preservice teachers, teacher expectations, lack of African American male role models, African American male teachers ethic of care, you better mind, I've done nothing wrong, the armless men, and influence and support. This study concluded that the perceptions of African American, male, preservice teachers are essential in understanding why there are so few African American males in the elementary education and how to reverse this trend.

2:00 – 2:50 PM DISPLAYS: TEACHER EDUCATION Mezzanine

President: Eddie Shaw

About the Teachers of Teachers: Research and Action Projects

Ellen S. Faith, Christian Brothers University

Academic achievement in the nation's K-12 schools continues to be a matter of concern and controversy, with associated issues about the possibly problematic role of teacher education in the production of learning in children and young people. Teacher education journals present a rich body of

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research on curriculum, instruction, and assessment of educators in preparation and induction stages, while K-12 literature emphasizes the development of capacity and quality in teachers. Yet, relatively little attention has been paid to the development of capacity and quality in teacher educators as a group related to but not co-identical with the broader education professoriate.

This display session presented an ongoing inquiry into teacher educators together with related proposals for action projects. Through mixed-method pilot studies in Tennessee, three broad lines of inquiry are being pursued: (1) Who is a teacher educator? And what does a teacher educator need to know, be able to do? What foci drive the work life of a teacher educator? (2) As no doctoral program prepares teacher educators specifically (unlike the field of counselor education), how do teacher educators choose or find this work? What are the characteristics of teacher educator careers? and (3) How do teacher educators learn what they need to know so that they add quality and capacity to the programs for which they share responsibility?

Beyond presenting instruments and initial results from the pilot studies and plans for further research, this display session proposes specialized forms of faculty development appropriate to those choosing careers in teacher education. Standards for teacher educators from the Association of Teacher Educators were disseminated, and visitors to the display were invited to: (1) evaluate the research project and/or proposals for specialized faculty development; and/or (2) respond to, critique, and refine instruments.

Contributions of African Americans

Rebecca M. Giles and Paige V. Baggett, University of South Alabama;
and Alicia L. Moore, Southwestern University

Black History Month has been celebrated annually for more than 30 years, sparking an annual debate regarding its continued usefulness. Regardless of one's position in this debate, it is clear that for American history taught in public schools to adequately reflect the contributions of all groups involved in its formation, teachers must be well-informed about the role played by these groups. This study investigated future teachers' knowledge of famous African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement.

Approximately 100 (92 female and 5 male) preservice elementary teachers from an institution in southern Alabama were anonymously surveyed. Although participants' ages ranged from 19 to over 50, the majority (62) were 19 to 24 years olds. While 75 participants were white, black (19), American Indian (2), and Asian (1) ethnicities were also represented.

Participants responded to a Black History quiz developed by the authors. This 20-item multiple choice quiz contained 10 questions pertaining to famous African Americans and 10 questions pertaining to the Civil Rights Movement. Each question was followed by a list of three possible responses with the correct choice for each question being the middle option (letter B).

Findings revealed that participants' Black History knowledge varied greatly. Total number of correct responses ranged from 3 to 20 with an average of 9.39 with black participants average number of correct responses ($M = 12.42$) substantially higher than white participants' average number correct ($M = 8.47$). Further, these future teachers were significantly ($t(1,99) = 6.84, p < .05$) more knowledgeable regarding civil rights ($M = 5.40$) than contributions of African Americans ($M = 4.11$) not surprising taking into consideration that many noteworthy events surrounding this movement occurred in the state in which they reside.

Combining Looping with Action Research in the College Classroom: A Three-Year Study

Patricia K. Lowry and Judy H. McCrary, Jacksonville State University

Looping is an instructional technique where the teacher remains with the same group of students for an extended period of time. In an elementary school setting the time period is usually for two years. At the university level, a modified version of this technique was implemented with students in the graduate teacher education program. This presentation demonstrated how a regional institution successfully demonstrated the looping concept with graduate students, as well as maintained program integrity related to the requirement for action research.

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The implications for policy change are evident in the literature review and through the observations of practicing professionals. The concept of looping has been successful in several areas: gains in academic achievement, development of closer personal relationships between teacher and student, willingness to participate in classroom activities, positive attitudes toward learning, and ability to focus on instructional objectives while spending less time on re-teaching concepts.

This modified version of looping at the university level has been successful. Research and practice have demonstrated successful exemplary practices that modified and then implemented for all levels of teacher education.

Students graduating during the Spring 2006 and Spring 2007 responded to the following reflection at the beginning of the first course – Describe your feelings about research as you begin this EED 631 course. Then, students responded to a brief questionnaire at the beginning of the third course – What are the advantages and/or disadvantages to having the same professor for the four classes? Finally, students responded to the following reflection at the end of the fourth course – Now that you have completed your Ed.S. program, describe your feelings about research.

Accreditation: Developing a Performance-Based Assessment System

Glenn Sheets and David Bell, Arkansas Tech University

The US Department of Education recognizes the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as the accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDEs). NCATE institutions produce more than two-thirds of the new teachers in the country each year. NCATE supports systemic standards-based reform in teacher education. The NCATE standards require the use of performance-based evidence to demonstrate that teacher candidates in all programs are gaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to have a positive impact on K-12 student learning. Emphasis is placed on systemic assessment of teacher candidate's learning.

The standards emphasize the significance of discipline-specific, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge. They elevate the role of assessment data in program improvement and promote increased accountability for teacher candidate learning. The standards require systemic assessment, which encourages more attention to program design, increased faculty collaboration, and greater alignment within and between programs. They necessitate self assessment and continuous improvement. In Arkansas, each teacher education program must maintain its NCATE accreditation. The state of Arkansas will not issue a teaching license to graduates of programs that are not accredited by NCATE.

This display session reported on the development of an assessment system and the components needed in order to meet the demands of NCATE. Stakeholder involvement, system components, kinds of assessment, decision points, use of data and system evaluation were shared.

The Use of Autobiographical Life Histories With Teacher Education Candidates

Jenetta R. Waddell, Delta State University

This action research study investigated the use of qualitative autobiographical life histories as an innovative teaching and assessment tool in higher education. Study informants were undergraduate English Education teacher candidates and graduate Educational Leadership candidates. For the English Education informants, life histories focused on the persons and cultural events that influenced their personal acquisition of language, while the Educational Leadership candidates' life histories explored the persons and cultural events that influenced their decisions to become and remain educational leaders. The writing of autobiographical life histories endorses personal experiences as a valid means of gaining knowledge and insight.

William Pinar's concept of *carrere*, which focuses on personal explorations of educational experiences, and the works of Robert Kegan, Jerome Bruner, and Albert Bandura, which stress the role of affect in developing memories and in structuring perceptions of the world, provided the theoretical framework for the study. The constant comparison method of data analysis was used to identify common themes across the life histories. Common themes centered on the importance of self-knowledge in the development of educators and the use of such knowledge as a vehicle for empowering self and others.

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The researchers presented examples of assignments, completed projects, and rubrics that may assist others in the use of autobiographical life histories as a teaching and assessment tool. The session assisted the researchers through providing feedback and critical input that enabled them to move to the next level in the development of the study.

Fictional Teachers: A Realistic Reflection of the Profession?

Leah H. Kinniburgh, Rebecca M. Giles, and Kelly Byrd, University of South Alabama

The typical mental image associated with “elementary school teacher” is a Caucasian female. Is this image, however, a cultural stereotype supported to a large extent by fictional portrayals of teachers, or is it an accurate representation? This study investigated the portrayal of teachers in children’s literature as it relates to current demographics within the profession. Sixty-four fictional teachers from 66 picture books published between 1955 and 2006 were identified. Both explicit and inferential information found in the text and accompanying illustrations was used to determine the teacher’s gender and race. Although 13 of the teachers were personifications--one monster and 12 animals, it was possible to ascertain the gender of these characters.

Results revealed that 54 (84%) were female and 10 (16%) were males. Racial representations for the 51 human teachers were as follows: 43 Caucasians, 6 African Americans, and 2 Japanese. Of the 43 Caucasian teachers, 39 (91%) female and 4 (9%) were male. The majority of teachers (61%) were Caucasian females. Demographic information provided by the Digest of Educational Statistics for 2005 reported that there were approximately 3.5 million elementary and secondary teachers engaged in classroom instruction in the fall of 2005. The National Center for Education Information (NCEI, 2005) reported that 82% of teachers are female and 85% of teachers are white. The statistics reported for other ethnicities showed that 9.7% of elementary and middle school teachers were African American, 1.7% was Asian, and 6.5% was Hispanic or Latino.

Findings revealed that the race and gender of teachers in picture books are similar to teachers (K-8) currently in the profession, raising the question about whether fictional portrayals are a true reflection of the profession or one reason for the lack of males and members of diverse cultures within the profession.

3:00 – 3:50 PM WRITING GRANT PROPOSALS (Training Session).....Boardroom

John R. Petry, University of Memphis

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

3:00 – 3:50 PM HIGHER EDUCATION Tri-Lakes

President: Shoudong Feng, University of Central Arkansas

A Leg Up To Go Up: Supporting New Faculty Towards Earning Tenure Through the Formation of a Professional Learning Community

Linda J. Searby, University of Alabama - Birmingham

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Newcomers to higher education are often confused and frustrated by the lack of congruence in their expectations of the role and the university's expectations for them and frequently have a difficult time understanding the "teacher/service/scholar model" element of the job. In addition, studies show that the presence or absence of collegiality in the higher education setting is a factor in the retention of new faculty. In schools of education, in particular, new faculty who were formerly K-12 practitioners sometimes struggle with the transition to tenure-track positions that require learning to write for scholarly journals and initiate worthy research projects. Support is needed to make new faculty believe that they are part of the professional community and have the skills needed to perform successfully.

This paper described a faculty development program initiated and implemented by a new faculty member in a school of education who sought to form a professional learning community for other junior faculty and herself in order to offer structured mutual support and encouragement for earning tenure. The group was afforded varied opportunities to develop their skills in scholarly writing and conducting research. Monthly meetings were held in which junior faculty shared pieces of writing in process, talked about research in progress, and helped one another become acclimated to the culture of higher education. Two writing retreats were held for junior faculty to immerse themselves in writing with senior faculty writing coaches/ mentors assisting them. Funds were provided for research software, resource books, and travel to conferences on grant writing and qualitative research methods. An initial report on the formation of the group and the first writing retreat was given.

A Survey of Faculty Adjustment During the First Year at a New Institution

Eric J. Heinrich, Louisiana Tech University

The study examined the adjustment of first-year faculty members at a new institution to find out: (1) the levels of assistance provided to new faculty members, (2) the degree of acceptance that they felt from other members of their department, and (3) the factors and conditions that may influence making a smooth transition to a new work environment. The researcher sent surveys to all new full-time faculty members regardless of their previous work experience at the college level. The researcher sought to determine: (1) the degree to which each faculty member felt that a smooth transition had occurred, (2) the specific assistance e.g. mentoring, training sessions, etc. that were provided to new faculty, and (3) the amount of involvement from various levels e.g. colleagues, division chairs, deans in assisting the faculty member in making a smooth transition. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to provide written comments detailing their first-year experiences. Tentative conclusions were drawn, and attempts to verify conclusions included reexamination of relevant data sources. The findings of the study suggested implications for administrators concerned about the retention of their teachers.

The Impact of Dehydration on Professional Practice

Jack G. Blendinger, Mississippi State University

This study examined the impact that addressing unrecognized persistent dehydration has on an educator's physical and mental fitness. It is a mistake to believe that feeling thirsty or experiencing a dry mouth are the only signs of dehydration: the body's need for water. The body can suffer from persistent dehydration--chronically not having an adequate amount of water--without the sufferer being thirsty or having a dry mouth. Thirst and dry mouth are among the last indicators of dehydration of the body. By the time they become reliable indicators of water shortage, many delicate functions have been affected.

A two-fold methodology was used in conducting the investigation: (1) self-study, and (2) medical school documents available to the public. The paper's author--a full-time, 74-year-old practicing educator with over 50 years of experience in professional education (1956 to the present) and who continues to be a world-class athlete in Olympic kayak racing--served as the subject for the self-study. In addition to data collected through self-study, additional information was collected from reviewing recently conducted research at the Harvard Medical School, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. The medical school research was used to authenticate results obtained through self-study.

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The results of the study indicated that the more physically and mentally fit an educator is, the better the likelihood of performing well regardless of age. Educators who are fit are better able to handle the demands that confront them. Physical and mental fitness provided positive benefits for educators, the institutions they represent, and the students they teach or staff they supervise.

3:00 – 3:50 PM ACHIEVEMENT Pageant

Presenter: David C. Ensminger, Loyola University - Chicago

Television and Teaching: Friend or Foe

Linda Gatlin, Walden University; Rebecca S. Watts, Middle Tennessee State University; and Chris Mattera, Walden University

Drawing from the theoretical underpinnings of Gerbner's displacement effect, the purpose of this study was to examine possible relationships between television viewing time and academic achievement. Razl (2001) showed that the relationship between amount of television viewing and academic achievement depended on the age of the student. This study also examined the direction and magnitude of the effect of television viewing time for students in different grade levels.

One thousand eighty-four students in grades 6, 7, and 8 were surveyed about their television viewing patterns. Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores were then analyzed with measures from the survey using regression techniques. The analysis showed that there was no significant relationship found between the amount of television viewing time and student achievement. However, consistent with the findings reported by Razl (2001), the relationship between viewing time and achievement differs according to the age of the student. Although these relationships were not significant, the relationship estimate was positive for students in grade 6. Negative relationships between viewing time and student achievement were found for students in grades 7 and 8, and the magnitude of the coefficients indicated a stronger negative relationship in higher grades.

The findings of this study substantiated the results of other studies that report positive effects of watching television at early ages but negative effects on the achievement of older students. They also served to inform statistical analyses on similar research for the potential non-linear relationship between these two variables.

Video iPod Influences on Content Achievement in Eighth-Grade American History

Lesia C. Lennex, Morehead State University

A hot topic in educational technology is the use of portable devices for learning (Blaisdell, 2004; Waters, 2007). Drexel University's (2005) COE provided Video iPods to develop educational P-16 instruction. To better evaluate the use of Video iPods for instruction at Eastern Kentucky, a practical test of its effectiveness on achievement was needed.

This study measured achievement differences between two groups of eighth-grade social studies classrooms. Groups were chosen for similarity between numbers of IEP's and/or 504 classifications, and relative class size. Instructional content was defined through Kentucky Program of Studies (2006) SS-8-G-3, effect from geographical barriers on people, and SS-8-G-1, examinations of human movement/culture. Four workstations with five students each were used for both groups. A computer station was established with Internet access to PBS from which to complete biographies, mapping for topography, timeline, and textbook from which to answer basic questions on Lewis and Clark. A fifth station for the experimental group contained one Video iPod with accompanying content videos. The control group did not receive the videos in any form. The videos were downloaded from United Streaming via the Kentucky Encyclomedia and converted for use on the Video iPod.

A two-tailed t analysis (N=25) was conducted on content pre- and posttests between the control and experimental groups. While no significant differences were seen between the two groups on content identification, there was a non-statistical difference in achievement in the test means and modes. The control group mean from a 15-point test pretest was 8.4; the experimental group was 6.4. The control group posttest mean was 9.4; the experimental group was 8.08. Interestingly, the mode in the

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experimental group jumped from 7 on the pretest to 10 on the posttest. The control group mode changed from 8 to 10. Comments from the experimental group suggest Video iPods encouraged achievement.

Homework: Best Practices

Marilyn A. Larmon, Rose Jones, and Mary Beth Evans, University of Southern Mississippi; and Faye White, McNeese State University

What are best practices in the use of homework in the elementary grades? The authors were interested in homework practices, as well as teacher, parent, and student perceptions of homework effectiveness. Various studies, books, and position papers in the field of education, as well as popular writings on the topic, were reviewed. Cooper (1989) conducted a synthesis of research on homework, and concluded that homework is a cost-effective instructional technique that can have positive effects on achievement and character development and can serve as a vital link between school and family. His research supported the idea that homework should have different purposes for different grade levels with a gradual increase in frequency and length throughout the grade levels.

Recent studies and articles on homework reveal mixed feelings about the pros and cons of its use. Loveless (2003) disagrees with those who feel that American students, in general, are suffering from too much homework, a situation that does not correlate with overall recommendations for children by ACEI and other child advocacy groups. He does feel that some students are overburdened with homework, and that these instances are serious for the parents and students involved. Loveless states that homework is positively associated with student achievement for middle and high school students and neutral for elementary students. Researchers such as Kohn (2006), who expressed criticisms that the homework process is stifling to youth, and Marzano and Pickering (2007), who respond to Kohn's strong statements, further confirm that conflicting views exist on the homework process. The review of the literature must continue, along with more research by educators, in order to find best practice for children concerning this far reaching issue.

3:00 – 3:50 PM SOCIAL STUDIES Mt. Tower

Presider: Dianne Richardson Swain

The Effects of Peer Teaching on Social Studies and Science Achievement by Elementary Preservice Majors

Ava F. Pugh, Jerrilyn Washington, and Mike Beutner, University of Louisiana - Monroe

One of the new requirements of NCATE is that preservice candidates demonstrate knowledge in the basic subject areas. This action research had a sample consisting of 20 preservice candidates enrolled in elementary social studies and science methods classes one semester prior to student teaching. The candidates were divided into four groups for peer teaching where the social studies topics were: Political Science, Geography, Economics, and History; and the science topics were: Human Body, Flight/Solar System, Plants/Animals, and Magnetism/Electricity. Each group was required to administer a pre- and posttest to their peers on the selected topics.

After the pretest was administered, selected groups taught a 60-90 minute lesson to their peers. These planned lessons concentrated on core subject matter learned during the previous three years in the College of Arts and Sciences. Even though all students had passed the PRAXIS I exam, a content exam on core subject matter is still administered during the senior year. This content exam, along with the PRAXIS I and PRAXIS II exams, emphasized the importance of candidates being responsible for basic core subject matter that is pertinent to a teacher's content knowledge. After the lesson was taught, a posttest was administered and graded to determine possible gains between pre- and posttest scores.

Correlated t tests indicated positive significant gains in all groups except for the flight/solar system in science and political science in social studies. For these two areas, significant declines were found. A possible lack of knowledge of the topics that contributed to confusion or inadequate teaching strategies perhaps caused the decline.

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The Effectiveness of Using Picture Books in Social Studies Instruction with Adolescent Students

Tammy L. Alexander, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University

The focus of this study was to determine the effectiveness of using picture books in social studies instruction with adolescent students. The researcher gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of data sources from sixth-grade students in North Alabama and from their teachers. The participants represented a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds and academic levels of achievement.

The data collection consisted of a pretest, posttest and retention test, pre-survey, post-survey, and individual teacher interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed for emergent themes and further analyzed for cross-case comparisons (Patton, 1990).

Findings from this study revealed that: (1) picture books are an effective instructional tool for increasing adolescent students' achievement in social studies, (2) adolescent students who are taught with social studies content picture books have a more positive attitude toward social studies than students who are taught social studies through textbook instruction, (3) there is little difference in retention of social studies concepts for adolescent students who are taught social studies concepts using picture books as compared to adolescent students using the textbook, (4) elementary teachers perceived they need more social studies content courses, and (5) elementary teachers perceive that social studies instruction is important.

3:00 – 3:50 PM DISPLAYS: READING & WRITING Mezzanine

President: Eddie Shaw

Datacasting: Bridging the Gap with Early Childhood Professional Development and Educational Resources

Maggie E. Stevenson, Mississippi Public Broadcasting

While digital equity concerns and educational disparities exist, Mississippi's low-income childcare centers face challenges in providing children with adequate resources and a firm literacy foundation. In response, Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) employed datacasting as an instructional delivery system to address the population's needs. For instructional purposes, data broadcasting, or datacasting, is the systematic transmission of instructional content to receivers by capitalizing on null packets used to transmit television programming. MPB utilized the Skyscraper Datacasting System, developed by Triveni Digital, as the delivery method to transmit content with accompanying descriptive metadata to childcare sites weekly via MPB's digital broadcasting bandwidth allocations. Training materials integrated the Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Benchmarks and aimed to increase children's early literacy skills by training teachers on reading aloud techniques and strategies.

Implementation occurred in two phases: Professional Development and Educational Resources. Professional Development participants (n=8) were teachers from four low-income, private childcare centers in Jackson, Mississippi. The evaluation focused on childcare teachers' and directors' reactions to the system, knowledge and skills gained by participants, along with the system's ease of use and future usefulness.

Data were obtained from the Childcare Teacher's Survey and Observation Form. Participants (n=20) in the Educational Resources phase were children (ages 3-5) at the childcare centers; the evaluation focused on delivery of Between the Lions programming and curriculum materials and the effect on children's literacy skills. The children were assessed with two episode assessments incorporating early literacy components. Overall, children's scores increased on the episode assessments after the intervention with three-year olds demonstrating the greatest gains.

Datacasting may be a viable source of resources and instructional content for childcare centers. However, further research regarding the system's design and structure is needed. Other variables that may have influenced the outcomes include teacher technology knowledge, usage time, and ages of children.

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Evaluating the Comprehension Components of Reading to Read

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Reading to Read is an intervention that was developed to increase and evaluate reading fluency and comprehension using a combination of passage previewing, repeated practice with corrective feedback, and contingent reinforcement. Previous research has indicated this is an extremely effective intervention package for students with significant reading delays. This study examined the addition of comprehension as an outcome and compared two evaluative procedures (open-ended questions and mazes) to determine: (1) if Reading to Read increases comprehension, (2) if open-ended questions and mazes evaluate comprehension accurately, and (3) if the comprehension components are comparable.

Five elementary students (two females, three males) who were at least one grade below grade-level expectations in reading participated in the study. Of the five students participating in the study for the four-week period, two were African American and three were Caucasian. Each individually administered intervention session consisted of an empirically validated multi-component reading intervention: listening previewing, repeated practice, error correction and immediate corrective feedback with summative and formative feedback, and self-monitoring of progress through graphic depiction of progress. After the implementation of the intervention package, comprehension was assessed by the use of mazes and open-ended questions. An Alternating Treatment Design (ATD) was used to compare the reading fluency and comprehension evaluation procedures.

Preliminary results indicated that the students increase in correct words read per minute (WCPM), made fewer errors per minute (EPM), and answered more questions correctly (QC). The comparison for each participant on comprehension procedures was presented graphically and implications for comprehension assessment procedures were discussed based on individual response to the intervention and evaluation procedures.

Personal Agendas and Politics in Literacy Instruction: An Historical Case Study of Reading Programming at the Local Level

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For the past decade, personal, political and commercial forces have shaped the type of literacy instruction US public school students receive and, in many cases, dictated how educators, especially elementary educators, teach reading. Commercial and political interests have intensified (Garan, 2002; 2004, Allington, 2004; 2005; 2006). Adding instability to programmatic changes, many US urban superintendencies are a virtual revolving door.

During the past 10 years, the elementary "reading program" in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System has undergone a tremendous shift in terms of both philosophy and pedagogy. The purpose of this case study was to examine what forces shaped instructional change and the impact of such change on selected teachers and administrators. Using historical artifacts, participant-observation, formal and informal interview data, this ethnographically informed case study provides a ten year portrait of a local school system's literacy instruction at the elementary level. Participants were provided an opportunity to closely examine how personal agendas and political forces have influenced and shaped instructional change in Louisiana's East Baton Rouge Parish School System's (EBRPSS) elementary schools from 1996-2006, and participants explored the impact of a decade of change of literacy instruction on selected individuals in a large, public, urban system in the southern United States, serving a predominantly African American, high-poverty student population.

A brief historical overview of EBRPSS demographic and historical data, using PowerPoint was shared; an examination of how programs changed according to district leadership, personal agendas, and politics; and a critique of political implications were offered. A discussion of urban education in general and how this situation can be generalized to other situations was conducted.

Parental Understanding of Developmentally Appropriate Practices

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The purpose of this study was to examine parents' ability to identify developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) for five-year-olds. Of the 88 parents between the ages of 21 and 62 who responded, 88.5% were female and 83.9% were European American. In addition, 60.2% had completed education programs beyond high school, and 24.1% had annual household incomes greater than \$100,000.00. A cross-sectional survey design was used to distribute questionnaires to parents of kindergartners at three public schools. Parental ability to identify DAP was measured by an adaptation of the classroom practices inventory (Hyson, et. al, 1990). Demographic information was collected by a questionnaire designed by the researcher.

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated a significant difference in Parental Total DAP Score based on Income category [$F(5, 67) = 3.396, p = .009$] and Education level [$F(3, 67) = 4.231, p = .008$]. However, there was no significant interaction between income and education $F(11, 67) = .987, p = .467$. A separate analysis indicated a significant difference in the Program Focus sub-score based on Gender $F(1, 83) = 4.878, p = .030$.

Although the data from this study indicated that annual household income and level of education are related to parental ability to identify DAP in public kindergarten settings, caution must be taken when making conclusive statements about this relationship. The author of the original instrument recommended caution for two reasons: (1) a more current understanding of DAP exists, and (2) the instrument was originally developed in a preschool setting. Consequently, further instrument refinement is needed in order to improve the meaningfulness of the data collected. In addition, research is needed to further clarify the exact relationship between income and education and parent ability to identify DAPs.

The Effects of Planning and Visual Stimuli on Elementary-aged Students' Writing

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It is estimated that 16% of students in grades 4-8 are writing below basic level and that by 12th grade, this percentage climbs to 22%. However, writing has received less exposure and study than other academic difficulties. Based on research that indicates that visuals can help a student to focus and analyze and, when combined with planning, a positive influence is seen on fluency and complexity in writing, it is believed that students can integrate visuals into their work to enhance the final product. The present study looks at the effects of an intervention which included a planning procedure combined with the use of visual stimuli on writing outcomes.

Six students with academic delays in reading and writing were exposed to three conditions daily: (1) the text-based stimuli, (2) image-based stimuli, and (3) both text and image stimuli. Stimuli were presented sequentially across three related themes (common family activities such as shopping). Students were instructed on planning using the WWW mnemonic device. Using this device, students answer a series of seven questions pertaining to issues such as who, what, where, when, and how.

Preliminary results indicated an increase in total words written and number of story elements present (e.g., main character, location, time). Additional analysis of outcome variables (e.g., story elements) were presented for the students, and results were analyzed visually using an alternating treatment design. Implications of the interventions and future research were discussed.