

The 13th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday, June 7, 2014

• Florida International University • Barry University • Miami Dade College •
• Nova Southeastern University • University of Miami • Keiser University
• Florida Atlantic University • DeVry University • St. Thomas University •
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South
Florida
Education
Research
Conference

- Honoring Inquiry
- Promoting Mentoring
- Fostering Scholarship

The purpose of the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference is to enhance the existing culture of research in colleges and universities in South Florida. The conference provides a meaningful vehicle for the preparation, mentorship, and presentation of scholarly work by students, faculty, and alumni.

Partially Funded by the College of Education Title V CLAVE Project: Creating Latino Access to a Valuable Education (US DOE Grant # P031M090054)

FIU

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**Be Worlds
Ahead**

SFERC 2014

Proceedings of
The 13th Annual South Florida Education
Research Conference

June 7, 2014
Florida International University
Miami, Florida USA

**Proceedings of
The 13th Annual South Florida Education
Research Conference**

Editor in Chief:

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College of Education
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Acknowledgements

The South Florida Education Research Conference Steering Committee (SFERC) would like to thank the member universities and their faculty and students for supporting the thirteenth annual SFERC. The members of the steering committee include Florida International University, DeVry University, Miami Dade College, Florida Memorial University, Lynn University, Johnson & Wales University, Keiser University, Barry University, Florida Atlantic University, St. Thomas University, University of Miami, and Nova Southeastern University. Additional thanks go to Lynn, NOVA and Barry steering committee members that contributed items for the packets.

Special thanks must go to the College of Education at Florida International University particularly Dean Delia Garcia, the Office of the Dean, and the Office of Graduate Studies. We also wish to thank Creating Latino Access to a Valuable Education (CLAVE) for its support of the conference.

Caprila Almeida, Marilyn Vinson, Fabiola Hernandez-Cook, and Maria Tester deserve special thanks for their assistance with registration, volunteers, logistics, recordkeeping and numerous other details that go into a successful conference. Their professionalism and attention to detail are much appreciated and valued.

Sarah M. Nielsen (DeVry) has served as editor of the proceedings for years, and now serves as editor in chief. Her attention to detail, editing skills, and patience have made the proceedings a quality publication. Teresa Lucas and Lori Gionti facilitated the review process. This includes locating faculty to review, prompting reviewers to return reviews, being third reviewers when the student and faculty reviews are opposed, and doing additional reviews when reviewers fail to return their reviews. For the fourth year we have the poster review and selection committee, chaired by Diana Valle-Riestra Student volunteers provide support by staffing the registration table, putting together packets, and doing other odd jobs. Michael Record (Keiser) has stepped up to help with the keynote, proceedings, reviewing and with the poster award.

Without the continuing support of so many, this conference would not exist, so thank you again for making our thirteenth annual conference so successful!

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CLAVE Project: Creating Latino Access to a Valuable Education at FIU College of Education.

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Keynote

Brian Dassler

Deputy Chancellor for Educator Quality, Florida Department of Education

Brian Dassler is a recognized former teacher and principal. He is a two-time graduate of the University of Florida (B.A. 2001 and a M.Ed. 2002) where he was named an Outstanding Young Alumnus twice and where he is currently a doctoral candidate. In 2006, while teaching at Stranahan High School, Brian was named Teacher of the Year in Broward County, Florida, the nation's sixth largest school system. The youngest person ever to receive the award, Brian taught English for five years and was also a founding teacher of the Urban Teacher Academy Program.

Brian was the principal of KIPP Renaissance High School, a part of the nationally recognized KIPP network of public charter schools and chief academic officer for the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), Louisiana's arts conservatory for high school students. At NOCCA, Brian's leadership resulted in the school being named an "A" school and one of the highest performing open enrollment high schools in Louisiana.

Brian was the first College Leadership Florida alumnus to be selected for Leadership Florida (XXIII), and he returned to Florida earlier this year to be a champion of and advocate for excellent teaching as Deputy Chancellor of Educator Quality for the Florida Department of Education. Brian's essays on education and school reform, many of them written with his mentor David Colburn, have been published by the *Tampa Bay Times*, *The Gainesville Sun*, *The Miami Herald*, and *The Orlando Sentinel*, among others.

Lunch Panel Discussion
South Florida Education Research Alliance:
A Community-based Education Research Collaborative to Impact Student Success

Building partnerships between local education authorities (LEAs) and education researchers in their respective communities is a current priority of national education advocates (e.g., AERA) and federal funders, such as the Institute of Education Sciences. The South Florida Education Research Alliance (SFERA) is a unique partnership of education researchers from private and public universities, an urban school district, and a local children's services organization dedicated to facilitating the academic success of students in South Florida (Ligas et al., 2012). Now in its third year, the partnership claims a number of successes such as SFERA's role in Broward County Public School's (BCPS) Black Male Success Task Initiative (BMSI), designed to support interventions for at-risk students. Panelists will include members of SFERA institutions, which include Broward County Public Schools, Children's Services Council of Broward, Florida Atlantic University, Barry University, Florida International University, and Nova Southeastern University.

Steve J. Rios, Ed.D., is a faculty member at the Florida Atlantic University College of Education, where he teaches research, statistics, and school-community partnerships. He earned his doctorate in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at FIU. He is the co-founder of Florida Reach, a state-wide network of education and child welfare professionals dedicated to helping former foster youth gain access to and succeed in college. He also co-owns Rios Research and Evaluation, a company that helps education organizations reach their goals by turning data into actionable knowledge.

Isadore Newman, Ph.D. is a psychologist, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at The University of Akron, a Visiting Scholar at Florida International University College of Education, and Adjunct Professor in the FIU College of Medicine Department of Human Development and Molecular Genetics. He is author of 17 books, numerous book chapters and monographs, and more than 140 refereed articles, and over 350 paper presentations, addressing mainly research methodological issues.

Russell Clement, Ph.D. is a Research Specialist for Broward County Public Schools with a PhD in experimental psychology from Brown University. He has engaged in public education research and assessment for more than 15 years with BCPS, as an independent consultant, and Senior Director of Research with *K12 Insight*.

Gerene K. Starratt, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in Barry University's Adrian Dominican School of Education, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate research methods and statistics courses. She earned her Ph.D. from FAU in cognitive psychology. Her research interests include research ethics, program evaluation, Professional Learning Communities, Ninth-grade academies, high school reform, and teacher leadership.

Maria Rosa Ligas, Ph.D. is Program Professor in the Doctoral Program in Educational Research and Evaluation at Nova Southeastern University's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. Prior to joining the Fischler School of Education (FSE), Dr. Ligas served for 15 years, as a research specialist and director with the Research Services Department at the School Board of Broward County, Florida. Her areas of expertise include analyses and dissemination of state accountability results; longitudinal research analyses; and program evaluation studies of at-risk, Title I, and ESOL student populations.

The Lorraine R. Gay Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship

The purpose of the award is to acknowledge, in the name of L. R. Gay, outstanding research scholarship on the part of students and their supporting presented at the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference.

L. R. (Lorrie) Gay, the founding professor of educational research for the FIU College of Education, was dedicated to students, to the rigorous pursuit of educational excellence and to research scholarship. She chaired the first doctoral dissertation awarded in the College of Education. She published textbooks in educational research, tests and measurement, and educational psychology. They were published as L.R. rather than Lorrie because the publisher felt a female author would not be as accepted as a male, so initials were used. The educational research text became the best-selling book of its kind and her publisher estimates that 1 out of every 2 students in the field has used this text.

The recipients of this award walk in the shadow of someone who cared for every student, and fought to make our course in educational research the best of its kind because she knew this was the way to best serve students. If you have taken the course you know what it requires and as you realize the skills you have attained through her efforts, you appreciate her efforts to this day, years after her passing.

It is anticipated that one award will be presented annually to the student whose research best exemplifies Lorrie's high standards. In the case of multiple authors for the same paper, multiple awards will be bestowed.

The awards are determined based upon papers submitted for presentation at the South Florida Education Research Conference. Award decisions are determined by the judgment of the faculty members serving as the L. R. Gay Award Sub-Committee.

L. R. Gay Award Recipients

- 2013 Barsony, I. *Perceptions of French and Creole Among First-Generation Adult Haitian English Language Learners*
- 2012 Annika L. R. Labadie, Ilisa J. Lieberman, Kurt Vargo, and Olga Flamion, *The Use of Literature to Combat Bullying*
- 2011 Maria S. Plakhotnik, *A Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation: A Phenomenological Exploration of Employees' Experiences*
- 2010 Martin J. Wasserberg, "I'm Trying To Bring the Scores of My School Up, Man!" *Standardized Testing, Stereotypes, and High-Performing African American Elementary School Students*
- 2009 Debra Mayes Pane, *Reducing the Discipline Gap Among African American Students: Learning in Classroom Communities of Practice*
- 2008 Antonio Delgado, *Speaking Up: A Phenomenological Study of Student Perceptions of Being Silenced in their Higher Education Classrooms*
- 2008 Tekla Nicholas and LéTania Severe, *School Segregation, Educational Disparities, and Impacts on Haitian Youth in South Florida*
- 2007 Liana Casbarro and Jemlys Jäger, *The Mistranslation of the ABCs: An American AIDS Education Campaign in Botswana*
- 2006 Suzanne J. Gallagher, *A Phenomenological Study of Learning Processes at Work; Confirming, Extending, and Challenging Holistic Learning Theory*
- 2005 Victoria A. Giordano, *A Professional Development Model to Promote Internet Integration into P-12 Teaching Practices*
- 2004 Kandell Malocsay, *The Effects of Cultural Distance on Student Socialization and Departure Decisions*
- 2003 Sarah M. Nielsen, *High Stakes and No Takers: The Impact of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Writing on Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Writing*
- 2002 Loraine Wasserman, *The Effects of a Family-based Educational Intervention on the Prevention of Lead Poisoning in Children*

Barnes & Noble Best Faculty-Student Paper Award

The purpose of the award is to acknowledge, in the name of *Barnes and Noble*, outstanding scholarship on a paper written by a faculty-student(s) team and presented at the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference.

It is anticipated that one award will be presented annually to a faculty-student team. In the case of multiple authors for the same paper, multiple awards will be bestowed.

The awards are determined based upon papers submitted for presentation at the South Florida Education Research Conference. Award decisions are determined by a panel of faculty and students serving as the Barnes & Noble Award Sub-Committee.

Barnes & Noble Award Recipients

- 2013 Chen, Z. and Bleiker, C. *Effects of Number-Way Curriculum on Pre-Schoolers' Mathematical Learning for Low Socioeconomic Status Children*
- 2012 Esther Fineus and Maria Lorelei Fernandez, *An Investigation of Participants' Perspectives About a Learning Assistant Program and Their Thinking about Becoming a Mathematics Teacher*
- 2010 Maria I. Bendixen and Martha Pelaez, *Effects of Contingent Maternal Imitation vs. Contingent Motherese Speech on Infant Canonical Babbling*

The Lynn University Outstanding Poster Presentation Award

The purpose of this award is to acknowledge, in the name of Lynn University, outstanding scholarship on a poster created by a student and presented at the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference.

It is anticipated that one award will be presented annually to a student presenter who, based upon the quality of his or her poster and presentation as a whole, meets all specified award criteria as determined by the South Florida Education Research Conference award committee.

Criteria for this award include, but is not limited to, organization, visual appeal, definition and clarity of the problem, clarity of research methods, interpretation and discussion of the results, and overall verbal presentation of the poster.

Moderators and Volunteers

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Delia Garcia (FIU)
Debbie Hasson (FIU)
Cynthia Januszka (FIU)
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**South Florida Education
Research Conference
Peer-Reviewed Papers**

Queer Theory or Queer Choice of Identification?

Jennifer Kross

Florida International University, USA

Abstract: The word *queer* has been used to identify gay, lesbian, bisexual people. *Queer theory* came from the roots of the gay and lesbian rights movement, but became synonymous with gender identity issues. Queer and queer theory are no longer appropriate identifiers for gay, lesbian and bisexual people. They are counterproductive to assimilation into mainstream society.

The term queer, as it is used in queer theory within the academic circles of education, is polarizing and a misnomer that complicates the integration and normalization of same sex relationships into mainstream society. This integration into mainstream society is necessary in order to secure the rights and responsibilities accessible to all recognized members of society. To enable this integration, the use of the word queer and queer theory as an academic platform must be halted or redefined to remove the stigmatizing effects on gay, lesbian, bisexual people as they gain equal rights in society. The term *sexual minority*, though inadequate due to its exclusive identification of people based on their sexual behavior, is more appropriate to use for gay, lesbian and bisexual people. This is due to the lack of gender issues that are intrinsically the issues that transgendered, hermaphrodites, pansexual, two spirit, and other gender conflicted people must deal with in our society.

Queer is defined as odd and outside the norms of heterosexual society. Queer was used as a derogatory word to describe gay, lesbian and bisexual people for many generations. In more recent years, the word queer has been used to describe not only gay, lesbian and bisexual people, but also people with gender identity issues such as transgendered, hermaphrodites, pansexual, two spirit, and other sexually based sociological subgroups. This umbrella term began to include people who self-identified as having gender identification issues, some of whom were homosexual and some who identified as heterosexual. "Queer theory in this broader sense now has so many branches, and has developed in so many disciplines, that it resists synthesis" (Warner, 2012, p. 1). In the recent past, some gay, lesbian, bisexual people and their supporters have reclaimed the word queer much in the way that some Black Americans have chosen to reclaim the "n" word (Sheared & Sissel, 2001). Historically, the reclamation or reappropriation of a derogatory word has taken away the negative sting of the insult and has been intended to empower the people who were oppressed by the negative use of the word. In the early history of the fight for gay, lesbian and bisexual rights, it was important to reclaim the word queer in an effort to defuse the power of the word to define separateness, differences and the inference that being queer was somehow a perversion of nature as defined by mainstream heterosexual society. As Boyd (2011) observed,

Anyone who has studied queer theory immediately gets how this framework is useful beyond analyses of sexuality, yet those who haven't been trained as such see two scary words: queer and theory. ... either word can prompt a serious phobia (para. 4).

Our society has chosen to separate people into several categories of sexual orientation. The primary separations have been designated gay or straight. Gay is generally considered inclusive of lesbians and gay men; homosexual people, and the term straight exclusively indicates heterosexual people. The label of queer was used in a derogatory manner meant to

indicate a “less than” position in society, which was reflected in discriminatory laws and practices. However, it was later in the gay rights movement that gender identity issues, separate from hetero/homosexual issues, became lumped under the label of queer.

In the 1990s, a movement named queer theory developed to draw attention to the need for inclusive writings, teachings and respect toward sexual minority people. “W/e [queers] are often not represented in real or meaningful ways in curricula and instruction in exclusionary mainstream learning circles” (Sheared & Sissel, 2001, p. 265). It was thought that educators could use the word queer to open dialogues about sexual orientations as well as draw attention to the need for civil rights for people who identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual (Green, 2007).

This small minority of intellectuals, sociologists and educators were able to stress the need for recognition of gay, lesbian and bisexual orientations as a legitimate, naturally occurring phenomenon that deserved respect, dignity and legally protected rights in our society. Their thinking was that destabilizing the norm present at that time in our history meant the full recognition of gay, lesbian and bisexual people as citizens with the same rights as heterosexually identifying people. This was necessary because homosexual and bisexual people were being discriminated against in employment, housing, lending and other areas that decreased the quality and safety of their lives.

Teresa de Lauretis (1991), recognized as the founder of queer theory, first applied the term queer, in “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities.” Her reappropriation of the word queer was an attempt to empower gay, lesbian and bisexual people. The social activist group Queer Nation was formed in 1990 to make a political statement, fight homophobia and the discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Queer theory was born of these roots.

This paper examines the need to remove the word queer as an identifier for gay, lesbian and bisexual people and the phrase queer theory to describe the study of these people. The conflagration of gender and sexual orientation, the importance of naming a community and the impact on social justice will be explored. This will support the conclusion that the word queer as defined in queer theory is incorrect nomenclature and damaging to the very people it seeks to support.

Queer Conflates Gender and Sexual Orientation

Queer theory came from the roots of the gay and lesbian equal rights movement, but soon became synonymous with gender identity issues. “queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire” (Jagose, 1996, p. 3). Jagose (1996) even went so far as to state that the word queer has been associated with lesbian and gay topics and people, but also includes topics such as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. It even questions the definitions of apparently unproblematic terms such as “man” and “woman.”

Within the queer theory movement, there began a discussion of gender, gender roles, and gender preference in relationship to the gay, lesbian and bisexual orientation of people. One of the founders of the queer theory movement defined gender as the “fully and dichotomized social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behaviors” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 28). The inference of this was that sexuality cannot be separated from gender in discussing gay, lesbian or bisexual orientations. However, this same discussion does not often take place surrounding heterosexual orientations and gender roles. Although there may be issues for some people regardless of their sexual orientation such as gender fluidity or the dichotomy of physical gender versus gender roles, these are not typically described as queer (Posocco, 2009).

Queer theory suggests that cross-gendered identification is common to all people. “How normative gender does not always line up with normative sexuality and how cross-gendered identification is not the aberration, but the very condition of gender norms” (Butler, 1999, p.18). This statement by Butler seems to suggest that there are gender identity issues in all people; this is not true. This is unfounded and limiting, because most people who are bisexual, gay or lesbian do not have gender identification issues. Furthermore, it is disrespectful to people who are dealing with gender identity issues who, when they are able to live in their self-identified “normal” gender state, actually endeavor to be recognized as heterosexual. The issue arises when people hear the word transgendered and think it means another type of gay; however, not all transgender people are gay (Herman, 2011). Studies conducted to study transgendered and bisexual people in the same study illustrate the basic lack of understanding of the characteristics of these two groups of people (Ferguson, 2013). This further illustrates that even within the context of queer theory; there is significant disagreement of the definition of queer and the consequent importance of naming these groups.

It is All in a Name

The importance of naming a community cannot be overestimated. Community has been identified as “a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action” (MacQueen, McLellan, & Trotter, 2001, p. 1929). The social ties, common beliefs and actions of a community affect their political, social and even financial relationships. Belonging to a community means that the members of that community will be treated as a group instead of as individuals. Community affects the way that society interacts with us. Community is also a recognition and celebration of our common culture and experience. When the community is defined as *queer*, the results affect civil rights, laws and privileges that members of that community can participate in within mainstream society. It may seem on the surface of this definition that gays, lesbians and bisexuals share a common community with people dealing with gender issues such as transgendered and other gender identity sub groups, but in reality, there are no gender issues at work in most gay, lesbian and bisexual people. There is a historical context to the word *queer* as an identifier that grouped people with sexual behavior outside the heteronorm of our society together. This nomenclature has outlived its correctness and usefulness and the word *queer* has become a barrier to the necessary integration into mainstream society that gay, lesbian and bisexual people demand and deserve (Grace, 2004). The reclaiming of the word *queer* and the evolution of queer theory has become an unintentional, but heavy yoke around the necks of gay, lesbian and bisexual people at this time in our history.

Queer theory was originally intended to provide greater inclusivity in regards to heterosexually based writings and teachings and to specify who was included in these groups. Queer theory has made the serious and simplistic error of identifying people simply by whom they chose to have physical sex with and then suggesting that this indicates that gay, lesbian and bisexual people have gender identity issues. It has also drawn the incorrect conclusion that having sex with a person who is of the same sex as you indicates that you are dealing with gender issues. This affects society’s acceptance of gays, lesbians and bisexuals as equal members of society and affects the laws that govern rights and behaviors. It affects social justice.

Social Justice

In our heterosexually dominated culture, gay, lesbian and bisexual people have been pigeonholed by the perspective that same sex relationships indicate gender identity issues. “It is important to understand that LGBTQ persons who reclaim *queer* and use it as a descriptor are

doing so to remind other people that some words have histories connected to stereotypes that defile and dismiss those named” (Grace, 2004, para. 3). Additionally, as gay, lesbian and bisexual people begin to claim and exercise their rightful place in society with the full rights due them as human beings, they cease to be “marginalized” members of society. A good example of this is the United States Armed Forces policy of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. This policy established in 1992 as a response to the original Uniform Code of Justice banning homosexuals from serving in the United States military, was meant to hide the identity of gay, lesbian and bisexual people, thereby limiting the resulting discrimination in our military. This policy proved to be destructive and hurtful not only to military personnel, but to families and society as a whole. In December 2011, this policy was repealed and gay, lesbian and bisexual members of the United States military are now able to serve openly while enjoying the same legal rights as heterosexual members of the military. To use the word *queer* to describe these soldiers would place a barrier in the road of some heterosexual members of our society in their endeavor to understand that gay, lesbian and bisexual people share the same hopes, dreams, and fears as other soldiers. *Queer* does not promote assimilation, but rather separateness. If the word *queer* incorrectly implies that these people have gender identity issues, it becomes more confusing for mainstream society to gain the necessary understanding of gay, lesbian and bisexual people as people who have sexual and intimate relationships with people the same sex as themselves, but who in most other aspects of their lives are themselves quite mainstream.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people need to be recognized and appreciated not just as sexual beings, but in the same holistic manner as heterosexuals. When observed holistically, it is easy to recognize the similarities in heterosexual and homosexual people due to the absence of gender issues in both of these populations. Same sex relationships are not about gender issues, but about the sex of one’s partner. Few would suggest that heterosexuals intrinsically have gender issues, and this is true for gays, lesbians and bisexuals as well. This is not to suggest that there is anything unacceptable about people with gender identification issues, but to illustrate that their issues are no less important, but very different from gay, lesbian and bisexual issues.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people were in a very different place politically and as an accepted group in society in 1990 when queer theory was formed, than they are in 2014. Having moved ahead to full citizenship in many places in the world and continuing to gain ground in civil rights in other parts of the world; gay, lesbian and bisexual people are becoming fully participating, protected members of society. As a result, many gay, lesbian and bisexual people no longer identify themselves as queer. The word *queer* has come to represent a different-ness and resulting separation from mainstream society that most gays, lesbians and gays wish to avoid (Rivera, 2013). Queer has become a term that suggests conflict and resistance to mainstream society. This does not reflect the significant changes that have occurred in our society and the resulting integration into the dominant society. As society becomes more aware of gay rights as equal rights, it is crucial that similarities to heterosexual culture be emphasized to help eliminate prejudice. There is still a need to celebrate our cultural differences, but gays, lesbians and bisexuals need to integrate into mainstream culture and law. It is only in self-identification as people instead of “queers” and the consequent acceptance of heterosexual society to that fact, that gays, lesbians and bisexuals will be able to enjoy the same freedoms and rights as all people.

Conclusion

Queer theory once provided an important function even in its inadequacy and inaccuracy, but is a concept that has outlived its time and usefulness. It called for action and change at a time when gay, lesbian and bisexual people were being actively discriminated against in society

for being who they were. In scholars attempts to be just and inclusive, the word queer and the resulting queer theory took on meanings that were broad and inaccurate. There is no room for a theory that suggests that simply being gay, lesbian or bisexual means that people are by definition dealing with gender identity issues. It is important to note that queer theory has only been utilized as an academic theory and has not significantly impacted daily lives. There is no discussion of queer theory by politicians or lawmakers. It has stimulated important discussion and writings in academic circles, but this has not significantly impacted the struggle for social justice.

Future research may prove that most lesbian, gay and bisexual people do not identify themselves as queer, that the inaccurate suggestions of gender identification issues have defeated the purpose of reclamation of the word queer. Research may also show that most people consider the word queer disrespectful and that it has become a barrier to equal rights and protection under the law. This research needs to be pursued and could result in gaining an appreciation and understanding of the human characteristics we all share.

It is important to thank the scholars who worked so hard in previous years to draw attention to the issues of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, genderqueer, intersex, asexual, two-spirited and other sexual minority peoples. As gay, lesbian and bisexual people continue to move toward recognition, respect, assimilation and normalization of sexual orientation identification for all people, it is also essential to respectfully support the people dealing with gender identification issues and their efforts of dealing with their own unique issues and their right to label themselves in whatever way they choose.

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Bottom Identity: Matters of Learning and Development

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Abstract: Bottoms—gay men who prefer to be penetrated, sexually—are more stigmatized than other gay men, and may develop and experience identities differently than other gay, bisexual, or heterosexual men. This paper explores intimate, interpersonal, and social issues and contexts in which bottoms perform and embody psychosocial and sexual identities.

Sexuality is one of the most complicated, yet understudied aspects of human behavior. Despite sexuality being “the source of our most profound private emotional and physical experiences” (Edwards & Brooks, 1999, p. 49), the subject “has remained un-discussable in everyday life” (p. 55) and as an area of interest and investigation. In contexts where dialogue about sexuality is considered appropriate, a number of dynamics tend to shape discussion, such as power, vulnerability, control, dominance, submission, and intimacy (Kippax & Smith, 2001). Many of these dynamics are the same or similar to those dynamics dictating the development of individuals’ identities, both sexual and non-sexual. However, conversations about sexuality rarely move beyond our most basic understandings of orientations (such as heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual), temperaments (such as conservative/traditional or progressive/nontraditional) or morality and/or religion.

The diverse sexualities of gay men remain underexplored. Gay men may exhibit several different sexual role preferences that are as much a part of their identities as being gay itself (Hoppe, 2011). For example, some gay men identify as tops (generally prefer to penetrate during anal and/or oral intercourse), some identify as bottoms (generally prefer to be penetrated), some identify as versatile (generally exhibit no particular preference for penetrating/being penetrated), and some do not subscribe to any of these labels. The complexity of the meanings and connotations of penetration among gay men “is muddled by stereotypes, preconceived notions, exaggerated scenarios...and the inadequacy of the language we use to address [the] issue” (Underwood, 2003, pp. 13-14). However, this does not negate the need to continue to study the significance and consequence of the labels gay men use and to which they subscribe. Thinking about bottomhood as an identity is a particularly compelling place to begin because of the stigmatization often experienced by these gay men, both within and outside of communities of other gay men (Hoppe, 2011). Men and women of all sexual orientations still believe men compromise their masculinity when they allow penetration. Thus, “bottoms are judged on an entirely separate scale” and are often “more severely stigmatized because” penetration “is considered feminizing and shameful” (Underwood, 2003, p. 3). Men who identify as bottoms and *allow* penetration by other men may be likely to develop and experience their identities differently than other gay men and certainly heterosexual or bisexual men. The purpose of this paper is to explore the intrinsic dispositions and extrinsic motivations that may lead some gay men to perform and embody “bottom identities” in intimate, interpersonal, and social contexts. In the remainder of this paper, we discuss how sexual preferences and behaviors are scripted and enacted in gay men’s lives; the sexual, emotional, and physical dynamics of gay men’s sexuality; and the implications for adult learning and education as a field that may be more inclusive of gay men’s experiences constructing, negotiating, and performing their identities.

The Scripting of Gay Bottom Identities

Sexual scripting (Simon & Gagnon, 1973) considers sexuality “as a social process rather than a biological imperative” (Irvine, 2003, p. 490). Sexual scripting involves the embodiment and perpetuation, often unconscious, of codes that have become the baseline for human behavior (Simon & Gagnon, 1973). Such scripting processes might include when some men hold doors open for women, and in turn, some women may learn to expect or desire this behavior in male partners. Both the man’s holding doors open and the woman’s reaction are part of the social script of chivalry, in which men and women learn how to interact with one another in a particular manner and may reproduce the script by performing it in both sexual and non-sexual contexts. Even such heteronormative scripts can have an impact on gay men’s interactions and sexual behaviors. For example, because of the assumed and stereotyped passivity of being penetrated, bottoms may be viewed as “the woman” in intimate relationships. Their roles and the way they are treated by the partner who is “the man” might mirror or be likened to interaction seen in heterosexual couples. Sexual scripts also become a way of understanding and interpreting sexual behaviors (Simon & Gagnon, 1973). Scripts occur on three levels: *intrapsychic scripts* (e.g., those experienced by an individual, “I am a bottom, so that means I am passive”), *interpersonal scripts* (e.g., those experienced between people, “We are both bottoms, so we are sexually incompatible”), and *cultural scenarios* (e.g., socially-constructed expectations, “You are a bottom, so I expect you to let me, as a top, be in charge”). However, “script” is not a direct synonym for “learned action”—all scripts occur in some way on each of the three levels, and identical actions in different social settings indicate different meaning by taking consciousness of actions into consideration.

Feminist theories are also helpful in understanding the social location of gay men who bottom. Because of their subverted sexual position, gay men do not enjoy the same benefits of the patriarchy, and thus, feminist theory can be a lens through which to understand their experiences. In “Thinking Sex,” Rubin (1984) introduced the *charmed circle* to describe sexualities that have society’s seal of approval: heterosexual, married, monogamous, procreative, intra-generational, intra-racial, etc. Bottoming is often considered shameful because of its association with the anus (Guss, 2010) and because it is thought of as “feminizing” (Morin, 2010, p. 107). Although still judged for having sex with men, people can more easily understand the role of a man who penetrates. The concept of masculinity is one with which gay men must grapple and negotiate.

Many gay men who have identified as bottoms at one point in time actually choose to abandon or alter that self-categorization over time, in part due to the overlay of heteronormative roles into top and bottom labels and in part due to the loaded nature of the term “bottom” itself (Wegesin & Myer-Bahlburg, 2000). Top, bottom, and versatile are all labels used to discuss the position *preferences* of gay men and do not in all cases communicate *exclusive* preference (Moskowitz, Eiger, & Foloff, 2008). Bisexual men who enjoy being penetrated may be able to subvert some of the stigma associated with “bottoming” because they may also have sex with women. Because of this, bisexual men also seem less likely to identify *as* bottoms. Tops and bottoms are assigned roles that go far beyond who penetrates and who is penetrated. Cultural scripts such as those surrounding passivity, masculinity, power, and intercourse have dictated a complex web of sex-role associations that leave bottoms highly stigmatized. Much of this stigmatization may stem from the association of bottoming, or being penetrated, with being a woman. Similarly, some gay men view themselves as bottoms in sexual situations where they are more “effeminate, less aggressive, shorter, endowed with a smaller penis, less handsome, or of lighter skin color” (Carballo-Diéguez et al., 2004, p. 163) than their partner. Each of these in some

ways indicates the ways in which heterosexual scripts for sex and relationships influence gay men's perceptions of topping and bottoming. Bottoms may be associated with shame and powerlessness (Carballo-Diéguez et al., 2004). Stereotypes and beliefs about what it means to be a bottom often play out in relationships of gay men.

Sexual, Emotional, and Physical Dynamics

The dynamics of power during male same-sex intercourse have been explored in several studies (Damon, 2000; de Zwart, van Kerkhof, & Standfort, 1998; Kippax & Smith, 2001). Even in healthy sexual situations, power is a complex construct that is negotiated between two people during intercourse (Kippax & Smith, 2001). Power is commonplace in both the rhetoric of sex and in the act itself as individuals interested in power “seek out opportunities for self-display where they have an audience for their endeavors, and to value interpersonal encounters in which they play an active, assertive, or controlling role” (Damon, 2000, p. 16). Contrary to the popular notion that the top is always the dominant partner, the ways in which power unfolds in sexual settings varies significantly (Kippax & Smith, 2001). In unpacking such a complex construct, there is an important distinction to be made between powering *domination* “where there is no possibility of resistance from one or other person” (Kippax & Smith, 2001, p. 416) and *power dynamics*, an exchange or redistribution of power that “opens up the possibility of intimacy and mutual pleasure within fantasies of domination and submission” (p. 413). For bottoms who enjoy the thrill of being “dominated,” it is often a *fantasy* of being dominated rather than actual domination. Thus, the illusion of domination is only possible because the bottom has given the top permission to “dominate.” For some bottoms, work and other life pressures require significant energy and authority, and it is in sex where they can let somebody else take charge (Damon, 2000). In his iconic essay “Is the Rectum a Grave?” Bersani (1987) famously argued, “to be penetrated is to abdicate power” (p. 212). But power can also be constructed in favor of the bottom. By allowing entry into his body, the bottom holds considerable power and some men identify as *power bottoms*, taking pride in controlling the sexual act and the ways in which their “top” partner will be submissive. Finally, in the sexual “dance,” two men can exchange power, each asserting his dominance at different moments. However it is constructed or performed, power plays a significant role for both tops and bottoms (Damon, 2000).

Another construct in bottom identity is intimacy. For some bottoms, it is the feeling of closeness with a partner rather than the physical sensations that makes sex meaningful. Bottoms have expressed the emotional sensation of letting one inside (Damon, 2000) and some find bottoming to be a powerful source of spirituality and connection. Bottoms in a few different studies have expressed a sense of fusion with their partner in the act of intercourse, involving a temporary losing of self as two lovers merge into one being (Corbett, 1993). This sentiment has also been construed as “deep communication” (Underwood, 2003, pp. 57-58). Although intimacy is sometimes characterized as the opposing polar of domination, the two constructs are not mutually exclusive.

Submission is an important component of identity for some bottoms (Hoppe, 2011). Powles (2003) discussed his journey to becoming a bottom and the meaning he ascribed to that identity. The intricately designed “dance” attracted the “opposite” type of sexual partner, a complex exchange of power and energy in which the fantasies—rather than physical acts—consumed and stimulated his sexual arousal. Through the abdication of power, his perceptions about his experiences changed. Submission, sometimes involving “knowledge of imminent pain or violence” (Powles, 2003, p. 112) played a key role in the bottoming experience. The desire to be submissive and the fantasy of being dominated is common, even if it is not always acted out (Morin, 2010). In

addition to experiencing psychological pleasure by giving partners physical pleasure, bottoms may experience pleasure by feeling used, being a site for the dispensing of semen, or being acknowledged as a “good boy” by their partners (Hoppe, 2011).

All of these constructs are important to the ways in which role preferences are scripted with respect to traditional notions of gender. American heterocentric scripts dictate that women be passive and that men be active/dominant. In gay sexual culture, these heteronormative scripts have been reproduced for tops (active/dominant) and bottoms (passive) (Hoppe, 2001). This has significant ramifications for bottom role identity. Internalized homophobia and “Femiphobia” (Morin, 2010, p. 107)—fear that females may be considered equals to men—creep into the collective societal mindset when people must contend with the thought of men being penetrated. In coming to terms with an uncomfortable proposition, people simplify sexuality and apply the script of the receptive role equals the *female* position. Although sex and gender are intimately related, “sexuality is not a residual category, a subcategory of gender; nor are the theories of gender fully adequate to account for sexuality” (Vance, 1984, pp. 9-10). Although some bottoms may identify with women because of the historical association with passivity, being a bottom can be thought of as “a differently structured masculinity, not a simulated femininity” (Corbett, 1993, p. 345). In considering the socialization of bottoms, one study found a connection between bottoms and feminine childhood experiences and adult cross-dressing, but the authors warn that “over-attribution of femininity to those who engage in receptive sex may exacerbate the negative stereotype associated with bottoms...and further promote the ‘closeting’ of men who self-label as bottoms” (Wegesin & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2000, p. 58).

Because of societal homophobia and heterosexism, there is an emphasis on sexual activity when thinking about gay men. A lot of assumptions about heterosexual couples may be made based on societal scripts, but it never has to cross one’s mind *what goes where*. When people observe a relationship in which both people are men, the focus tends to be on working out the details of their sexual lives. Even the most well-intentioned people ask, “Who is the ‘man’ in the relationship and who is the ‘woman’?” which assumes that people need to be boxed into one set of scripts. This apparent need to find heterosexual male/female role equivalents may leave bottoms feeling feminized due to the social constructions about what it *means* to be penetrated. This contributes to the “excess of significance” (Rubin, 1984, p. 139), in which too much significance is placed on sexual acts of all kinds, but is compounded further for gay men, who are perceived to be more sexually promiscuous. An additional burden is placed on bottoms because of the sexual double standard that women face: if they enjoy sex, they are perceived to be “slutty.” Because bottoms are penetrated, they may be seen as not participating in sex in the *proper* way.

In terms of gender, bottoms may differ considerably in how they construct their identity (Damon, 2000; Hoppe, 2011). In one study, some men “...experienced great difficulty in coming to terms with the pleasure of being anally penetrated, and the difficulty related to what they regarded as an incompatibility between being masculine *and* receptive” (Kippax & Smith, 2001, p. 420). Another study revealed that some bottoms enjoy being dominated and overpowered, and attributed the pleasure of the sexual experience to the masculinity of their partners (Damon, 2000). The ways in which bottoms situate their gender identity psychologically often has a physiological manifestation of some kind, especially with respect to how comfortable they are having sex. For the men who find it troubling to have a man’s penis enter his body, being penetrated may have a castrating effect. He may find it difficult to maintain an erection and fail to achieve penile orgasm. A “feminine identification” is often assumed of all men who bottom “via the abdication of phallic activity, the enactment of castration, and the fantasized experience of the anus as vagina” (Corbett,

1993, pp. 351-352). However, for other men, the stimulation of the prostate enables the bottom's penis to remain a primary source of pleasure during sex, and bottoms are often easily able to achieve orgasm (Underwood, 2003). Central to a bottom's sexual experience is how comfortable he feels with his anus and how active a role it plays in the experience. Could the penetration be reconstructed as an anus engulfing the top's penis? If receptive anal intercourse involves losing oneself in merger, could "that surrender be re-imagined as an expansion, as an urge to consume or incorporate, to possess the partner?" (Guss, 2010, p. 138). Some bottoms understand their role to be one of control. A man experiencing penetration may have a "desiring anus" (Dowsett, 1996, p. 208) yet not think of the sexual episode in terms of *receptive* behavior. Additionally, the conclusion of a sexual activity may or may not end in a penile climax. For some bottoms, the satisfaction comes from getting his top to achieve orgasm. Others experience a climax entirely located in the anus without ejecting semen (Botticelli, 2010; Hoppe, 2011).

Finally, gay men who bottom face unique wellness issues. Because practices such as anal sex are considered pathological or immoral, gay men often practice unsafe sexual behavior, lacking access to information or fearing social stigmatization. Because of the nerve endings in the anus where a penis is penetrating, bottoms are more likely than tops to contract HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Wegesin & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2000) and many studies are focused on HIV prevention (Carballo-Diéguez et al., 2004; Damon, 2000; de Zwart, van Kerkhof, & Sandfort, 1998; Hart et al., 2003; Moskowitz, Rieger, & Roloff, 2008). Additionally, due to the sensitivity of the anus, some bottoms experience anodyspareunia (Damon & Rosser, 2005). Similar to dyspareunia, in which pain is experienced during penile-vaginal intercourse, anodyspareunia involves severe physical and psychological distress, leading bottoms to abstain from sex, sometimes abandoning it forever. Further, because the nerve endings in the anus connect with the brain, studies have found that the psychological affliction actually increases anal tension and pain, dispelling the myth that it results solely from the physical act of intercourse (Damon & Rosser, 2005). Because of the shame of engaging in anal intercourse and disagreement in the medical community about its prevalence, it is likely that many cases of anodyspareunia go undiagnosed.

Implications for Adult Learning and Education

The issues bottoms face in constructing, negotiating, and performing their identities provides a glimpse of the work that still needs to be done in both the research and practice of adult education. In the following sections, we discuss what the foundations of this paper have to offer for understanding bottoms' learning in terms of: (a) communicating relevance to adult education research and practice, (b) challenging traditional constructions of masculinity, (c) resistant normative sexual roles and learning related to sex/sexuality, and (d) discussing and learning about safe sex.

Communicating Relevance to Adult Education Research and Practice

Research in adult learning and education could further investigate alternative models for identity development and construction. In aspiring to be too comprehensive, most sexual identity development models fall short. Models that detail stages of development are limited because they suggest that identity is achieved, progressing in some normal fashion, and that all people identify in the same way (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). Bottoms are just one subgroup of gay men; does their development occur differently than tops, versatilities, or men who subscribe to no such label? Because these varied identities differ markedly from the heteronormative mainstream, different theoretical frameworks might be employed to discover these differences. Because "queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, [or] the dominant" (Halperin, 1997, p. 62), research employing queer theory (de Lauretis, 1991) may help advance models of gay

development. In queering identity development, scholars should consider Foucauldian notions of power, knowledge and pleasure, which “in turn, produce our sense of ourselves and others and the limitation we put on our own behavior” (Edwards & Brooks, 1999, p. 54). Because most identity development models have focused on traditional development (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005), models that apply queer theory may be especially useful in investigating whether men who identify as bottoms develop in ways that are similar or different than those men and women upon whom other models are based.

Learning about the sexuality of bottoms should not be geared exclusively to bottoms or other gay men. In order to improve societal acceptance of anal sex and alternative sexualities, adult educators should educate about the sexuality of all people. They “have a unique opportunity to create conversations about sexual identity in the adult classroom. As a site of learning and a site of difference, sexual identity discussions can enrich our education of the whole person” (Brooks & Edwards, 1999, p. 55). In creating such opportunities for people who may not normally think about different sexualities, adult educators can facilitate learning communities “built on the mosaic of difference. Sexual identity is an important site of difference and development and consequently is an opportunity for important learning” (p. 56). Whereas the literature in the past has focused on death and illness of gay men, new research and educational outreach should focus on healthy benign sexual variance. And in so doing, education will reveal to students their “attachments to heteronormality, homophobia, and heterosexual privilege” (Hill, 2004, p. 91).

Sexuality is an important, yet undervalued, aspect of our lives that we often feel compelled to hide. For those inside the charmed circle, this seems proper and unproblematic. But this is not the case for those on the outskirts of the mainstream and “without more detailed knowledge about anal sex, researchers and HIV prevention workers will continue failing to comprehend the decisions gay men make about both protected and unprotected anal intercourse” (de Zwart et al., 1998, p. 90). Sex takes on a multitude of meanings for the gay men who engage in it. For the physical and mental wellbeing of bottoms, adult sexuality educators and researchers should strive to advance research and promote empowering messages about safety and normalization of anal sex.

Challenging Traditional Constructions of Masculinity

Queering research in adult education involves exploring how traditional gender boundaries can be deconstructed. It would be useful to explore “power relations and contest the social, political, economic, historical, and cultural context that define and sustain so-called normal sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender expression or identity” (Hill, 2004, p. 91). Issues of who penetrates, who is penetrated and the kinds of orgasms that are experienced complicate traditional gender constructions. Reframing the reception of a penis into the body as an act of power instead of a dejection of masculinity may increase a bottom’s ability to enjoy sex. Receiving the penis “...does not constitute a loss of masculinity. On the contrary, the ability to relax, to receive, to voluntarily surrender control is a psychological and interpersonal asset, not a loss” (Morin, 2010, p. 107). A reconstitution of gender construction utilizing purposeful integration of the masculine and feminine aspects of self may solve physical obstacles in some cases. Re-conceiving these roles more broadly in multiple contexts could liberate people to practice their sexualities freely in pursuit of benign sexual variation (Rubin, 1984).

Resisting Normative Sexual Roles and Learning Related to Sex/Sexuality

The clinical implications indicate that in order to have a fulfilling relationship, couples interested in maintaining a monogamous relationship would be well advised to find a sexual complement. If self-labeling predicts most other sexual activities beyond penetration, then two tops

(or two bottoms) would likely be sexually incompatible (Moskowitz, Rieger, & Foloff, 2008). Studies should investigate how self-label plays out in long-term relationships and if “alignment or misalignment of the sexual self-label can predict relationship satisfaction” (p. 201). With so many sub-identities emerging (e.g. “power bottoms,” “versatile-tops”), research is merely at the cusp of understanding the psychosocial implications of these varying definitions.

Discussing and Learning about Safe Sex

Without role models or sex education specific to same-sex intercourse, gay men learn about sexual intercourse in ways that are different than most heterosexuals who are exposed to models in popular culture. However, because “learning can be participatory, self-directed, collaborative, transformative, or conflictual” (Hill, 2004, p. 93), learning about sexual intercourse likely comes from actual experience. Additionally, recent research has revealed that one primary source for sexual education for bottoms may be internet pornography (Rothmann, 2013). Resistance education, involving “unlearning” and leading “to powerful identity transformations in individuals” (Hill, 1995, p. 148) can be a useful method for sexuality educators. When people “unlearn” things they have taken to be truths, they can confront stigmatization, homophobia, and heteronormativity. Resistance education can take place in a variety of settings, whether structured or informal. In fact, “much gay education occurs in an informal context, is self-initiated, self-directed, purposeful, and sustained, but is not sponsored, planned, or directed by an organization” (Hill, 1995, p. 148). In constructing their sexual and relational roles, bottoms may need to unlearn societal scripts.

Studying sexual behaviors and their meanings to the gay men engaging in them is important in order for normalization of anal sex (de Zwart et al., 1998). The psychological burden of carrying this additional stigmatization produces increased internalized homophobia (Morin, 2010). Thus, it is important to consider how one’s sexual position impacts their sexual practices. Bottoms need messages that suggest ways they can relinquish control (fulfilling their desire to be “overpowered”) while remaining safe (Damon, 2000). Bottoms must be able to assess their sexual safety and to what extent “they experience power as a sexual motive” (Damon, 2000, p. 28). If bottoms rely too heavily on these power dynamics, it may inhibit their ability to practice safe sex. Thus, an “empowerment-based prevention intervention...could incorporate consciousness raising elements about socially constructed gender roles and their effect on interactions among gay and bisexual men” (Carballo-Diéguez et al., 2004, p. 168).

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Forgotten Women: Incarceration and Health Concerns of Minority Women

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Abstract: This paper will discuss incarcerated minority women's health conditions, and health education in prison. Issues related to health education of inmates, such as programs, cultural awareness and literacy, will be discussed. Finally, this paper will discuss issues related to medication access and adherence, as well as post-incarceration medical referral services.

Women comprise 6.9% of the prison population and 12.9% of the jail population (van Wormer, 2010). *Incarceration* is used interchangeably for populations housed at jails and prisons, yet each population is defined differently based on sentencing or non-sentencing (e.g., suspected of a crime, convicted of a crime) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013). Incarceration of women has increased 757% since 1977 (Talvi, 2007). During the last decade, females have been incarcerated at twice the rate of males (Hall, Golder, Conley, & Sawning, 2012; van Wormer, 2010). In 2012, there were 108,866 women prisoners in U.S. correctional facilities. In 2011, an estimated 26,000 inmates were Black women and 18,400 were Hispanic women, about 44% of the total incarcerated population of women (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Despite increasing numbers, minority women represent a critically understudied population in prison (Hall et al., 2012).

Incarcerated women often exhibit higher rates of physical health problems than non-incarcerated women (Harner & Riley, 2013; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013). They are among the sickest and least likely to have easy access to health insurance and care (Hyams & Cohen, 2010). Minority women often require immediate care upon entry into the correctional system (Guthrie, 2011; Salem, Nyamathi, Idemundia, Slaughter, & Ames, 2013). Factors pre- and post incarceration such as education, poverty, domestic violence, and homelessness contribute to an increased risk for illness (Flanigan et al., 2010; Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005). These social and economic conditions can make it more difficult for individuals to protect their sexual health (Dean & Fenton, 2010). In addition to disproportionately being affected by HIV/AIDS, incarcerated minority women may also have reproductive issues and chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, heart disease) (Binswanger et al., 2010; Harner & Riley, 2013; Harzke et al., 2010). The purpose of this paper is to discuss incarcerated women's health care, health education programs in prison and health concerns upon return to the community, as related to minority women

Incarcerated Women's Health Care

Incarcerated women's health is a priority of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) (NCCHC, 2008). When inmates arrive at correctional facilities, health screenings for communicable diseases, physical and mental health assessments are conducted. During this process, medical and mental health evaluations of current and past conditions are conducted. Gynecological examinations are required as part of the initial screening to determine

pregnancy status and the presence of sexually transmitted infections (STI). Inmates are referred to the appropriate care providers for treatment-initiation and care continuity while incarcerated. Treatment may consist of daily medication, monthly provider assessments and quarterly diagnostic evaluations and individual or group counselling referrals (NCCHC, 2008).

Medication noncompliance is a problem that challenges correctional health care providers. Inmates' noncompliance to treatment varies between asymptomatic and symptomatic health conditions and fear of being labeled with mental or medical conditions (Freudenberg, 2001). Jail and prison inmates have a higher burden of chronic diseases including asthma and cervical cancer than the general population (Harzke et al., 2010; Nijhawan, Sallowy, Nunn, Poshkus, & Clarke, 2010; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013). Incarcerated women identified with chronic medical and mental health diseases at intake/receiving screening require clinical management to reduce disease manifestation while optimizing treatment interventions. National Commission on Correctional Health Care (2008) defines chronic diseases as:

An illness or condition that affects an individual's well-being for an extended interval, usually at least six months, and generally is not curable but can be managed to provide optimum functioning within any limitations the condition imposes on the individual. (para. J-E 04)

Incarcerated women with chronic conditions requiring disease-specific care by an expert are referred to as *secondary care*. If an incarcerated woman does not respond to secondary care intervention and requires hospitalization or specialty care, this is referred to as *tertiary care*. The levels of care and legal mandates determine the treatment interventions and method used to ensure optimum care is provided to incarcerated women (Zaitow & Thomas, 2003).

Incarcerated women are at a higher risk for Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infection through unprotected sex with HBV-infected persons, injection drug use and shared close living quarters with other inmates infected with HBV. Over the last decade, transmission of HBV and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) increased, making it a significant concern (Macalino, Vlahov, Dickinson, Schwartzapfel, & Rich, 2005) and an urgent public health issue. HBV prevalence has been found to be 36%, and HCV infection prevalence was 34% (Macalino et al., 2005) in this population of women. Among prison inmates, 16%–41% are infected with HCV and 12%–35% are chronically infected, compared to 1% in the US population (CDC^b, 2013). Individuals who test positive for the HBV for more than six months are diagnosed as having a chronic infection. Although some people are able to get rid of the virus within a few months, with others the HBV still remains in the liver and blood. This characterizes them as chronically infected and requires additional precautions and treatment (CDC, 2011; Oser, Knudsen, Staton-Tindall, & Leukefeld, 2009).

Approximately 4 to 6% of the TB cases reported in the United States occur among people incarcerated at the time of diagnosis (CDC^d, 2012). Evidence suggests that the epidemics of HIV, STIs, and HCV disproportionately affect minorities, particularly Blacks, who account for approximately 45% of new HIV infections annually and have an HIV prevalence rate 7 times that of White Americans (Flanigan et al., 2010). Many of the women were diagnosed during their incarceration yet acquired HIV in the community where access to care and medication was a challenge. Once diagnosed, women fear HIV confidentiality will not be maintained while incarcerated and the stigma attached to HIV may interfere with seeking treatment until the illness becomes acute. Support is provided through HIV education and prevention counselors, mental health professionals, psychologists and social workers (Moore, Stuewig & Tangney, 2013).

The Correction Department, Public Health Consultants, and CDC initiated a program to identify possible interventions to address health conditions for incarcerated populations. The objective was “to promote healthy sexual behaviors, strengthen community capacity and increase access to quality services to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and their complications” (CDC^a, 2013, 25-3). Prevention methods were made available for the high-risk pre and post incarcerated through collaboration between the community, Health Department and jail linkage programs designed to help incarcerated individuals prepare to return to their local communities. Prevention methods include education, early detection (screening) and treatment.

Mental or behavior health conditions impact 73% of incarcerated women in state prison and 75% of incarcerated women in jails (James & Glaze, 2006). Prior to incarceration, the women are exposed to various harsh situations, such as domestic violence, substance abuse and sexual abuse. Incarcerated women from these environments need services before, during and after incarceration, including psychological counseling for mental or behavioral health and services to decrease the risk of recidivism (Salem et al., 2013). Anxiety, worry, fear, and depression are common concerns for the population while incarcerated (Leigey & Hodge, 2012).

There are programs specifically designed to address minority-incarcerated women, such as Project POWER, an HIV/STI prevention/intervention program for incarcerated women delivered across an eight-week period in ninety-minute sessions (Fasula et al., 2013). The sessions incorporated group discussion, games, video clips featuring previously incarcerated women, behavior modeling and role-play. Project POWER, aimed at HIV-negative incarcerated women with short sentences, is an adaptation of Project SAFE, a small group intervention shown to be effective in reducing risky sexual behaviors and STI incidence among African American and Mexican American women in STI clinics. HIV/STI prevention tools should be gender- and race specific for incarcerated women, to increase the success of health education programming (Fasula et al., 2013). Engaging incarcerated women in individual or group therapeutic recreation may help them to adapt to the norms of the prison environment, develop a sense of normalcy while incarcerated, productively express angst, and move towards recovery.

Post-incarceration women may need mental and physical health follow-up as well as childcare, prenatal care, housing, transportation and a host of other needs. Unmet needs contribute to re-offending, homelessness, and rearrests (DiPetro & Klingemaier, 2013). Freudenberg et al. (2005) identified infectious and chronic diseases, mental health conditions, addictions and violence experienced prior to or during incarceration as factors influencing health care continuity and affecting urban communities financially upon release. Partnerships between correctional facilities and local health care providers to plan or provide services within correctional facilities as well as arrange follow-up care in the community upon release is key to helping women address their health care issues. Without additional services, any mental or physical health gains that have been made during incarceration may be lost post release.

Health Education Programs in Prison

Low income and low education are obstacles that most incarcerated women struggle with during their lifetimes (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The educational attainment level of incarcerated men and women is much lower than the general population, with about 60% of America's prison inmates considered illiterate. The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) survey found that 1% of prison women demonstrated proficiency in literacy as compared to 14% of household women who demonstrated proficiency. Minorities had disproportionately higher rates of illiteracy. The NAAL survey, which measures prose, document and quantitative literacy scores at levels of below basic, basic, intermediate and proficient,

indicated that 15% of incarcerated Blacks performed below basic category in prose literacy (Kutner, Greenberg, Jin, & Paulsen, 2006). In the general US population, low literacy costs \$73 million per year in terms of direct health care costs (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Low literacy creates barriers to access to care, adherence to medical treatments and diminished health. With regard to incarcerated persons, to obtain medical services, inmates must write a request; this presents a barrier for those with the lowest literacy.

Educational strategies for incarcerated women start during the intake and orientation process, once the medical needs of the women have been identified. Mandatory health education sessions are held individually with health care providers or counselors as well as mandatory or voluntary workshops or group sessions (NCCHC, 2008). Facilitated group programming and educational interventions are effective practices for raising awareness and working with Hispanic and Black women; these cultures have a strong emphasis on family structure and community and many minority women may find working with others similar to themselves socially empowering (van Wormer, 2010). A concern that educators must note is respect for privacy of the learner/inmate. Printed brochures and pamphlets detailing a condition may inadvertently identify an inmate who has a particular disease to others; therefore, these types of materials should be provided to all inmates to prevent disclosing individual health conditions. General public health campaigns throughout the facility should, however, be inclusive of the multi-ethnic, multicultural population. These campaign materials should use strategies to reach everyone in the population by incorporating different languages, education levels, and diverse images of people. Providing health education to inmates can improve their knowledge of their health conditions and increase their health literacy, which may improve the health related knowledge of their communities. Programs should be connected to outside entities to ensure continuity of care (Hall, Golder, Conley, & Sawning, 2012; Hyams & Cohen, 2010; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013).

The state of Massachusetts developed The Women's Health Policy and Advocacy Program to promote the highest standard health care for all women and influence state policy (Hyams & Cohen, 2010). Although most former and current inmates in Massachusetts were eligible for some subsidized care before and after incarceration, they did not obtain medical care because the women were not aware of the available services in the community. Future health reform efforts should address access inside the prison system and post-incarceration support (Hyams & Cohen, 2010). In Baltimore, Maryland, the JEWEL (Jewelry Education for Women Empowering Their Lives) intervention geared toward women involved in illegal activity combines health education, skill building, and economic empowerment to reduce drug use, HIV, and STIs risk. Minority women are at increased risk for drug use, HIV and STIs and can benefit from being engaged in programs that can effectively address health needs, along with economic or personal needs. This program teaches women how to make and sell jewelry to increase their self-efficacy to promote employment and avoid criminal behaviors (Pinkham, Stoicescu, & Myers, 2012).

Addressing the health concerns of incarcerated women is a priority of the Canadian prison system, which implemented several collaborative community prison programs (Granger-Brown et al., 2012). In British Columbia, Canada, the minority women population consists of mostly Aboriginal persons. In an effort to address the health education needs of this population, the Canadian correctional system has used holistic learning and healing workshops for Aboriginal women, taught by elders in the community (Granger-Brown et al., 2012). This is an example of a collaborative prison-community program, which included health screening and education, therapeutic recreation, nutrition and exercise, and mother-infant programs. Some

health and nutrition programs were designed by the women, granting them the opportunity to use initiative and be self-directed learners.

Return to the Community

Research reflects that early treatment interventions and continuity of care can create an enhanced quality of life for women throughout incarceration in jails or prisons and upon return to the community (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013). There is often limited access to routine medical care in their communities once they return. Bridge and linkage programs identify inmates with certain mental or physical health needs and assist them in returning to their local communities by providing them with resources, helping them set appointments prior to release, establishing treatment plans, and ensuring they have copies of their medical records. An effective example of these types of educative community services is The Jail Linkage Program in Florida that is a part of the Florida Department of Health's Corrections Initiative focusing on HIV-infected inmates (Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, 2006). The Florida Department of Health defines linkage as active referrals and follow up (Florida Department of Health et al., 2006). The Jail Linkage Program is a collaborative effort that connects incarcerated individuals with the Health Department in their respective counties. The programs in the various counties include counseling, disease prevention education, screenings, and additional follow up services, which include other needs such as substance abuse counseling, support groups, and housing. This program is vital to the needs of minority women in Florida where in 2008, the AIDS case rate among Black women was 20 times higher than that among White women. Also, HIV cases diagnosed among Hispanics in Florida between 1999 and 2008 increased by 76% (Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, 2006).

Health education opportunities and learning while incarcerated impact communities. Post release care is imperative because untreated communicable illnesses have a detrimental impact on the families or communities of the previously incarcerated, if not properly treated. In addition, there are costs to society when measures are not in place to ensure continuity of care, which include costs for repeated and ineffectual treatments and for repeated diagnostic testing (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013). Public health risks related to untreated infectious diseases and disrupted psychiatric treatments are also of concern upon release for previously incarcerated minority women. Referrals to treatment services on the outside, including self-help groups and medical health clinics, are vital to stability post release (van Wormer, 2010).

Conclusion

Implementation of health care access, health education programs and treatment interventions during and post incarceration allow incarcerated women an opportunity to maintain medical treatment practices and have positive health outcomes (Hyams & Cohen, 2010). In 2014, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) will allow incarcerated women to obtain health insurance coverage and access to care upon return to the community thus increasing the likelihood for continuity of care.

Correctional facilities must implement policies and guidelines that address incarcerated minority women's health care needs. Educators and health providers should partner with substance abuse, community outreach, and counseling (individual or group) programs in an effort to minimize or eradicate health concerns. Evidence-based practice reveals that a health education approach and early intervention with treatment and access to care can enhance life while incarcerated and upon release (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2013). Varied educational approaches are needed to reach minority women inmates who have differences in language, culture and education. The ability of correctional facilities to apply evidence-based cultural and

ethnically aware health education practices is an important factor in minimizing or eliminating the physical and mental conditions of many minority women inmates. More research needs to be conducted on the effectiveness of programs offered by Correctional Health Services and other providers. This research should reflect on the types of programs needed to promote health in a culturally and ethnically aware manner as well as aid in reducing health disparities among minority women.

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Perspective Transformation Theory and the Donald Woods Experience: From Racist to Anti-Apartheid Activist

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Abstract: This paper chronicles White South African journalist Donald Woods' life (1933-2001) as he transformed from holding racist beliefs that Blacks were "people who were there to be your servants," to becoming one of his country's leading anti-apartheid activists. Adult learning and development via perspective transformation theory are explored.

Adults can learn what freedom, equality, democracy, and emancipation mean in microcosm as they strive toward the realization of these ideals in communities of rational discourse, and they can act politically to create interpersonal relationships, organizations, and societies in which others can discover the meaning of these values as well. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 208)

Prejudice-reduction strategies have traditionally centered on inter-group contact and dialogue across dominant and disadvantaged groups, with the objective of reducing prejudices and stereotypes. Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim and Tredoux (2010) confirmed some success in South Africa with these strategies where positive contacts between Blacks and Whites resulted in increased racial tolerance for both groups. They also found evidence that disadvantaged-group members' trust in the dominant group have at times resulted in reduced awareness of the burning need for social change. Dixon et al. (2010) argue further that where one group started out with greater economic, political and social power, cordial contact reinforces unequal relations where each group "knows their place" (p. 6). This change from hostility to cordiality is not the optimal outcome and must be distinguished from the complete transformative experience that some advantaged-group members undergo, seeking nothing less than radical social change and justice.

One such individual was South African journalist Donald Woods, who lost his privileged White status and was forced to flee his country in 1977 during the height of the apartheid era that spanned the late 1940s to the early 1990s. He went on to travel the world, exposing the apartheid regime's injustices and brutalities. Woods estimates that by 1981, he had addressed over 300 million people through radio, television and the press (Woods, 1981). He wrote seven books on his experiences, including his 1981 autobiography, *Asking for Trouble* and *Biko* (1987), a tribute to his slain Black friend who founded the Black consciousness movement in South Africa in the 1970s. These two books triggered a major film, *Cry Freedom* (1987), starring Kevin Kline and Denzel Washington, which reached an audience of millions across the globe.

The aim of this study is to explore Woods' conversion through the lens of Mezirow's theory of personal transformation. Mezirow identified these conversions as typically starting with a disorienting dilemma, leading to self-reflection, feelings of remorse or shame and significant evaluation of previous assumptions. Learners feel more connected as they recognize that they are not alone in their struggle. They plan, explore alternative roles and relationships, acquire new knowledge and skills, while testing and embracing their new roles and finally, resume life on new terms dictated by the fresh perspective (Mezirow, 1991).

A secondary objective is to add to the body of literature regarding informal and nonformal transformational experiences, while a third objective is to add to the literature on discrimination and prejudice. Morrice (2013) laments the “paucity of studies that have explored perspective transformation from informal and nonformal settings” (p. 254). She further contends that some of the greatest learning comes from that which is experienced and applied informally. Additionally, although various studies have sought to increase our understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of prejudices and discrimination, Oskamp (2013) states that significant gaps remain in identifying more meaningful prejudice reduction strategies.

Although Woods’ journey focuses on racial prejudice, we need to understand, and replicate where possible, those variables and contexts most likely to reduce or eliminate the many forms of existing prejudices and discrimination. Studies such as these will allow individuals, workplaces, educators and policy makers to utilize their limited resources in the most effective manner to educate and ultimately effect cultural and political change.

This paper reviews Mr. Woods’ autobiography, *Asking for Trouble*, his follow-up book *Biko*, and a 1988 recorded presentation made at George Washington University, in an attempt to identify the psycho-social factors that facilitated the momentous shift in his meaning perspectives. Firstly, I will discuss the literature on transformation learning and the literature on prejudice and racism, after which I will chronicle Woods’ transformation. I will evaluate his emotional experiences and responses to the social dimensions of power in the context of the South African society. Finally, I will identify the unique factors that influenced Woods’ learning and transformation, and conclude with recommendations for future research.

Transformative Learning

Rational discourse and premise reflection are key elements for change in perspective transformation theory. Mezirow defines rational discourse as distinct from everyday dialogue in that “principles and operations are made linguistically explicit” (1991, p. 77). Under ideal circumstances, participants have full and correct information, equal status, are able to objectively analyze arguments, and have the capacity to accept an informed and rational consensus (Mezirow, 1991). On the concept of reflection, Mezirow explains that reflective learning becomes transformative “when assumptions are found to be distorting, inauthentic, or otherwise unjustified. Transformative learning results in new or transformed meaning schemes or, when reflection focuses on premises, new or transformed meaning perspectives” (p. 111). Perspective transformation theory should therefore provide us with some structure for understanding how individuals with racist belief systems learn through rational discourse and reflection to become non-racist.

Transformative learning is central to adult education, with development being the progressive realization that people are able to have rational dialogue, question their previous learning and experiences however troubling this may be, and take action based on discoveries at particular points in their lives. It is considered “more of a journey and less of a decision at one point in time” (McDonald, Cervero & Courtenay, 1999, p. 11). Mälkki (2012) advises further that disorienting dilemmas can occur naturally in nonfacilitated environments via everyday living. The adult learner is able to analyze the reasons for these dilemmas by examining “the psychological distortions that have motivated them in the past” (McDonald et al., 1999, p. 16). A number of studies also confirmed the uneasiness that accompanies the catalyst for reflective learning (Brigham, 2011; Kember, 1999; Mälkki, 2012). Critical reflection then becomes the means by which individuals can change or revise their distorted perspectives (Mezirow, 1994).

The pitfalls of discourse are introduced by Hart (1990), who argues that it is subject to distortion at the socio-cultural, the interpersonal and the psychological levels. She further contends that all three levels are intertwined, with the dominant group communicating the preferred values and beliefs in order to maintain the status quo and their privileged position of power. Discourse at all levels is therefore tainted by the dominant belief system entrenched at the macro level. This premise is supported by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) who take the position that racism is about long-established power relations. Kucukaydin and Cranton (2012) also address this problem, expressing concerns about how communities arrive at agreement on issues, adding that mutual understanding is only possible through “domination-free interaction” (p. 52).

Tropp and Pettigrew (2005) suggest that members of both the elite and minority groups have different challenges when intergroup contact is made. The underprivileged group is more likely to focus on their inferior status while the dominant group tends to take their elite position for granted. Taylor (2007) identifies socio-cultural and prior life experiences as significant contextual factors in any analysis of transformational learning, and highlights “the enormous interpersonal and socio-cultural challenges associated with confronting the effects of power” (p. 184). Applying a simple and succinct definition of power as having the freedom to act, McDonald et al. (1999) advise that individuals who consciously take on the status quo have to be prepared to battle relations of power with activities that are “sustained over time in the face of formidable cultural and interpersonal odds” (p. 20).

Although social psychologists have mostly relied on intergroup contact to reduce prejudice, five other major techniques have been identified: (a) reducing the bases for conflict, (b) publicity utilizing role models, (c) cooperative learning, (d) exposure to personal experience of discrimination, and (e) demonstrating inconsistencies among held values (Oskamp, 2013). Research over the past 20 years has also highlighted the importance of intergroup friendship in bringing more balance to the power relations among the groups (Finchilescu, 2010; Pettigrew, 1998; Vincent, 2008). Vincent (2008) distinguishes between contact and integration, with the latter being described as “something more than merely surface toleration of those being regarded as being of a different racial category,” to include “acceptance, friendship, equity and equality” (p. 1432). Pettigrew (1998) who has done extensive work on this topic, underscores the role of friendship in prejudice reduction. In a study with over 3800 majority group respondents from four European countries, Pettigrew found that individuals with out-group friends scored much lower on all five prejudice measures. Additionally, they more often reported having felt sympathy and admiration for the out-group.

Findings/Discussion

Born in 1933 in the rural Transkei territory of South Africa, Woods grew up among the Bomvana tribesmen on a trading post run by his parents. As the youngest child and the last to leave home, for a time, he was the only White child among the thousands of Black tribesmen. Up to age five, he even expressed himself better in Xhosa than in English because it was spoken by his Black playmates and his nursemaid (Woods, 1981). Woods advises that barring his family’s isolated experience, there is nothing in the national life of South Africans above the master/servant relationship that encourages contact or friendship between Black and White (1988).

Disorienting Dilemmas

Woods’ journey towards conversion started with the initial disorienting dilemma phase identified by Mezirow (1991). In spite of all the obvious signs, the thought that South African Blacks were being oppressed first occurred to him when he entered university around age 18,

while studying the principles of law and natural justice. He recalled an incident around 1951 with a revered barrister and role model, Harold Levy, which marked the start of his dilemma:

One day in the class during a discussion on politics, Levy said “Woods, you are from the Transkei, you’ve lived among the Blacks there – what do you think is the best policy?” I said: “They should all be sent back to the reserves, where they belong. They’re happier there. It’s no good educating them and bringing them to the towns. It’s either send them back to the reserves or shoot them – it’s them or us.” There was a shocked silence. Levy looked at me silently for a long time. “Do you believe that?” he asked “Is that really how you feel?” I said it was, and that ended the discussion, but in the days that followed I felt increasingly uneasy about my answer. (Woods, 1981, p. 59)

Approximately 37 years later, in a videotaped presentation at George Washington University, he once again identified this period in his education as the starting point for his discomfort:

I think it was only when I started university (Cape Town) to study the principles of natural justice and law and it didn’t seem to me to go exactly with what was going on around. But it didn’t send me starting out to demonstrating or becoming a radical student or anything; it just made me a bit uncomfortable. (D. Woods, video recording, April 4, 1988)

This supports McDonald’s (1999) proposition that transformational learning usually evolves over a period of time and includes ongoing interactions as the learner discovers how to apply the new perspective. Woods began questioning his previous assumptions and found them distorting, inauthentic and unjustified.

The interesting thing is that after his troubling awakening, Woods continued to face intensifying dilemmas at various stages of his transformation as more epic distortions surfaced. In 1973, while employed as the editor of the Daily Dispatch, he met Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, who challenged his writings and invited him to meet Steve Biko to rectify the misinformation that he was publishing about the Black consciousness movement. As Biko was under banning orders, Woods travelled to Biko’s home for the meeting. Banning was a series of laws during the Apartheid era that confined targeted individuals to their homes, barring them from writing, speaking publicly and meeting with more than one person at a time, with the goal of turning them into nonentities. Woods recalled this incident with Dr. Ramphele and its impact on him:

I’ve been changing since the age of 20 painfully slowly but ultimately a remarkable lady walked into my office and tore a strip of me for writing editorials attacking Steve Biko saying I should go meet with him because I was doing what Whites normally do in South Africa; assume you know what Blacks are saying and then attack them for saying it when they haven’t said it in the first place. I went to meet him and it was indeed a very educational experience. I realized then, the positive aspects of what the Black consciousness movement was saying. (D. Woods, video recording, April 4, 1988)

As Woods’ relationship with Biko grew over the next three years, the two developed a deep friendship, bolstered by lively debates and discussions. Such was the impact of their one-on-one discourse that Woods was able to grasp for the first time the reality of the apartheid system from the perspective of the victims. In his 1988 presentation, he shared his fully evolved perspective:

I believe nowhere in the world, including the United States, including South Africa or Britain, I don’t think White people are capable; and I don’t care who they are no matter how sympathetic, how supportive they are to the Black cause. I simply don’t think Whites are capable of perceiving completely what it must be like to be in a Black skin in an oppressed society. What is possible, however, if you are lucky enough to meet

someone who can articulate these things well, someone like Steve Biko, then what is possible is to get as close perhaps as a White person can to perceiving what it must be like. And once that happens, you have unconsciously crossed the line I don't think you can step back from. (D. Woods, video recording, April 4, 1988)

Here, Woods confirms the transformative power of rationale discourse. Throughout his books and presentation, he emphasizes the impact of experience, discussions and reflection on education and learning. Woods continues:

Because, certainly in the case of my wife and myself, we had been inhabiting this White world where your friends came round for dinner and your conversation had to do with your golf handicap or what was on at the theater or where your swimming pool is looking a bit murky. The next night you'd be with the likes of Steve Biko and his friends and the conversation around supper would be who is in solitary confinement, who is being tortured, what can we do? And so you get this crazily unreal world continually bumping up against the real world in a country like South Africa. Once that happens, it's not a question of political conversion, it's a question of the personal experience and when you hear or learn or read that one of these people has been imprisoned or has died in prison, it's not just a political issue, it's a personal friend... So, it becomes impossible, in fact, it is unthinkable to go back to what was before and say what amounts to - Gee, that's tough. Life must go on. (D. Woods, video recording, April 4, 1988)

Woods' dilemma increases as he starts to perceive his world as unreal and Biko's world as the real South Africa. The use of affective language creeps in as he refers to his personal friend and his personal experience. Dispassionate observation from secondhand stories and news articles were removed. His friend's experiences were now his own.

Biko's murder and Woods' immediate banning by the South African government marked the removal of the remaining scales from his eyes. With all the distortions and injustices that he had uncovered, it was still shocking and unfathomable to him that his government could kill one of its brightest citizens, and then dare to silence him as well. Woods became helpless against the full extent of power unleashed by the ruling elites and describes his experience as becoming "a pariah in his White suburban neighborhood... and subject to the ire of angry White enemies who considered it a patriotic duty to show their hostility" (1981, p. 5). His position became eerily similar to the Blacks, which moved him to the highest level of empathy and understanding.

Self Reflection and Evaluation of Assumptions

In tandem with Mezirow's 1991 theory, Woods' disorienting dilemma phase was closely followed by self-reflection and evaluation. A clear pattern of self-analysis is seen throughout his adult years. Woods describes dents in his psyche as he struggled to justify his contradictions, telling himself that South Africa's situation was unique, and that apartheid was a practical necessity for Whites (Woods, 1981). He describes his early questioning of his values:

... two further things set me questioning it all again. One was a sermon during Mass which criticized apartheid as un-Christian and a contravention of the religious ethics of Judaism and Islam as well, and another was meeting a Black American. English-language universities were not yet segregated and this man attended a couple of classes as a student visitor. I was struck by the fact that his accent was as American as those of White Americans on the movie screen, and reasoned that, if accent was a matter of environment, so might racial culture be. And as he was the first Black foreigner I had encountered, I began to consider that the assumption of Black inferiority in South Africa might be a result of the environmental circumstances forced on South African Blacks...

For me, this was a startling concept, because it challenged all my racial prejudice. It was a period of inner turmoil, because I was having to make major adjustments... (p. 61) Feelings of guilt and discomfort were evident as he reflected on his assumptions and beliefs, but it was years before inner turmoil would turn to horror at racism, apartheid and the state's control of the media, which he eventually likened to Nazi Germany in the late 1930s. Woods (1987) ruefully admitted that "for the next twenty years I believed that my education out of racism was complete – until I met Steve Biko" (p. 44).

He credits Steve Biko with his transformative education, which gave him a firm grasp of the realities of Black politics in South Africa and a clearer understanding of Black consciousness and its link to Black self-esteem. Woods was also learning just how far the powerful would go to maintain their position of privilege as he faced enormous interpersonal and socio-cultural challenges resulting from the confrontation. His contemplation at the news of Biko's death on September 13, 1977 foretold the major action to come with his departure from the country:

Within those shocked seconds South Africa became a different place for me, and when I called Wendy she had a similar reaction. For both of us the Nats (Nazi) were now the mortal enemy who had committed the ultimate outrage. She said: "I'm beyond feeling scared of them. There's nothing worse they can do." (Woods, 1987, p. 305)

Although he had always known people who were banned, including Biko, he was shocked and indignant that he could be subjected to the same fate. He wrote, "It seemed there was a special dimension to being a political captive in one's own country...my feelings of indignation grew. Who were these people to confine me to my own territory?" (Woods, 1987, p. 322)

Moving towards Action and a Fresh Perspective

A critical component of Mezirow's 1991 theory is the adult learner's action that results from the new perspective. In South Africa, the government-controlled media was used to disseminate all forms of communication. They instituted hundreds of laws that kept the dominant and the powerless groups apart and applied numerous censors. By isolating the groups and pitting them against each other, it was nearly impossible for rational discourse to take place at the interpersonal level where human interaction is important for reflection to take place. Woods (1988) estimated that of the five million Whites in South Africa, fewer than 5% had an appreciation for the horrors of apartheid and its impact. Planning and action therefore took on varying forms as Woods evolved. As a young adult, he tried to effect incremental change through the political process. After disastrously losing the elections, he took up journalism. He later described this period of his life as being theoretically opposed to apartheid: "it was mostly up here (head), it wasn't in the gut." (D. Woods, video recording, April 4, 1988)

While only few Whites held similar liberal anti-apartheid views at the time, that handful helped to make the journey more bearable. He describes his wife Wendy, who also grew up in the Transkei region, as having insight long before he did. He mentions a few others such as Rob and Hildur Amato who started a non-racial theatre group, through which they met for the first time, Blacks who spoke as social equals and with whom they became friendly (Woods, 1981). So brutal was the government in silencing the voices of the dissenters, that on the title verso page, Woods dedicated his book *Biko* to "all our friends now banned, exiled, detained or dead."

Two distinct transformative phases were identified in Woods' adult life between 1951 up to the time he fled South Africa in 1977: Pre-Biko (18 to 41 years) and Post-Biko (41-45 years). Although Woods had early positive contact with Blacks, he perceived them as lesser beings based on his socialization and as evidenced in his callous response to his professor to shoot or send them back to the reserve. His Pre-Biko transformation started with his formal exposure to

concepts of natural justice and fairness, enlightening literature and interaction with a few liberal role models. Travel to other countries and exposure to a few educated Blacks also helped him to reject apartheid in theory as he could logically rationalize and understand its inherent unfairness and injustice. During this phase he still, however, regarded himself as superior and untouchable by the state, except for some litigation and low-level governmental scare tactics and threats.

It was his post-Biko period and its repercussions that triggered a different level of self-examination, reflection and terror, ultimately leading to a total transformation in what Mezirow (1991) labels as meaning perspective or viewpoint. The difference at this stage was the deep friendship with a Black man whom Woods describes as superior to himself in reasoning and charisma. Woods confessed that he didn't really understand racism until he met Biko. He moved from superficial contact to what he identified as a personal experience with a friend.

This relationship ultimately led to Woods and his family getting a taste of what many Blacks experienced on a daily basis. By moving beyond the boundaries of South Africa's socio-cultural distortion and embracing another truth, Woods and his wife isolated themselves from the mainstream ideology and immediately became targets, with family and personal safety becoming real issues. His family's relationship with Biko had forced a redefinition of values that they held for years, but so extreme was state control over communication that the ability to effect social change through discourse at the individual level with other Whites was almost impossible.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Real transformational learning is a long process that must necessarily take place in adulthood. It is central to adult education as unlike children, adult learners are uniquely able to challenge previous assumptions and arrive at new meaning perspectives through experience, development and reflection.

Two of Oskamp's (2013) prejudice reduction techniques, *demonstrated inconsistencies among values* and *exposure to personal experience of discrimination*, were evident in Wood's journey and played crucial roles in his transformation. The latter in particular needs special attention as although the Woodses were White, they lost their privileged status and therefore treated with similar contempt as the Blacks. The reality of ostracism and diminished stature furthered their personal understanding of discrimination and prejudice and their effects.

However, the most significant finding was the role of friendship, which stands out as a critical component of meaningful perspective transformation. Mere contact between groups only results in incremental movement, which is important to the extent that it is a necessary first step for any further relationship to develop. Woods attributes his transformation to the deep and profound friendship that he experienced with Biko, which developed through discourse and reflection. Their meeting was a watershed moment for him and as Woods avows, it was this meeting and eventual relationship that propelled him from being somewhat uncomfortable and against apartheid in principle, to making a stance and taking a specific course of action. Further research on the role of friendship in prejudice reduction is recommended, especially in terms of the conditions and affective variables that allow its development beyond superficial contact.

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Supporting Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Higher Education through Mentoring

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Abstract: This paper identifies the skills mentors use during their sessions with students with intellectual disabilities and outlines challenges with mentoring partnerships in postsecondary transition programs. Data analysis revealed major themes related to inclusion, self-determination, and adaptive behavior skills.

The American job market has become more knowledge-based, increasing the need for a postsecondary education (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003). Federal legislation such as the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (2008) has made it possible for students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) to enroll in university programs through inclusive transition models. The increased need for knowledge in the everyday workplace, in addition to newly acquired opportunities, draws students with ID to college campuses. With this increase of students with ID in postsecondary education, it is necessary to examine the types of supports needed to ensure successful outcomes. Peer mentorship has been identified as a crucial aspect of support and a practical solution for academic and social dilemmas (Campbell-Whatley, 2001). The literature regarding mentorship practices has been limited to mostly theoretical research. Nevertheless, one of the few studies conducted in a postsecondary transition program was Jones and Goble (2012). Although it provided a thorough examination of mentorship practices, limitations of the study included a small research sample and a homogeneous group of mentors. Additionally, Jones and Goble (2012) stated that further in-depth analysis was needed regarding what skills mentors expended time on with their mentees. The purpose of this paper is to determine what skills mentors of students with ID primarily focus on during mentoring sessions as well as to identify potential struggles in these partnerships.

Literature Review

An individual with ID is a person with a cognitive impairment with specific limitations in the areas of cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior (HEOA, 2008). The most recent reauthorization of the HEOA (2008) outlines a series of provisions that focus attention and federal resources on the postsecondary goals of these students. In addition to the HEOA (2008) provisions for this population of students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) defines the transition for students with disabilities as a coordinated set of activities designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, integrated employment, and independent living. The coordinated set of activities is guided by the student's preferences and interests and includes instruction, community experiences, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives (Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990, Public Law 101-476, section 602 (a)).

According to Hart, Grigal, Sax, Martinez, and Will (2006), students with ID have the poorest post-school outcomes compared to other students with disabilities especially when it comes to attending college and particularly participating in coursework. A comparison study conducted on 20 students with ID with some type of Postsecondary Education (PSE) experience (e.g., noncredit audit, certificate course) and 20 with no PSE experience revealed that students

with PSE experience were much more likely to obtain competitive employment, required fewer supports, and earned higher wages. Furthermore, these same students had increased self-esteem and expanded social networks (Zafft, Hart, & Zimbrich, 2004).

Program Description

Project Panther LIFE: Panther Learning Is For Everyone was conceptualized and guided by the regulations of the HEOA (2008) to support students with ID in the areas of academics, social activities, employment, and independent living, and through an ongoing Person-Centered Planning (PCP) process of exploration and discovery of interests and strengths. The PCP process allows for the formation of a circle of support for the student (Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak, & Shogren, 2011) by valuing and respecting the student's preferences for his or her future planning.

Florida International University (FIU) has partnered with the local public school system and with a parent resource center to design, implement, and sustain a postsecondary transition program for students with ID in the Miami-Dade community. *Project Panther LIFE* is in its third year of implementation and its primary goal is to provide a comprehensive postsecondary program and system of supports (e.g., academic mentors) through a well-planned and individualized curriculum leading to paid employment.

This non-degree certificate program allows students with ID the flexibility to select and enroll in University courses and participate in campus life. Besides access and participation, students also participate in a series of job shadowing experiences, complete a community employment internship, and attend other required program activities. Refer to Table 1.

Program Design

Project Panther LIFE's curriculum framework includes the 10 critical areas of independent living as proposed by Wehman and Kregel (1997) (e.g., self-determination, financial planning, etc.) and a detailed curriculum map which aligns with each domain provided by each member of the partnership (FIU, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Parent to Parent of Miami, Vocational Rehab). An array of supports is provided to students to ensure successful completion of the program and potential for paid employability. Supports include academic advising and instructional programming from project coordinators and university faculty advisors; academic mentoring and peer coaching from FIU students; access to and participation in University activities and events, technology training, and family/student seminars. Each planned activity and support leads students to increased levels of knowledge and skills gained through access and participation in postsecondary education.

Academic mentoring and social support is ongoing and provided by a group of trained mentors and coaches. The role of an academic mentor is to assist *Panther LIFE* students in accessing university coursework while helping to foster student academic independence and ownership of learning. Mentors are provided with trainings and one-on-one consultations with a mentor coordinator throughout the academic year in order to better understand the needs of students with ID and how to implement a variety of instructional strategies. On a weekly basis, mentors are asked to schedule three sessions lasting one hour each. Typical mentoring activities have included re-explaining and/or clarifying content/information, proofreading assignments, and creating graphic organizers for studying key concepts. The role of the peer coach varies only in that the focus of the work centers on assisting the *Panther LIFE* student in understanding and acclimating to University campus and social life. Examples of peer coaching support have included introducing the mentee to others, addressing social skill needs, and

attending on- and off-campus events. Providing this structured system of support ensures that students experience a high level of success during their program tenure.

Method

Description of Participants/Setting

Academic mentors and peer coaches (all referred to as “mentors” in this publication) consisted of 31 university students ages 18-42 of which 25 were females and 6 were males. University class standing of the group consisted of 11 seniors, 9 sophomores, 4 juniors, 1 freshman, and 6 graduate level students. The group’s racial/ethnic diversity consisted of 21 Hispanic (67%), 4 White (14%), 4 Black (14%), and 2 Asian (5%) students. The group had a variety of majors including Special Education (5; 15%), Biology (6; 20%), Hospitality and Tourism Management (4; 12%) Nursing (3; 10%), Psychology (2; 5%), and Advertising, Architecture, Pre-Medical Studies, Physical Education, History, Business Administration, Adult Education and Human Resource Development, and Social Work (1; 5% respectively). Ninety percent of mentors indicated that they had previous experience working with individuals with disabilities. Participants were selected through an application and interview process and worked with the students for at least one full semester. Seven students (22%) worked with the program for the entire duration of the study (Fall 2012 to Fall 2013).

Data Collection/Instruments

All mentors agreed to complete an online questionnaire regarding their overall perceptions of the program and a log tracking activities. The questionnaire is a summative evaluation tool compiled of quantitative and qualitative data. For this particular study, only the qualitative data were used in the coding process. The log is an open-ended data collection instrument that served as a journal and was used to collect formative data as students were instructed to fill out the log after each mentoring session. The mentors were trained during an initial orientation meeting on what type of information should be entered in the log, but no further probes were used during the process.

Analysis Process

Data from the logs and questionnaires were collected in December 2012, May 2013, August 2013, and again in early December 2013. In total, 58 logs and 55 questionnaires from 31 students were collected over the course of a one year period. To assess the data and identify important aspects of the mentorship program along with potential areas of improvement, the researchers were guided by the coding process outlined by Gilbert (2008). Open coding was used after each set of logs, and questionnaires were collected to determine emerging themes in each log. Axial coding was then used with all sets of open coding data to determine relationships in themes across the data sets. Emerging themes were then narrowed into sub-themes and categories were developed.

Results

Three major themes were originally discovered in the data set: Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Adaptive Behavior Skills. Refer to Table 2 for major themes and sub-themes. Within the Inclusion category were found two subcategories of On-Campus Involvement and Off-Campus Involvement. Within the Self-Determination category was found one subcategory of Self-Advocacy. Finally, within the Adaptive Behavior Skills category were found five subcategories: Career Development, Social and Communication Skills, Physical Development/Health and Wellness, and Academic Skills.

Inclusion

On-campus involvement. The majority of mentors stated a goal of having students become more involved on campus, especially in terms of joining clubs and groups. A few examples of mentors assisting students included intramural sports teams and political volunteer groups on campus. Mentors reported that joining a club on campus was beneficial during the college experience for social aspects. One mentor stated, “I want her to join a club that she can be actively involved on campus. Being involved in the club will help her open up.” Another mentor indicated, “She needs to work on interacting with people and being less intimidated and more social. We will volunteer next week and this will be a great opportunity for her.”

It was also reported that engaging in on-campus activities together helped to create rapport with the students as they immediately had something in common. One mentor reported that taking salsa dancing classes on campus with the student was her favorite part of the program. She reported, “It was a great bonding experience. She really enjoyed it and I loved dancing with my student each week!” Other mentors also agreed that having common interests outside of academics made for a more enjoyable experience.

On-campus involvement also included attending events such as sorority and fraternity events, football games, featured speakers, and holiday campus events. During these events, mentors shared that the students had the chance to meet new people and practice appropriate social behaviors. One mentor reported taking her assigned student to her Greek Life events to expand his social circle. She said, “This is a great way for him to make more friends. He participated without hesitation. He engaged appropriately and was nice to everyone he met.” Other mentors were in agreement that on-campus events provided benefits to all parties involved.

Off-campus involvement. Along with on-campus involvement, mentors reported spending time together off-campus to make the relationship more authentic. One mentor indicated that when finding out the student held a common interest in a video game, the two began getting together off-campus with friends to play the game. He related, “Our online gaming has really been a nice way to spend quality time and socialize.” Others recorded going to events (both program sponsored and non-program sponsored) off-campus such as movies, festivals, and fairs. Mentors indicated these off-campus events offered mentees a chance to practice social behaviors in places other than the University setting. One mentor also noted that finding activities off-campus incorporated technology into the sessions as the mentee would use an app on his i-Pad to find things to do in the area. A few mentors attended University conferences with their mentees and one commented, “[It was] such a fun time for everyone. We all bonded on a new level.” Generally, mentors were in agreement that off-campus activities were beneficial, though some reported difficulty in planning events due to time constraints and transportation.

Self-Determination

Self-advocacy. Mentors frequently mentioned the use of learning style quizzes disseminated at the initial orientation and training. Several mentors reported that filling out the learning style quiz helped them to support their mentees. One mentor added that her mentee was able to open up and discuss his learning needs. Mentors shared that the quiz was a valuable tool to establish rapport with their mentees by learning about each other. As one stated, “Today we talked about what we thought our strengths and weaknesses were. It ended up being a great ice breaker.” Other mentors also indicated that the learning style quiz led to setting semester goals.

Mentors reported several different ways in which self-advocacy was encouraged with their mentees including travel training, speaking to professors, and establishing an ongoing dialogue with their parents. Mentors mentioned assisting students with being on time for their

transportation and planning ahead to ensure arrival in the correct place. One mentor went as far as to ride the public transportation with her mentee to get him acclimated. She reported, “I would really like to see him take advantage of the transportation resources provided to him. We will ride together so he feels more comfortable with the process.” Later in the semester the same mentor reported, “He really loves taking the bus now!” Yet another mentor reported helping his mentee research driving programs and opening a dialogue with his parents about learning how to drive. Other mentors reported going to class with their mentee to encourage them to speak to their professors about needed accommodations. Some mentors documented meeting with mentees’ parents and encouraging more levels of independence. One mentor shared, “Today we talked about some more leisure time that her parents could give her to have off campus activities possible. Her homework for the next meeting is to talk to them about this topic.”

Adaptive Behavior Skills

A common theme among the data revolved around four adaptive behavior skills: Career Development, Social and Communication Skills, Physical Development/Health and Wellness, and Academic Skills. It was also within this area that many mentors reported challenges. Adaptive Behavior Skills were a focal point in the initial orientation and training, during which mentors were encouraged to model proper behaviors and use self-determination skills.

Career development. Mentors indicated asking their mentees what their interests and future goals were. A few mentors mentioned visiting their mentees at their job shadowing or paid job sites for observation. One mentor commented, “He got to show me what he does at work each day and his responsibilities.” Other mentors agreed that observation was a mutually benefitting experience. Additionally, mentors recorded activities to prepare mentees with the skills necessary for a workplace. Some activities included: building a resume, attending job fairs, conducting mock interviews, and building time management skills. One mentor said, “We sent his resume to his advisor. I noticed he is developing a sense of professionalism.” Another mentor commented on working on her mentee’s time management skills: “I explained how it is rude to arrive late to anything; I emphasized the idea that if he was ever late to work they would fire him.” Mentors were in consensus that behavior should be congruent from mentor meetings to job sites and reinforced this throughout the study.

Technological skills were also emphasized in regards to adaptive behaviors for employment. All *Panther LIFE* students received an iPad and training, and mentors reported assisting their mentees with utilizing this tool. The majority of mentors reported working with their mentees to send e-mail and use pps for organization, calendars, and learning. One mentor said, “He had a lot of difficulty with organization in general, and I tried to help by getting him an app that will remind him about the things he needs to do.” Another reported, “She knows basic skills, but I am going to help her learn how to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.” Others reported using iPads for practicing academic skills such as reading and math. A mentor commented, “The games are fun and he really enjoys it while learning Math skills.” All mentors were in agreement that iPads are a useful tool for their mentee’s career development skills.

The data revealed that an area of challenge for mentors included the lack of time management and organizational skills exhibited by the students in the program. Mentors referenced mentees missing appointments, being unorganized, not prioritizing items, and forgetting materials during classes or sessions. As one mentor commented at the end of the semester, “Overall, good experience to work with [her]; however, her organizational skills need to improve.” Another commented, “The biggest frustration was working on her time management skills.” Literature demonstrated that improved time management can lead to

enhanced independence (Davies, Stock, & Wehmeyer, 2002). This may be indicative of attention needed in relation to these skills by support staff and mentors in the future.

Social and communication skills. Social and communication skills play a major role in adaptive behavior and social competence, which directly affects future adjustment including employment (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001; Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990). Social behavior, communication, and interactions were emphasized in the initial orientation and training for the mentors, thereby drawing it to their attention during the study. Many mentors chose to focus on communication and appropriate social behavior with their mentees as a goal. Several mentors noted that seeing social growth and intellectual connections with their mentees was the most rewarding part of the program.

A few common themes that occurred during the study regarding social and communication skills were appropriateness, public speaking, and expanding social circles. Nearly all mentors mentioned introducing their mentee to their circle of friends. One mentor added, "I introduced her to my friend who is majoring [in] Nursing; that's the major that she wants to study. We had a conversation about that." Several mentors spent weeks preparing and practicing speeches with their mentees who attended conferences with one mentor/mentee group making memorizing a speech a semester goal.

Although growth was reported, mentors expressed challenges with social behaviors and the need to redirect students to more appropriate behaviors. One mentor stated, "He tells so many girls they are beautiful; I explained how that might make them feel uncomfortable." Continuing to support mentors and other program staff in implementing strategies to improve social and communication skills is a future consideration and is supported by the literature (Campbell-Whatley, 2001; Gresham et al., 2001; Kupersmidt et al., 1990).

Physical development/health and wellness. Teaching mentees about nutrition and workout plans was a common theme in the data collected. While the mentees attended sessions during the week at the Recreational Center, most mentors felt that additional help was needed. Activities reported in the logs included spinning and Zumba classes, weight training, and intramural sports. One mentor said, "I went to the gym with [him]; we came up with a workout plan that he should stick with and brought some workout exercises." Other mentors reported progress with their workout goals for the semester. One mentor commented, "He called me the next day telling me he was sore but that he's happy I made him do the extra 2 sets at the gym yesterday. I think he is seeing results!" Overall, mentors agreed that doing physical activities played an important role in the overall experience for their mentees. This also aligns with previous literature associating physical activity with higher levels of self-esteem and fewer health risk factors (Robertson, et.al., 2000; Sonstroem, 1997).

Mentors also reported having conversations with their mentees regarding nutrition. One shared, "We talked about how he needs to be on a diet and too many French Fries are not good for him." Others reported their mentees used information from a nutrition class and applied it to their everyday life. One mentor reported a semester goal of helping her mentee make healthier choices at the store on campus. Overall, mentors reported an increase of healthy eating habits over the course of the year. Although nutrition was not discussed during the orientation and training meeting, healthy diets can reduce the risk of obesity, which occurs more frequently in people with intellectual disabilities (Marshall, McConkey, & Moore, 2003). Therefore, more consideration about proper nutrition and exercise may be necessary.

Academic skills. Mentors were introduced to various instructional strategies for helping their mentees with academics, including note-taking and studying for tests. Nearly all mentors

reported working one-on-one with their mentee on academic work at some point during the study. Academic skills mentioned in the data included reading comprehension, vocabulary, math and calculation, study skills, researching in the library, and writing outlines for papers. One mentor recounted a success story with her student: “While preparing the outline for the essay, she had some trouble spelling out certain words. Rather than asking me, she went on her phone and used an app that allows her to spell check.” A number of mentees were reported as verbally asking for help while others required prompts regarding assignments and due dates. Other mentors also shared that their mentees showed improvement in academics throughout the study. One mentor stated, “As the semester goes on she is taking responsibility for her own learning.” Another mentor said, “I love how she is becoming an independent student.” Study skills were also emphasized through note cards and reviewing notes and handouts. One mentor recounted her strategies for studying with her mentee: “She typed the notes by herself and offered to read information as I read and explain the information to her. Her homework was to take the notes home and highlight important details.” Another mentor described giving vocabulary homework to her mentee to improve comprehension when reading for class. Overall, mentors reported attempting multiple study strategies with their mentees and ultimately witnessing positive and improved academic results at the end of each semester.

Alternatively, concerns from the mentors emerged when examining the data. Mentors reported feeling that online classes were difficult for their mentees due to the reliance on personal accountability. Several mentors also commented on the number of classes their mentees were taking per semester. “He was overwhelmed the entire semester and unable to keep up with 3 classes and a work schedule. It took away from his academics.” The consensus was that mentoring sessions were not as effective when more than two classes per semester were selected. Other concerns included difficulty with assisting students with course assignments due to limited functional skills in reading and math.

Discussion

Federal legislation is now making it possible for students with ID to enroll in university programs through inclusive postsecondary transition models. With the increase in the number of students with ID participating in these programs, it is necessary to examine the types of supports that need to be in place for this population of students to experience success. One support that is often identified is the use of peer mentorship for improved academic and social development (Campbell-Whatley, 2001).

In this study, we examined the mentoring support students received in a postsecondary transition program called *Panther LIFE*. The purpose of the study was to determine the specific skills mentors needed and used during their mentoring sessions as well as to identify potential struggles and challenges with mentoring partnerships in postsecondary transition programs. The data reported from participating mentors revealed the skills that were held in high priority during mentoring sessions focused on improving and enhancing the academic, social, and employability skills of the students. Mentors wanted their students to understand their academic responsibilities in university courses but equally stressed the importance of understanding and displaying appropriate social behavior on- and off-campus. Furthermore, mentors understood that the goal of the program was to prepare students for paid employment and therefore engaged their students in conversations and activities related to career exploration and the development of work-related skills. These mentor perspectives allow transition programs such as *Panther LIFE* to re-evaluate priorities and focus on overall student inclusion and future success.

The results also demonstrate that mentors at the postsecondary level for students with ID

choose to focus on challenges that directly reflect their own as well as other college-aged students without ID becoming a self-advocate, attempting to be more independent, expanding social circles, and gaining employment after graduation. Although students with ID may struggle with these challenges in different ways, ultimately mentors serve as a bridge of understanding between a college campus and a student. Researchers such as Jones and Goble (2012) have noted that mentors require preparation and training before working with students with ID; however, the results indicate that continued support throughout the transition program is needed. Mentors need further support from postsecondary transition programs, especially in areas related to time management — balancing work life, school life, and social life.

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Table 1

Program Activities and Descriptions

Program Activity	Description
On-campus Job Shadowing Experiences ($n = 3$)	These employability experiences occur on-campus with the support of the Employability/Community Coordinator in collaboration with the student's assigned job coach and on-the-job supervisor. Each student will have a total of three (3) job shadowing experiences to introduce him or her to a particular knowledge base and skill set (e.g., clerical/office, recreational, child care). Job shadowing experiences are part-time, typically occurring 2-3 times per week.
Off-campus Community Employment Internship ($n = 2$)	These employability internship experiences occur off-campus with the support of the Employability/Community Coordinator in collaboration with the student's assigned job coach and on-the-job supervisor. Each student will have a total of two (2) supervised internships with a public or private business in the local community to focus on developing expertise in an area of career interest. Internships are full-time, typically occurring 5 times per week.
Online Functional Academics Curriculum	<i>i-Ready Reading and Math Curriculum</i> will be used by students in the program under the direction of the M-DCPS Project Coordinator. This curriculum focuses on the development of reading and math skills through online individualized instruction with ongoing progress monitoring.
Online Transition Curriculum	<i>Unique Learning System Transition Program</i> will be used by students in the program under the direction of the M-DCPS Project Coordinator. The primary goal of this curriculum is to increase a student's independence in the areas of job skills and daily living through the creation of learning opportunities in the context of real-world scenarios.
Online Employability Curriculum	<i>Microcomputer Evaluation of Careers and Academics (MECA)</i> will be accessed by students in the program under the direction of the M-DCPS Project Coordinator. <i>MECA</i> is an age-appropriate transition, career exploration, career assessment, and vocational assessment system related to training, education, and employment.

Program Activities	Program activities include attendance at University Orientation & Welcome Back meetings, weekly sessions with system of supports (e.g., academic mentors, peer coaches), attending monthly student meetings, family/student seminars, etc.
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Table 2
Mentor Reported Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme	Frequently Recorded Activities
Inclusion	On-Campus Involvement	Homecoming activities Sporting events Greek Life activities Joining a club
	Off-Campus Involvement	Special Olympics activities Going to the movies Attending festivals
Self-Determination	Self-Advocacy	Creating personal goals Utilizing the Disability Resource Center Using public transportation Determining learning style
Adaptive Behavior Skills	Career Development	Career Services events Resume/job interview prep Observing student at work Sending e-mails Utilizing iPad for organization
	Social and Communication Skills	Meeting for lunch Practicing speechmaking Symposiums, presentations, and conferences
	Physical Development/Health and Wellness	Going to the gym together Working on a diet and talking about nutrition Doing yoga
	Academic Skills	Reading/answering book questions Doing homework and projects Studying together and going over study habits Meeting at and using the library

Engaged Scholarship: A Model for Creating an Education Research Lab

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Abstract: This presentation delineates a model for developing a university-based education research lab that (1) provides opportunities for faculty and students to collaborate in conducting authentic community-based research and (2) facilitates professional development for mentors and mentees by fostering opportunities for scholarship, teaching, and service. Logistical considerations are also explored.

Improving the quality of education research has been a conspicuous theme in the education literature for a number of years (e.g., Burkhardt & Schoenfeld, 2003; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). This paper proposes a model for local, School of Education-based education research labs (ERL) that share characteristics similar to the Institute of Education Sciences-funded Regional Education Labs (RELs) found throughout the U.S. and also with the type of research labs commonly found in basic and social science (e.g., psychology, sociology) departments at institutions of higher learning, but less often seen in schools of education. We argue that the proposed ERL model can play an important role in (a) student training, (b) faculty scholarship, and (c) meeting community needs for research and program evaluation in local education entities, from school districts to non-profit community programs with an education component.

Theoretical Framework Characteristics of the Model Making Research Accessible to the Local Community

In institutions of higher learning that are characterized as “research institutions,” the research training model is traditionally for students to work as research assistants with faculty and other student researchers on projects that fall within the purview of the faculty research mentor’s own scholarly research agenda. In a community based research model, the agenda is driven by community needs (Sadler, Larson, Bouregy, LaPaglia, & Bridger, 2012). Through this professional service, researchers and research students are often engaged in research and evaluation projects that address social justice issues, such as reducing education inequities (e.g., Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2012).

From an applied developmental sciences perspective, Jensen, Hoagwood, and Trickett (1999) articulated a community-based model that challenged research scholars to move outside the confines of their institutions to study real-world issues in real-world settings. That is, collaboration leads to a clearer understanding of community dynamics, which ultimately facilitates impacts that are valuable. Similarly, Boyer (1996) talked of a scholarship of engagement, which called for universities to engage as active partners in addressing problems of the local community and larger society. Similar models, including design-based implementation research model (Penuel, Fishman, Cheng, & Sabelli, 2011), promote the same message of authentic, relevant, and collaborative research that meets the needs of the local community (e.g., Roderick, Easton, & Sebring, 2009).

Partnerships/Collaboration

The potential of community-based research is only achieved through authentic partnerships between experts (often university faculty) and community stakeholders that can

include organizations, individuals, families, and/or practitioners (e.g., Ligas et al., 2012; Sadler et al., 2012). We contend that an ERL is most vibrant and successful with the inclusion of student research assistants who gain the benefits of experiential learning through participation in an authentic research experience (Liu & Breit, 2013).

A Student's Perspective

Students who pursue and embrace opportunities to conduct research with faculty recognize the value of this unique experience. Although some students embrace the idea of research because they see it as a valuable tool for understanding phenomena in an area of interest or bringing about positive change in communities, undergraduate and graduate students too often approach research classes with some degree of trepidation. Academic exercises such as conducting annotated bibliographies or drafting research proposals provide a glimpse into the world of a researcher, but hands-on opportunities to be engaged in actual research can pave the way for students to conceptualize and develop their own research projects, setting them on the path to a research career. Students with an interest in research are willing to volunteer considerable time and effort in exchange for this unique learning experience.

Reciprocal and Synergistic Benefits

Figure 1 depicts the reciprocal nature of the benefits of this practical and authentic relationship. First, experiential learning creates unique opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage and to apply academic understandings through hands-on experience, while developing new knowledge and perspectives on topics that are the focus of research. Students are involved with real life projects, not just hypothetical exercises. The full range of research activities, such as completing an IRB protocol, constructing a research proposal, developing proposals for presentations and presentation of findings, and opportunities to co-author articles for publication, are real. The work of a researcher becomes real. It is no longer an abstract concept, or a distant activity in which only faculty engage. Students are involved in developing an understanding of real-world problems and issues. Being engaged in the research agenda of a faculty member also ensures an authentic mentoring experience (Liu & Breit, 2013).

Second, university researchers benefit by access to timely and authentic research that is especially valuable in its ability to impact positive change in the local community. In addition, working with student research assistants increases a faculty researcher's ability to be engaged in research in that the students do much of the hands-on work, thus limiting a mentor's time commitment. It is important that the research mentor ensure that the student research assistant is engaged in challenging tasks that promote the development of new technical and scholarly skills (e.g., developing IRB proposals, attending IRB meetings, gathering data, analyzing data, preparing and giving presentations, or scholarly writing), rather than other types of administrative tasks.

Third, community education partners similarly benefit from both the expertise of university researchers and the hands-on work completed by the students under the guidance of their research mentors. This model stands in contrast to more traditional models of education researchers as consultants, often paid through grant funds or organizational budgets. We contend that the benefit to all partners outweighs any potential monetary gain. In addition, the synergy generated by the continuous and authentic interaction of all partners, and the reciprocal nature of the benefits in this model, enhance both value and quality of the work.

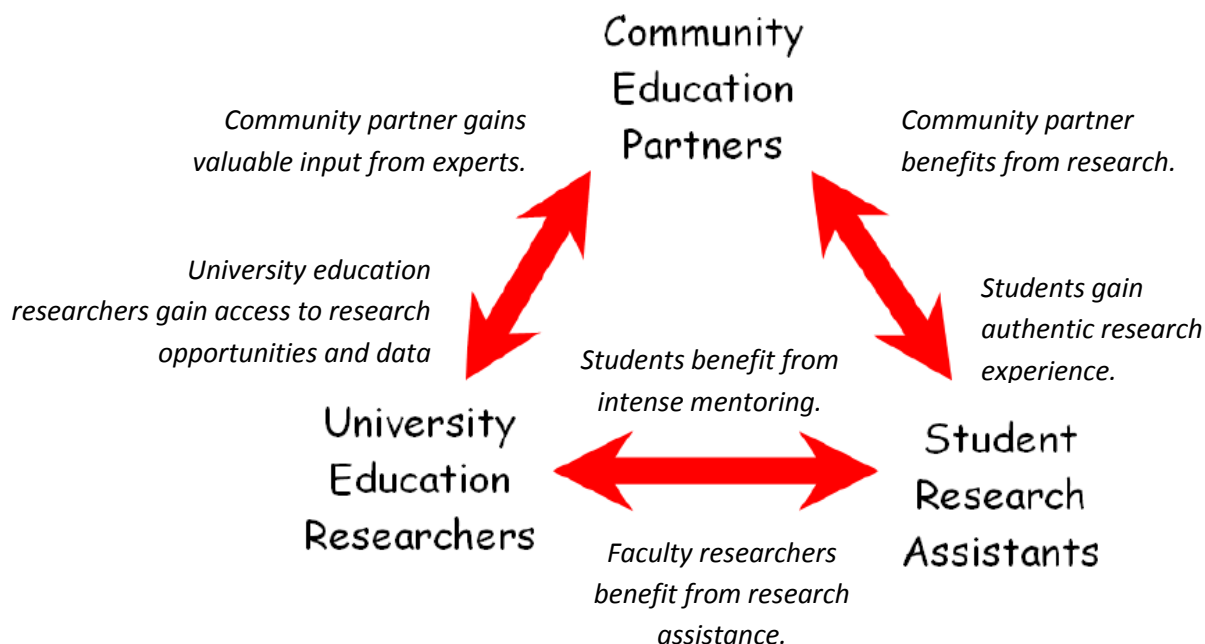


Figure 1. Reciprocal benefits for all ERL stakeholders

Structure of the ERL

Comprehensive Research Agenda

Consistent with both a community-based research model and a developmental evaluation model (McNeil, Newman, & Steinhauser, 2005; Patton, 2011), an ERL must ultimately be guided by a cooperative research agenda, developed in partnership with all stakeholder groups, based upon community need and the interest and expertise of partners. The development of a research agenda that is broad, deep, and authentic facilitates faculty scholarship opportunities. A strong research agenda that is driven by local need also facilitates student researcher development as critical thinkers in developing solutions to real and complex problems. The collaborative nature of the work facilitates building relationships that support understanding of complex problems. Budgets for small and large grant opportunities can be written to include tuition stipends for student research assistants. Of course, an active ERL conducting relevant and authentic research may have an increased chance of funding, as well.

Collaboration

Research students working in teams foster a successful ERL, in that collaboration will occur among graduate students, between graduate and undergraduate students, among students working in different disciplines (e.g., counseling leadership, curriculum and instruction), between faculty mentors and students, and between students and community members. Mentoring should also specifically extend to the student's development of skills in professional communication. Student collaboration allows undergraduate and graduate students to engage in academic discussion, joint problem solving, and critical thinking. The building of relationships also fosters the development of higher levels of interest in the subject matter, the methodology, and research in general. Students from various departments and at varying stages of their academic careers share knowledge, clarify misunderstandings, and work together toward a common project. These rich and diverse relationships allow for hybrid opportunities and an integration of multiple perspectives.

In a similar way, faculty also benefit from collaboration with the students within a junior colleague model, where the students are encouraged to attend research meetings at all levels, to explore and contribute new ideas, and to make decisions about all aspects of the work. The development of cross-institutional relationships can be valuable for both faculty and students. Faculty can model successful and respectful collaboration and provide opportunities to connect students across institutions.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is a particular focus of the successful ERL, wherein faculty model leadership and provide opportunities for the students to take positions of leadership in relation to the work. Seniority is determined either by years in the academic program (e.g., doctoral students mentor master's students and/or master's students supervise undergraduates) or years in the ERL (i.e., students with a longer history in the ERL supervise and train incoming research students). Leadership skills that are cultivated in the ERL are then transferred to other academic situations and areas. The research assistant (RA) then becomes a point of reference and a knowledge source for his or her peers.

Meeting Structure

A number of different types of meetings may be developed. It is beneficial to have small group meetings related to the details and ongoing work of specific projects. However, it also supports continuity and consistency of vision to have larger meetings of the ERL to facilitate the development of relationships and support an ongoing focus on the overall research agenda. Attendance of researchers at community meetings is important to maintaining relationships, especially in those cases when much of the research work is taking place behind the scenes. In general, students are welcome to sit in on any research meeting being conducted for any purpose. This is an opportunity to both observe professional collaboration and to learn new theoretical and methodological skills. Although all meetings have a professional development purpose, some workshops are more focused and can be institutional or cross-institutional in nature. For example, a recent cross-institutional dissertation boot camp provided the opportunity for students to explore the process of developing a research question that is aligned with the research purpose. We have had success with targeted, open, biweekly student research meetings, which can serve a number of purposes, including workshops on ethics, navigating the IRB, how to conduct interviews and focus groups, transcription, etc. With the goal of making research more accessible to students, the open meeting format allows for the involvement of any interested students at their chosen level of engagement and commitment. The biweekly research meetings are open to any students who are interested, including those who are committed to ERL projects and those who simply want to explore the possibility that research might be an area of interest. Some students will simply attend meetings and observe, while others will begin by observing for a time and transition into a more involved or committed role within the research team. It is also possible for students to engage intimately on a research project for a period of time and then scale back their engagement at a future point in time due to time constraints or competing academic responsibilities. Consistent with the leadership development strategy, more senior students can conduct training during these meetings for those newer to the ERL program.

Scholarly Development

All aspects of the ERL are aimed at providing students with opportunities for scholarly development. These include presentation and publication opportunities, guidance in building a curriculum vitae, and the development of a research profile. Students learn how to talk about their data in research forums. Both undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to

participate in a research experience, and more importantly, showcase their research through oral and/or poster presentations to the university, local, and broader professional and/or stakeholder communities. Conference opportunities allow students to become more competent and confident public speakers and presenters.

Lab Manual

In order to support the continued growth and development of an ERL, attention must be paid to logistical considerations. Standardizing procedures can go a long way to facilitating, operationalizing, and institutionalizing an ERL, which can also promote stability over time. To that end, a lab manual can be a valuable tool by documenting procedural details that facilitate collaboration and the implementation of rigorous and valid measures. The lab manual can include everything from how to complete and submit hours as documentation of work on the project for the purpose of stipends, file naming conventions that allow students to share a database of resources, guidelines for transcription to ensure that data are comparable across researchers, transcription guidelines, or standardizing procedures for conducting focus groups and interviews.

Conclusion

The federal government and AERA have identified as a priority the need to build partnerships between local education authorities and education researchers in their respective communities. A School of Education-based ERL can contribute to this work. Tuckman (1965) noted that the maturity for a group develops through a process of predictable stages related to both task orientations and socio-emotional issues. The development of a collaborative ERL will require attention to both the social phenomena (e.g., relationship-building leadership development, and constructing a CV), and the logistics of tasks (e.g., how to navigate the IRB, how to conduct an interview, how to communicate with stakeholders). We contend that this model has the capacity to facilitate authentic and valuable work that benefits all stakeholders in unique, equitable, and important ways.

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What Factors Influence Persistence Rates in Active Older Adult Group Exercise Programs?

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to discover factors that influence the persistence rates of active older adults participating in exercise classes, and how instructors respond to these factors. Data suggested participants prefer group classes for wellness, socialization, and instructors, who are critical in advancing exercise motivation to attend classes.

Exercise is no longer an isolated activity but continues to have universal appeal. However, many middle age and senior adults typically do not continue with exercise programs despite the low cost options available. Of the individuals who do participate in regular group exercise, many quit within three to six months after starting a regular group exercise program (Jones et al., 2001). With decreased physical activity, prevalence rates of major health concerns such as obesity, cognitive decline, and age related illness are significantly increased (Jones et al., 2001). Furthermore, empirical research projects the population of individuals above 60 years of age to increase over the next several decades, emphasizing a need to intensify advantageous behaviors, thus increasing longevity.

Research into exercise adherence, conducted by Abraham, Feldman, Nyman, and Barleen (2011) suggests that individuals who recognize the benefits of exercise, as well as have access to additional resources promoting exercise and health, were more likely to participate in regular exercise. Specifically in middle aged and senior adults, exercise stimulates cognitive activity, enhances mood, and promotes growth of nerve cells, as well as improves self-confidence, efficacy, and decreases depression (Roberson, 2007). What prior research advocates is that active older adults can benefit from education and wellness programs designed with their unique demographic needs in order to improve persistence and retention. This can include increased awareness of exercise, nutrition, and flexibility training directed specifically towards an active older population.

Implications of Exercise Persistence

Many individuals considered middle aged and older will be experiencing, often for the first time, age related deficits, and a desire to increase or engage in healthful behaviors. Roberson (2007) posited that greater preparation through education can enable these middle-aged adults to better prepare and delay the aging process. Stephan, Boiche and Le Scanff (2011) further proposed that individuals above 60 years of age will increase dramatically within the next decade. In 2030, this number is projected to increase to 20% of the United States population (Kuczmarksi & Cotugna, 2009). Because of this increased education concerning health and wellness, worldwide views regarding aging are shifting in a marginally positive direction, increasing the propensity towards living longer and healthier (Roberson, 2007).

Abraham et al. (2011) further argued a strong parallel between activity in early to middle adulthood and cognitive stability and longevity later in life. In an investigation into the participation rates of voluntary employee wellness programs, Abraham et al. noted the correlation between the increased participation of individuals in company-sponsored wellness programs and the rising rate of insurance, suggesting a desire to improve wellness to decrease

insurance premiums. Despite conclusive research that exercise and wellness initiatives improve cognitive and physical health, Oka (2011) posited that the prevalence of physical inactivity continues due to increased time and environmental dependence associated with careers, lifestyle, and travel cost and distance. Internationally, many countries also have not explored the benefits of senior programs; rather, the impetus remains a focus on early adulthood wellness programs (Roberson, 2007).

Positive Health Effects

According to the American College of Sports Medicine (Haskell et al., 2007), active older individuals should engage in light to moderate physical activity that promotes cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility health most, if not all days of the week. Resnick (2001), for example, suggested light activity can include walking, or light yard work, while biking, and jogging can be considered moderate depending on speed, intensity, and duration. Cardiovascular health can be improved by any activity that prolongs sustained heart engagement, such as walking or jogging (Resnick, 2001). Alternately, muscular strength can improve through weight bearing exercises that work the body against gravity (Resnick, 2001). Finally, flexibility training promotes elongation of the muscle groups essential in older adults because flexibility is lost as age increases, leading to loss of balance and injury (Resnick, 2001).

Motivation and Dropout

Mode or type of exercise, and intensity can be both motivating and intimidating when beginning any exercise program (Resnick, 2001). If individuals are engaged in activity that is above or below the participant's ideal level, intimidation or boredom can occur, respectively. Furthermore, if exercises are complicated or progress at a frenetic rate, confusion can lead to discouragement about exercise, yet another contributing factor that can eventually lead to exercise dropout. Stephan et al. (2011) examined motivational causes influencing dropout in an active older female population utilizing self-determination theory- innate changes that promote motivation and growth. Several possibilities may be responsible for influencing retention or, conversely, dropout rates: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Stephan et al. described intrinsic retention factors to be elevated knowledge of exercise: how it relates to active aging, and extrinsic to be discouraging factors as societal pressure to maintain weight. Utilizing a random sample of 1,000 women, aged 55 plus, the French Federation of Physical Education and Voluntary Gymnastics allowed researchers to determine which intrinsic and extrinsic factors were responsible for motivating exercise (Stephan et al., 2011). Those who were more intrinsically motivated were more likely to continuously participate because of positive development over a period of time. Moreover, the release of endorphins allowed them to experience more enjoyment from exercise (Stephan et al., 2011). Those who left the program tended to be externally motivated, and potentially lacked sufficient information or motivation to participate longer.

Aging Stereotypes

Horton, Baker, and Deakin (2007) of the School of Kinesiology, Ontario, Canada clarified the negative effects of stereotypes on an older adult population. Despite the literature on continuing health and exercise, seniors are often subject to harmful cultural stereotypes and denigrations because of their demographic (Horton et al., 2007). With the prevalence of media, other forms of discrimination are commonplace, such as images and claims of reduced socioeconomic status, lowered cognitive ability, and decreased physical appearance. As a result, many active older adults mistakenly adopt these false stereotypes of health. Internalizing these subliminal propaganda and false claims often prevents successful aging and performance through

reduced physical and cognitive output and a lack of confidence and self-efficacy (Woo & Sharps, 2003).

Researchers discovered that when providing positive information to seniors regarding preventative behaviors involved in health and aging, self-perceptions of aging improved dramatically and directly correlated with their overall self-concept (Horton et al., 2007). Increasing mindfulness of stereotypes and eradicating their usage could result in improvement of self-concept and self-efficacy for older adults. Harris and Dollinger (2001) further suggested that professionals in health related fields would benefit from continued educational classes designed to provide psychological insight and education concerning senior adults attitudes, including methods of reduction of age related myths and stereotypes. Furthermore, in research on these continued educational courses for older adults, participants had a more positive outlook on health, decreased anxiety, and decreased negativity towards their own aging process (Harris & Dollinger, 2001).

Cognitive Benefits

Woo and Sharps (2003) researched the salient association between exercise and enriched cognitive responsiveness and attentiveness. Utilizing a Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Woo and Sharps determined baselines of cognitive functioning in groups of older adults who were participating in an exercise program. Resulting data indicated that older adults experienced increased levels of verbal memory directly correlated with increased exercise (Woo & Sharps, 2003). Furthermore, Blair, Glaister, Brown, and Phillips (2007) posited that individuals in the care of senior residential or assisted living facilities who regularly engage in daily activity have increased cerebral functioning when compared to those who decline exercise. Dependence on these facilities additionally hastens physical decline because residents rely on staff to take care of needs rather than maintaining autonomy (Blair et al., 2007). This suggests that senior adults require physical as well as psychological stimulation for optimal health.

Dickinson and Hill (2007) evidenced that communication is essential with older adults, as it increases the likelihood of psychological and social wellbeing, along with sustained higher order processing. As adults age, the loss of spouses, friends, and colleagues can lead to social and cognitive decline. Furthermore, physical impairments, such as illness, memory loss, hearing difficulties, and other age related conditions can cause some older adults to remove themselves from social situations (Dickinson & Hill, 2007). Younger adults also contribute to this marked removal from society, as younger adults often provide only superficial communication because of a lack of erudition towards senior adults (Dickinson & Hill, 2007). Understanding communication, including how to improve methods of interaction with active older adults, is also an impetus to increasing retention of active adults in group exercise classes.

The Present Study

This study was concerned with understanding what factors encourage activity and the level of instructor awareness about how these factors can be adopted in their future classes. Despite the low cost options available, many individuals do not continue to participate in group exercise classes specifically designed for active older populations. As active middle aged and senior populations continue to grow, there is a greater need to understand factors that will motivate this group to benefit from exercise. Research provides a greater insight into how the active older adult community can benefit from regular exercise— not only physically, but also cognitively. Additionally, health related resources increase the likelihood of participation in addition to exercise, and positively influence intrinsic motivation. It is imperative that

researchers discover how to better influence this population now so that future generations can benefit from longitudinal research directed at increasing health and wellness.

Continued research is essential to develop enriching education promoting the benefits of exercise adherence, wellness, and specific initiatives triggering retention and persistence with an active older population. Therefore, the target of the current study was twofold: (a) it sought to discover what factors influence persistence rates in active older adults enrolled in exercise programs, and, (b) how instructors said these findings would influence their methodology in these courses.

Method

Participants

Thirteen individuals participated in the first group (age range, 40-89; men $n = 3$, women $n = 10$) recruited based on their participation or current membership at a gym in Central Florida, who attended group exercise classes designed for an active older population. In order to be considered for the study, participants must have been attending or had attended at least one group exercise class designed for active older adults or/and met the age demographic requirements for active older adults. For the purposes of this research, persistence concerns continuous or lifelong activity, and participants qualified if they were 40 years of age or older. Other demographic information indicated that 53% were employed in white collar professions such as health care, insurance, physician's office administration, and community college administration. Participants also reported that 84% spent 2-5 hours engaged in physical activity per week, while 16% engaged in 5-9 hours. Although several participants noted that joint problems (e.g. back and wrist) were their most common discomfort, most participants did not report chronic illnesses preventing them from regularly attending group exercise classes. Each participant received a cover letter, informed consent, and voluntary questionnaire containing open-ended and Likert type questions designed to engage thoughts and feelings regarding participation in group exercise classes.

The second group participating in the study consisted of group exercise instructors (one man and one woman) who had expertise in conducting classes designed for an active older population. Additionally, both instructors had been involved with or had taught group exercise classes for 10 years or more.

Procedure

This research utilized three participant surveys as the primary method of data collection. The first survey, designed for the group exercise instructors, determined current instructor cognizance of what factors were significant to active older adults and what personal attention strategies were currently implemented in classes. The second survey, based on the literature review, was designed for active adult participants and examined overall feelings towards group exercise. Furthermore, the second survey and research findings in the literature were the basis for a professional development course, an hour-long professional development session designed to improve instructors' course standards. It included demographic questions, including gender, age range, and marital status; Likert type questions asking participants to evaluate questions from strongly agree through strongly disagree; one ranking order question; and lastly, nine open-ended questions regarding what motivational factors were involved in the decision to participate. During the professional development course, instructors participated in a final follow up survey to determine whether the active adult survey information assisted instructor development of improved standards of care and personally motivating strategies about active older adults. It

should be noted that the two instructor surveys asked four open-ended response questions and one ranking question and was a condensed version of the larger participant questionnaire.

The first stage of implementation consisted of two synchronous phases in which instructors and active adults responded to surveys ascertaining their feelings and opinions about group exercise. The first group received and responded to surveys during a weeklong collection period during classes intended for active older adult participants. Instructors also responded and returned surveys during this period. Additionally, although some individuals participated in multiple classes during the survey period, no one responded twice. Following data collection, the professional development session was conducted, at the end of which instructors responded to a second survey to determine whether they had an enhanced understanding of motivators for active adult populations.

Results

Based on the empirical evidence linking exercise and wellness, one purpose of this study was to determine what factors influenced active older adults to persist—or continuously participate—in group exercise classes.

Survey results from the 13 participants in the first group indicated that 92% of the individuals enjoy engaging in regular exercise, and 69% indicated that exercise is additionally more enjoyable in a group setting. When asked Likert type questions (Table 1) regarding specific factors that influenced and motivated exercise, 84% of participants indicated overall health, 84% indicated socialization factor, and 76% indicated maintaining fitness were the most motivating. Most participants indicated that they strongly agreed with one or more of the seven motivational factors indicated on the Likert scale. The next question asked participants to rank their choices of these factors from one to seven. Participants ranked overall health highest and family lowest.

Active adult participants were additionally asked to respond to open-ended questions, providing more detail about specific exercise considerations. Respondents indicated that the most important reasons for class attendance were to “keep the body in working condition,” to get out of the house, [and] learn new exercises,” for “weight loss,” and for the “socialization factor.” Specifically regarding favorable characteristics of group classes, respondents indicated they sought “encouragement from peers and the instructor,” and enjoyed being able to “ask instructors health and fitness related questions.” When asked to add additional comments, responses included:

- I appreciate the individualized instructor attention to students and form, as well as the understanding that not everyone is on the same page and the instructor provides modifications
- The instructors are positive role models for women and fitness
- Group exercise has improved my overall mental and health outlook
- I love using all the different exercise instruments
- The instructors have friendly and warm dispositions and make us feel comfortable because they share their lives with us
- Exercise has improved my health and wellbeing
- The most important thing for me is that the instructor has been able to adapt classes to all levels of fitness, regardless of young and old, and keeps us motivated!

The first instructor survey examined what steps they take to personalize attention in group classes, with independent responses stating that learning members’ names was essential, as well as getting to know the regular and returning members. Questions additionally encompassed

what important factors should be considered during group classes. Instructors both stated that introducing themselves helps set the tone for the class and ensures member comfort during class, such as when members ask questions, and that it is essential to learn each participant's level of ability, thus ensuring safety. When asked about what recommendations instructors have to improve group classes, instructors both stated they attend regular conferences and/or workshops to improve understanding of exercises and/or to maintain certifications. In ranking the needs of active older participants based on a list of seven items, one instructor chose maintaining fitness as the most important and increased mental health as being the least important. The second instructor additionally chose increased fitness as the most important but chose family as the least important.

Lastly, instructors participated in an hour-long professional development course that was based in part on questionnaire results from the group exercise participants. During this time, all research data were consolidated to provide a clear body of what factors were important to participants, including the high relevance of instructor input and class organization, including the camaraderie, encouragement and motivational stance of the instructors. Following the professional development course, instructors responded to a follow up survey indicating an improved understanding of participant needs. Data indicated that previous knowledge of their classes provided a foundation for their understanding; this research highlighted areas previously not considered, which included increased mental health and sustained self-sufficiency. Interestingly, although instructors additionally indicated the data provided in the professional development session increased their motivation to improve standards, there seemed a profound realization that their contribution and involvement influenced class standards more than previously realized. Furthermore, instructors indicated that they recognize the greater importance of not simply recognizing participants, but really getting to know them, thus increasing rapport.

Discussion

This study illustrates the crucial influence that group exercise and instructors can have on motivational factors encouraging individuals to participate—not simply in exercise, but in increasing their own wellness. During the course of the study, it was clear how excited active older participants were at participating in this research, as evidenced through rapid return of surveys, and a willingness to respond with detail and clarity. One couple made it a point to stop into the facility to return the survey despite not attending classes that day. After the conclusion of the study, many of the participants inquired about the study, and continued to show interest in what the study implied for the future of these programs.

Moreover, this study indicated that persistence rates of active older individual individuals participating in group exercise classes can be improved through personalized attention strategies, as evidenced by the data and feedback collected from instructors. Stephan et al. (2011) previously noted that negative extrinsic motivation—such as poor media exposure or negative stereotyping—was a determining factor in increased dropout over time as participants continued in exercise programs. Conversely, this current study suggests that participants who felt encouraged and motivated by the group, and more specifically by the instructor, began to internalize their commitment and continue because of personal determination. In other words, the survey responses could be interpreted as evidence that positive external reinforcement and motivation led to increased self-confidence and self-efficacy. Additionally, participants attended classes when they derived a sense of self-worth and improved self-perceptions negating aging stereotypes, as evidenced through participant responses indicating how they felt when instructors

adapted classes to meet the requirements and needs of each person in the class, regardless of age or athletic level. Interesting findings were that participants responded to instructors who made them feel capable of performing external tasks with greater efficiency and the profundity of instructor awareness of their role as motivators and teachers.

Because of the small sample size of participating members and instructors, this study may not be generalizable at this time, but may provide future insights to researchers who repeat this study with a larger sample. Additionally, what was not analyzed in this research study was data from the individuals who are reticent to participate or are intimidated by group classes as a result of never having attended, and those who do not have access to gyms or are unaware of the classes offered for active older individuals. Incorporating this information into a longitudinal research study would lend reliability to the current examination by expounding on the group exercise prevalence rate and the relationship between exercise and health. In the future, focus groups are recommended to obtain greater in depth responses, further data evidencing camaraderie between participants and instructors. A focus group could promote further reflection on the questions, and stimulate thinking in ways that individual, personal reflection cannot.

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

Individuals, regardless of age, want to feel capable and autonomous. Especially at this critical juncture in our history where the number of adults 60 years of age and older is increasing, it is essential that positive and encouraging wellness programs be designed with a vision for the future of successful aging. The implications of this study suggest that when individuals participate in group classes designed for active older participants, they are motivated by the personal attention strategies and direct care that is result of the group exercise environment, the participants as a whole and the instructor. It is clear that active and continuous motivation from instructors or group exercise leaders can influence both intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to exercise. Additionally, when group exercise instructors provide continued education dispelling myths regarding active aging while encouraging positive behaviors, participants continually persist in their exercise regimen.

Finally, this study acknowledges the importance of the human spirit. Exercise was considered a nebulous concept several decades ago, until researchers discovered the inexorable connection between exercise and longevity, cognitive awareness, and happiness. The participants of this study continue their exercise journey, in part to prevent cognitive deficits, in part to reduce physiological decline, and in many ways to circumvent the inevitable process of aging. Not enough research can be done to outline how important successful aging is toward improving the quality of life for active older individuals. Research must continue to make strides towards research in this area so that generations to come will benefit from increased mindfulness and consideration of the journey towards health and wellness.

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Table 1
Specific Motivational Factors Influencing Participation

Statement	(5) Strongly Agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly Disagree
I enjoy engaging in regular exercise.	12	1	0	0	0
Exercise is more enjoyable alone.	0	0	3	4	6
Exercise is more enjoyable in a group setting.	9	3	1	0	0
I only attend group classes because of a friend or spouse.	4	0	0	4	5
Retention and Persistence					
I attend group exercise classes because of the instructor.	5	7	1	0	0
When motivated or encouraged by the instructor, I feel I can do more in class.	7	6	0	0	0
There are too few classes for me to attend.	5	3	2	2	1
A public gym environment is the best for me to engage in regular exercise.	5	4	4	0	0
Which of the following motivates your exercise routine? (Please answer all that apply)					
Maintaining fitness	10	3	0	0	0
Maintaining health	11	2	0	0	0
Socialization	3	5	3	2	0
Engaging in physical activity	11	1	1	0	0
Increased mental health	9	3	1	0	0
Increased self-sufficiency	8	4	1	0	0
Family	4	4	4	1	0

Positive Effects of Peer Modeling and Positive Reinforcement on Healthy Food Intake in Elementary School Children

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Abstract: The current study was conducted to discover the effects of “Food Dudes” peer modeling videos and positive reinforcement on vegetable consumption using a delayed multiple baseline design across subjects. Results suggest peer modeling and positive reinforcement as effective means to increase vegetable intake.

Healthy eating behaviors are currently being stressed among youth of today because of the ever growing rate of chronic illnesses that are attributed to unhealthy lifestyles, including unhealthy eating behaviors. For this reason, it is important to reinforce healthy eating behaviors and healthy lifestyle behaviors among our youth in order to have healthy future generations.

Considering the current importance of promoting healthy lifestyles, several studies have examined methods that may help increase healthy eating behaviors among youths. Related to the current study there has been considerable research on the effects of peer modeling and positive reinforcement on healthy eating behaviors.

One interesting study looked at adolescents’ self-efficacy for healthy eating and peer support for healthy and unhealthy eating behaviors (Fitzgerald, Heary, Kelly, Nixon, & Shevlin, 2013). The study consisted of a large sample ($N=483$) of adolescents in Ireland, aged 13 to 18 years. Results indicated that peer support of unhealthy eating behaviors was associated with unhealthy food intake (Fitzgerald et al., 2013). That study demonstrated a connection between peers and an individual’s eating habits. The primary limitation of their study was that a majority of the peer support data was collected by self-report measures rather than an objective measure, and may have been biased by comprehension or recall (Fitzgerald et al.).

Another study with a large sample ($N=116$) examined whether a peer’s vegetable intake would predict the vegetable intake of the participant (Hermans, Larsen, Herman, & Engels, 2009). In relation to the previous study that found a connection between peers’ support for unhealthy eating and participants’ unhealthy eating behaviors, this second study found that female participants consumed more vegetables when they were exposed to a female peer eating a large amount of vegetables than when they were exposed to one eating few or no vegetables (Hermans et al., 2009). This finding supports a connection between peers’ vegetable intake and participant vegetable intake, and the effectiveness of social modeling of vegetable intake. However, a limitation of this study was that participants were only exposed to same-sex peers, which may not be representative of participants’ surroundings while eating.

Additionally, a study conducted by Granner and Evans (2012) examined the effects of parent modeling as well as peer modeling on the fruit and vegetable intake of a large sample ($N=843$) of adolescents (ages 11 to 15 years). Parent and peer modeling were significantly correlated with both fruit and vegetable intake (Granner & Evans). The results of their study suggested that both parent and peer modeling were effective methods to improve vegetable intake in the adolescent sample. The primary limitation of the Granner and Evans’ study was that the data was drawn from a convenience sample and based on self-report measures.

An interesting study conducted by Mita, Li, and Goodell (2013) examined additional means preschool teachers ($N=38$) found effective to encourage preschool children to eat fruits and vegetables. One of the skills the researchers found that teachers found effective to increase preschoolers' fruit and vegetable consumption was by using a conditional reward (Mita et al., 2013). Mita et al.'s study suggests that in addition to peer modeling, positive reinforcement of fruit and vegetable consumption may also be an effective method to increase young children's fruit and vegetable consumption. One significant limitation of their study includes that the semi-structured interviews with the teacher participants may have led to the collection of biased data due to social desirability bias (Mita et al.).

Similar to the present study, Lowe and Horne (2009) examined the effectiveness of the "Food Dudes" program to increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption. Results showed that the "Food Dudes" program increased children's, aged four to 11 years, fruit and vegetable consumption through the use of role modeling, rewards, and repeated tasting (Lowe & Horne). Lowe and Horne's results support the idea that peer modeling and the positive reinforcement of fruit and vegetable intake may increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption. The main limitation in their study was that the "Food Dudes" program combines a role modeling aspect with a reward system aspect to increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption, which does not allow for the discrimination of each aspect's effectiveness. Another limitation in their study was that the sample was limited to individuals living in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

A related study that was conducted in the United States examined the usefulness of the "Food Dudes" program with elementary students, first- through fifth-graders, in an American school (Wengreen, Madden, Aguilar, Smits, & Jones, 2013). The results of Wengreen et al.'s study indicated that the "Food Dudes" program effectively increased the fruit and vegetable intake of elementary participants ($N=253$) in the United States, which was measured by photo analysis and the evaluation of skin carotenoids. One limitation of their study, as previously mentioned with the prior "Food Dudes" study, includes the inability to discriminate the effectiveness of the peer modeling aspect versus the positive reinforcement aspect of the "Food Dudes" program. In addition, the researchers indicated that the use of skin carotenoid assessment has not been researched as a valid measure of fruit and vegetable intake among children (Wengreen et al.).

The current study was undertaken to address the current lack of healthy eating behaviors among youth by examining the effect of peer modeling videos and positive reinforcement on healthy eating behaviors in children. More importantly, the present study was conducted in order to differentiate the effectiveness of peer modeling videos from positive reinforcement of healthy eating behaviors. The literature presented indicates that peer or social modeling may have a modest, but significant effect on an individual's eating behavior (Fitzgerald et al., 2013; Granner & Evans, 2012; Hermans et al., 2009). Additionally, the literature indicates that frameworks including positive reinforcement aspects have significantly and effectively increased vegetable consumption among young children (Lowe & Horne, 2009; Mita et al., 2013; Wengreen et al., 2013). With that being said, the researchers predicted that the "Food Dudes" peer modeling videos would slightly increase vegetable eating behaviors, but positive reinforcement would cause a greater increase in vegetable eating behaviors.

Method

Participants

Three participants from a kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) charter school in southern Florida partook in the current study. The participants were recruited from the school's

aftercare program, so that the study sessions did not interfere with class time during the school day. The first researcher met with the participants' parents prior to initiating the research and explained the study and received consent.

The first participant was a 7-year old African American boy in the second grade with no known food allergies. He reported that his favorite food was macaroni and cheese, and his least favorite food was popcorn. Participant one mentioned that his favorite vegetable was carrots, and his least favorite vegetable was broccoli. When asked how he felt about eating vegetables, he stated, "It's all right."

The second participant was a 5-year old African American boy in kindergarten with no known food allergies. He reported that his favorite food was chicken, and his least favorite food was apples. Participant two indicated that his favorite vegetables were red bell peppers and tomatoes, and his least favorite vegetable was Brussels sprouts. When asked how he felt about eating vegetables, he said, "It's okay."

Last, the third participant involved in the current study was a 7-year old African American girl in the second grade with no known food allergies. She reported that her favorite food was pizza, and her least favorite foods were celery and peanut butter. Participant three mentioned that her favorite vegetable was carrots, and her least favorite vegetables were potatoes and celery. When asked about how she felt about eating vegetables, she indicated that she enjoys eating certain vegetables.

Setting and Materials

The present study took place in a K-8 charter school in southern Florida. Sessions were conducted during an aftercare program and were held in a storage room on the first floor of the elementary building. The storage room was approximately seven feet by 15 feet in area. A door to the outside was positioned behind the experimenter and a hallway with classrooms was positioned behind the participant.

About a half pound of rinsed raw snow peas on a black Styrofoam tray were used during every session. Raw snow peas were selected for the study in order to ease the measurement of vegetable consumption given their consistent size. In addition, an iPhone mounted by a tripod was used to record every session for interobserver agreement. The first intervention used downloadable "Food Dudes" clips via the Internet and a laptop. The "Food Dudes" clips retrieved from the Internet vary in specific content, but all the clips have the consistent plot of a team of young ethnically diverse children, the *Food Dudes*, promoting fruit and vegetable consumption while demoting the consumption of unhealthy foods by combating a group of villains, the *Junk Punks*, who favor unhealthy foods and try to steal fruits and vegetables. The second intervention used reinforcers including pencils (traditional and mechanical), stickers, stackable crayons, magic towels, toy cars, coloring kits, card decks, and erasers. These reinforcers were selected because of a functional assessment consisting of parent interviews, teacher interviews, and participant interviews that indicated that the selected objects would be reinforcing to the children's vegetable consumption behavior.

Experimental Design and Variables

A *delayed multiple baseline design across participants* was used for the current study. The first independent variable was implementation of the "Food Dudes" clips, which consisted of peer modeling aspects. The second independent variable was positive reinforcement of vegetable intake behavior. The dependent variable throughout the study was vegetable intake measured by per piece or part eaten. The independent variables were deliberately ordered to display an increase in participants' vegetable consumption, and to conclude the study on a

positive note with participants eating more vegetables in the last phase than in the first two phases.

Procedure

Baseline. The experimenter took one participant out of the aftercare classroom and walked the child to the research setting. Once both the participant and the experimenter were seated, the experimenter set up the camera and tripod. Next, the researcher took out the raw snow peas and placed them in front of the participant and in the view of the camera. The researcher then indicated that the child may start tasting and recorded for two minutes. When two minutes passed, the researcher indicated to the participant that the session was finished while ending the recording and putting away the raw snow peas. Once the first participant's behavior achieved a stable baseline, the researcher started the baseline procedure with the second participant. Last, when the second participant's behavior reached stability in baseline, the researcher began the baseline procedure with the third participant.

Intervention 1 (peer modeling videos). Again, the researcher took one participant out of the aftercare classroom and walked the child to the experimentation setting. Once the experimenter and participant were both seated the experimenter set up the camera, tripod, and laptop. Then, the experimenter opened the file of "Food Dudes" video clips and played two minutes of the clips as the participant watched. After the "Food Dudes" video clips concluded, the experimenter took out the tray of raw snow peas, placed the tray in front of the participant, and indicated that the participant could start tasting. Once the participant had the opportunity to taste for 2 minutes, the researcher indicated that the session was finished while ending the recording and putting away the snow peas. There were two criteria for starting the interventions with the second and third participant. First, the participant "ahead" of the other had to advance to the next treatment. Second, the participant must have reached stability in the current treatment. Once the first participant's behavior achieved stability during this intervention phase, the researcher started the first intervention with the second participant. Finally, when the second participant's behavior reached stability in this intervention phase, the researcher began the first intervention with the third participant.

Intervention 2 (positive reinforcement). As in the baseline phase and first intervention phase, the researcher took one participant out of the aftercare classroom and walked the child to the experimentation setting. Once the researcher and participant were both seated, the researcher set up the camera and tripod for recording. Next, the researcher took out the tray of snow peas and placed them in front of the participant. The researcher then took out the reinforcers, and explained to the participant that he or she would receive a prize for every snow pea consumed. The researcher then began recording and indicated that the participant may start tasting. As the participant finished one snow pea, he or she was presented with a reinforcer. Once 2 minutes concluded, the researcher indicated the session was finished, ended the recording and put away the snow peas. Once the first participant's behavior achieved stability during this intervention phase, the researcher started the second intervention with the second participant. Last, when the second participant's behavior reached stability in this intervention phase, the researcher began the second intervention with the third participant. Interventions were conducted on separate days until this phase, due to participant absences and the quickly approaching end of the some of the positive reinforcement interventions were conducted on the same day.

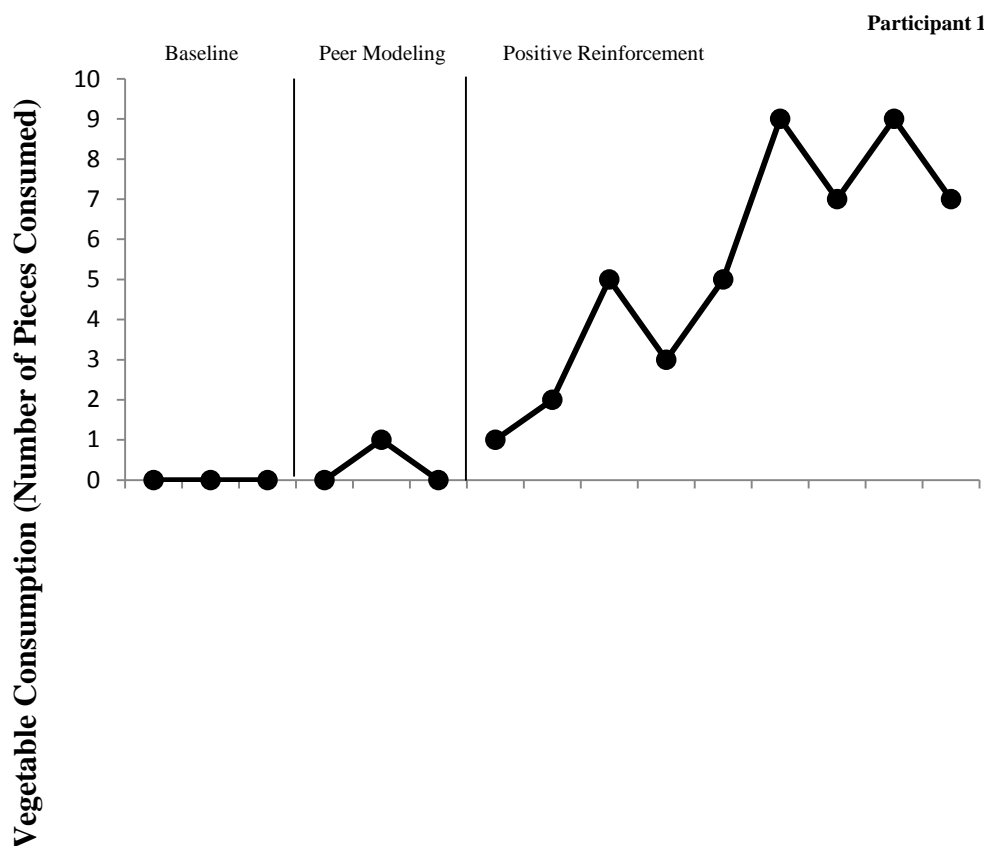
Interobserver agreement. There was a total of 36 sessions conducted during the current study. Each participant's vegetable consumption behavior was observed and recorded once per session. Each participant was involved in three baseline sessions as well as three Intervention 1

(peer modeling videos) sessions. As for Intervention 2 (positive reinforcement), the first participant was involved in nine sessions, the second participant was involved in six sessions, and the third participant was involved in three sessions. Interobserver agreement was calculated by having the second researcher review a random sample of 11 sessions out of the total 36 sessions (about 30%). The interobserver agreement on the number of snow peas consumed by each participant during the observation sessions of the current study was 100%.

Results

The visual analysis of data is considered sufficient in single subject methodology (Richards, Taylor, & Ramasamy, 2014). The visual analysis of the data from the current study (see Figure 1) suggests that the “Food Dudes” videos, which implemented the use of peer modeling, slightly increased participants’ vegetable consumption. The first participant’s mean vegetable consumption increased from zero during the baseline phase to approximately 0.33 during the peer modeling intervention. Likewise, the second participant’s mean vegetable consumption also increased from one during the baseline phase to approximately 1.67 during the peer modeling intervention. Contrary to the prior two participants’ results, the third participant’s mean vegetable consumption dropped slightly from approximately 0.83 during the baseline phase to approximately 0.67 during the peer modeling intervention.

Additionally, a visual analysis of the data shows that positive reinforcement of participants’ vegetable consumption had a greater effect on increasing participants’ vegetable consumption than the peer modeling videos alone. The first participant’s mean vegetable consumption increased from approximately 0.33 during the peer modeling intervention to approximately 5.33 during the positive reinforcement intervention. Similarly, the second participant’s mean vegetable consumption increased from approximately 1.67 during the peer modeling intervention to approximately 2.67 during the positive reinforcement intervention. Lastly, the third participant’s mean vegetable consumption increased from about 0.67 during the peer modeling intervention to about 2.67 during the positive reinforcement intervention.



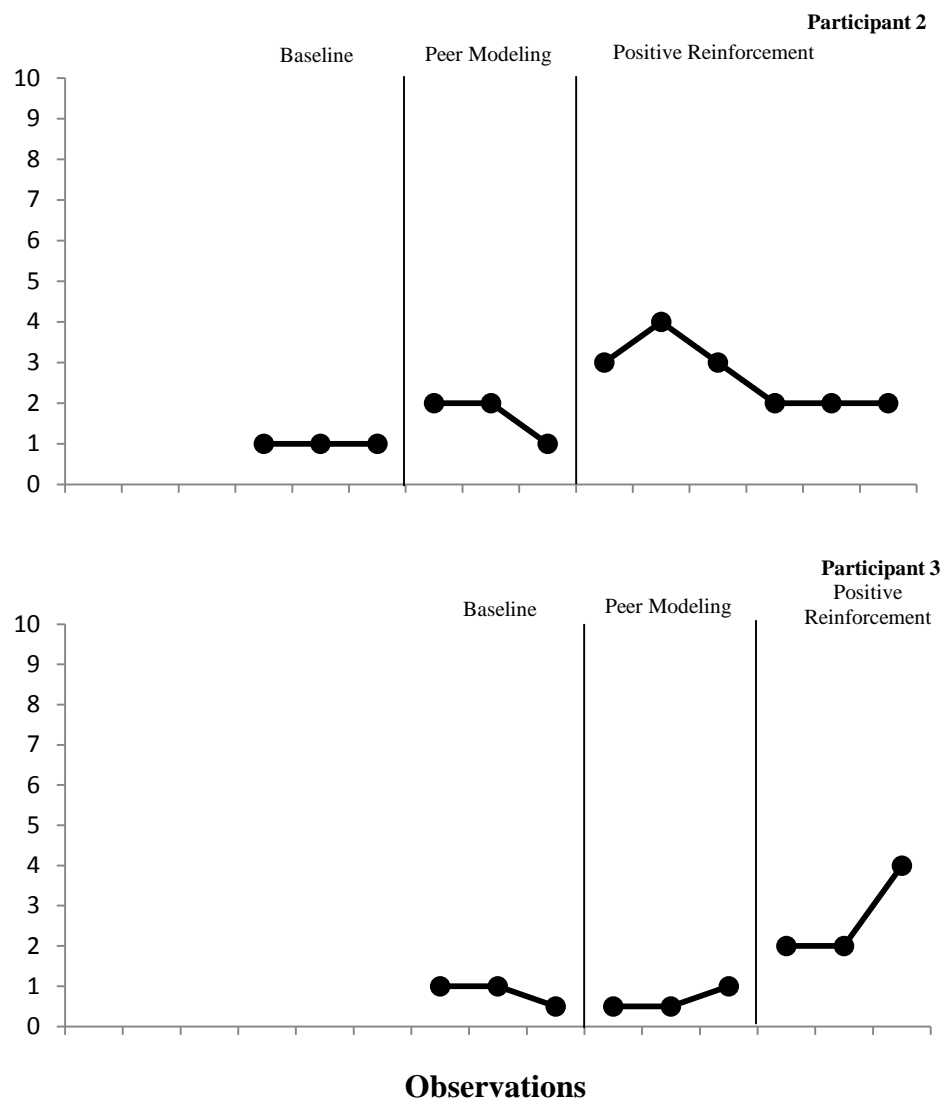


Figure 1. Using a delayed multiple baseline across participants, data displays the number of vegetable pieces consumed across baseline, Intervention 1 (peer modeling videos), and Intervention 2 (positive reinforcement).

subject research *delayed multiple baseline across participants* design. The current research supported the hypothesis that peer modeling videos slightly increased participants' vegetable consumption, and positive reinforcement of participants' vegetable consumption resulted in an even greater increase in the target behavior, comparing the changes in participants' mean vegetable consumption between the study's phases. These findings support the idea that positive reinforcement in the moment may increase vegetable consumption.

The findings of the current research are useful and beneficial to the ongoing effort to help improve the diets of younger generations. On February 9, 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama launched her campaign, *Let's Move!*, to improve the health of the nation's youth (Office of the First Lady, 2013). First Lady Michelle Obama's initiative focuses on providing real support to families and young people to live healthier lives (Office of the First Lady). The support created

modeling videos
in the single

by the *Let's Move!* campaign includes increased access to health information for families, improved meals provided by schools, increased availability of healthy affordable foods, and increased opportunities for physical activity in different communities (Office of the First Lady). Evidently, the United States of America is taking great measures to ensure that the nation's youth is living to their full potential through improving their overall physical health. The *Let's Move!* campaign focusing on improving children's diets, as the current study has done, is a central part to improve their overall health.

One limitation of the study is that the study did not have sufficient resources to conduct a follow up phase, to determine the maintenance of participants' vegetable intake without the use of either intervention. It would be interesting in future studies to investigate if participants' behavior reverts to baseline levels with the withdrawal of positive reinforcement methods. Another limitation concerns the external validity considering the small sample size and demographic homogeneity of the study participants. In addition, the available choice of vegetables presented in this research could have been another potential limitation. A child may not like the taste of a vegetable, and therefore he or she may be less likely to eat the vegetable on his or her own. On the other hand, a child who eventually likes the vegetable after repeated tastings may be more likely to eat the vegetable on his or her own without positive reinforcement. Considering this limitation, future research is suggested with more choice of vegetables. The researchers recommend future research to investigate the amount of repeated tastings or positive reinforcement on children's beginning to enjoy eating a variety of vegetables. Lastly, the multiple positive reinforcement intervention sessions conducted in the same day may be another potential limitation. It is recommended that the current research be replicated with more demographically diverse participants and more vegetable availability, in order to further display the effectiveness of peer modeling and positive reinforcement of vegetable intake on increasing vegetable intake.

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Nonverbal Aptitude and Academic Achievement at a Diverse Parochial Secondary School – A Correlational Study

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Abstract: The Naglieri Nonverbal Aptitude test is designed to measure general aptitude while minimizing language bias. Admission directors may use it in the admissions process to assist in properly placing a diverse student population into its programs as its results demonstrate a positive correlation with academic achievement.

Admission directors in independent private schools serve an important function. They are tasked with screening applicants for admission in order to help fulfill the mission of the school and place students into appropriate classes and programs. In performing this function, they must consider students' past records, recommendations, academic potential, personal interviews, financial capabilities, and their potential fit within the school and its culture. Admission directors work in conjunction with the administration of a school to set standards and goals for what a student demographic profile should reflect in accordance with the ultimate objectives determined by the school's governing body.

Admission directors must be familiar with the population they serve. This will help to ensure that their practices are non-discriminatory in the collection of data pertinent to the screening process, allowing them to effectively place students into appropriate programs within their schools to encourage both social and academic growth in its student population. This includes knowledge of the general population, the private school market, area competition, the school's mission, and the defined student profiles (SSATB).

Through the admissions process, applicants must be screened in order to best predict their ability to fit within the school's culture as well as their ability to perform at a satisfactory academic level. The school's ultimate function should be to support the students. If a student stands out in opposition to the values of the school or is not academically prepared to meet the academic standards as defined by the school, enrollment of that student can have an adverse effect on both the student and the school.

When a private school works to serve a diverse student population and provide excellence in education, academic aptitude is important to evaluate to ensure the student will be provided an education that is appropriately leveled. As regions within the United States are becoming increasingly diverse, schools are serving students from a variety of backgrounds. This includes students from all over the globe, students with primary languages other than English, and students with cultures that vary tremendously.

Numerous tests are available to quantify a student's academic ability. These tests range from those that test a student's Intelligence Quotient (IQ) or intelligence across a broad range of skills and subjects, multiple intelligences, and non-verbal tests for general aptitude. Each of these tests may be used to predict academic achievement. Admission administrators must identify the test that will best serve its student market. The most commonly known tests are "IQ" tests and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT).

IQ tests are often times used to predict academic achievement. In fact, IQ tests have been found to have correlation values between .5 and .6 with academic achievement and become more

accurate as students get older (Brody, 1997). IQ tests are offered in numerous languages as well. Research has indicated, however, that IQ scores are often lower for minority groups (Rushton & Jensen, 2003) and those of a lower socio-economic status and do not necessarily gauge their intelligence in an effective manner (Ceci, Rosenblum, & Kumpf, 1998). Based upon the communication style and differing types of knowledge that are stressed by different cultures, IQ tests can be biased (Sternberg, 2002). IQ tests also generally underestimate academic achievement in college by women (McDonald, Newton, Whetton, & Benefield, 2001).

The SAT is a college admissions test, generally administered in the 11th or 12th grade, used to predict academic achievement in college and it is often times correlated to a student's freshman grade point average (fGPA). The College Board that writes the SAT publishes research that demonstrates a high correlational value between the SAT and fGPA. Sackett, Kuncel, Arneson, Cooper, and Waters (2009) tell us that the r correlational value between the two is equal to .47. Research independent of the College Board often times affirms a positive correlation but do not place the correlational value so high when other indicators are controlled for such as socioeconomic status, race, family income, gender, and when the sample size is taken into account (Zwick & Himelfarb, 2014). The SAT, like the IQ tests, is seen as having biases, to include cultural and linguistic biases, resulting in differing predictability rates among different races (McDonald et al., 2001).

Independent school admission officers came together in 1957 to discuss issues with the current tests and their ability to predict academic success. They identified a need for a common test amongst private schools. They formed the Secondary School Admission Board (SSAB) and worked with Educational Testing Services (ETS) to create the Secondary School Assessment Test (SSAT). ETS and the SSAB suggest that a high correlation between the SSAT and the SAT exist although they do not publish this correlation or the correlation between the SSAT and academic achievement (SSATB: Home). Like the SAT, the SSAT includes both English language dependent sections and quantitative sections (SSATB: Home).

Due to the growing diversity of student populations within schools and the desire to increase diversity in private schools to be more reflective of American demographics, the use of IQ tests and the SSAT needs to be reconsidered in light of their recognized biases. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale may be utilized to test students for this purpose. It attempts to remove cultural bias (Verney, Granholm, Marshall, Malcarne, & Saccuzzo, 2005). The test attempts to downplay cultural bias by testing four areas: verbal reasoning, perceptual reasoning, working memory, and processing speed. Language only represents a fraction of the overall score (Wechsler, 2003). Despite this downplay of language, it does still rely on it and may put students of different cultures at a disadvantage in our schools.

ETS identifies nonverbal tests as being useful for testing students whose primary language is not English to avoid bias (Non-Verbal Aptitude, 1990). Nonverbal tests are already utilized in numerous schools to identify students for gifted programs (Giessman, Gambrell, & Stebbins, 1990). Nonverbal tests, however, have not been fully evaluated to determine fairness in application (Lakin & Lai, 2012). For this reason, a nonverbal test should be identified and studied for use in private schools for secondary students that accurately predict academic achievement while at the same time avoiding recognized biases in tests such as IQ tests and aptitude tests.

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Second Edition (NNAT2) was developed to measure general ability through the use of nonverbal measurements. This was done to promote fairness regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity ("Technical Information," 2011). The NNAT2

has also been found to predict academic achievement independent of socio-economic status (Balboni, Naglieri, & Cubelli, 2009). The test is based upon geometrical shapes and patterns and their identification. Language is avoided throughout the test, from its samples that provide the directions for the test, to the last problem posed. Student ability is estimated based upon the comparison of results to other students of similar age (“Technical Information,” 2011).

Admission administrators require a predictive assessment to better identify a student’s potential to find success in a rigorous academic environment. Many schools utilize prior academic achievement as identified by previous grades. In a diverse school that serves students with varying background that have come from numerous educational systems around the world, comparing previous grades proves problematic due to the differing scaling and grading methods utilized in differing educational systems. The utilization of an aptitude test, the SAT, was shown to have equivalent predictive ability as prior academic achievement by McDonald et al. in their literature review of the SAT (2001). Despite this, bias remains. The testing of nonverbal aptitude (general ability) in the NNAT2 in regards to academic achievement could satisfy the need of the administration to identify a student’s potential for success if the NNAT2 is shown to provide predictive ability.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The objective of this study was to determine whether higher results on a nonverbal aptitude test, namely the NNAT2, predict academic achievement as determined by second semester grade point average (GPA) in a secondary private school setting while controlling for English as a Second Language (ESL) level. Second semester, the latter half of the school year, grades were utilized because the time allowed for greater strides to have been made for the students to successfully transition into the new school with support from parents, teachers, and peers (Grolnick et al., 2000).

Questions

- a. Is there a relationship between students’ nonverbal academic ability (NV) and academic achievement (AA) while controlling for English as a Second Language (ESL) level?
- b. Is there a relationship between the multiplicative of ESL level (ESL) and nonverbal academic ability (NV) with academic achievement (AA)?

Hypotheses

- a. Student scores on the NNAT2 will accurately predict academic achievement as determined by second semester GPA.
- b. The multiplicative of a student’s nonverbal academic ability based upon scores on the NNAT2 and ESL level will accurately predict academic achievement as determined by second semester GPA.

Null Hypothesis

- a. Student scores on the NNAT2 will not correlate with academic achievement as determined by second semester GPA.
- b. The multiplicative of a student’s nonverbal academic ability based upon scores on the NNAT2 and ESL level will not accurately predict academic achievement as determined by second semester GPA.

Method

The data for this study were collected over the course of the summer leading up to and during the 2012-2013 school year. The correlational study was performed shortly after the end of the second semester.

Availability or convenience sampling was utilized for this study at a small parochial school of approximately 500 students. It is located in a Western suburb of Miami-Dade County. The school serves students from pre-k3 to 12th grade. The results from all new students accepted into the school from 6th through 12th grade were included from the period of the study. It included 59 students. Two of them did not take the NNAT2. Because of this, 57 were included in the statistical reports of this study. The demographic make-up of the student population at the school was 95% Hispanic, 2% Black non-Hispanic, 2% White non-Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The students included in this sample included thirty-six students from Latin America, three from Northwestern Africa, one from Eastern Europe, fifteen from the US or Canada, and 2 students from Asia. Ten of students spoke English as their native language. Fifteen of the students were not proficient in English as reflected by an ESL level of four or lower. The school practices full inclusion for all of its students, putting them side by side in all of their classes with their peers.

For this study, the α level was set at .05. A one tailed test was utilized to look for a positive correlation between a student's nonverbal academic aptitude and academic achievement. A correlational design is appropriate for this study because it shows whether a positive correlation exists. If a positive correlation exists, then students' nonverbal academic aptitude can be used to predict academic achievement levels.

Data analysis was conducted by utilizing the general linear regression model on the hypotheses addressed with SPSS to identify correlations and statistical significance. Attention is paid to the adjusted *R Square* to identify the percentage of variation in the dependent variable that is explained after adjusting for sample size and the predictors given.

The data was collected for this study using the NNAT2 for each appropriate grade level. The NNAT2 utilizes its own scoring mechanism, the NAI, to quantify student's Academic Aptitude for the purpose of this study. Using inferential norming and conversions to standard scores, the mean score on the NNAT2 or the NAI is 100 with a standard deviation of 16 and a range of 40-160 ("Technical Information," 2011).

The NNAT2 utilized the split-half reliability method to evaluate internal consistency reliability. The average for all ages was .90. Internal Consistency was verified using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20). The coefficient average of the KR20 for all ages was .88. The NAI scores, when correlated with the Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability when administered to the same students, was .73 ("Technical Information," 2011).

Results

A multiple regression analysis was utilized to evaluate how well the full model predicted student academic success as determined by the second semester GPA. The predictors were ESL level, NAI, and the multiplicative of the student's ESL level and score on the NAI. The linear combination of these predictors demonstrated a high correlation to the second semester GPA as demonstrated by table 1.1. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .48, and the R square was .23. The significance level reported is .008, well below the established alpha level for this study of .05. Based upon these results, further analysis was done with each of the variables.

Table 1.1
NAI and ESL Model Correlation with GPA

Model	Change Statistics								
	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Err of Est	R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sif F Change
1	.475	.226	.182	.527870	.226	5.154	3	53	.003

Predictors: (Constant), NAI X ESL, NAI Score, ESL Level

A 1-tailed test was utilized to determine each of the variable's significance. The NNAT2 scores on the NAI were shown to be significant as demonstrated by table 1.2. The remaining variables are not considered as their significance exceeded the alpha level of .05. Since the NAI results are the only ones that prove to be significant, only the results of the NAI to GPA are given. The correlation coefficient of only the NAI results and GPA are .394 with an R square value of .16 with a significance level of .001, again well below the established alpha level.

Table 1.2
Semester 2 Correlations with Variables

	Sem 2 GPA	ESL Level	NAI Score	NAI X ESLS
Pearson Correlation Semester 2 GPA	1.00	.052	.394	.145
Sig. 1-tailed Semester 2 GPA		.350	.001	.141

Discussion

Based upon these results, the first null hypothesis can be rejected. The NAI does show the ability to be used to predict academic achievement as they have a positive correlation. The second null hypotheses, however, cannot be rejected. Its significance value exceeded the pre-determined alpha level of .005, meaning admissions should not utilize results of the multiplicative of the NAI and ESL level to predict academic achievement. These two findings may lead to two separate conclusions. One is that the better a student does on the NNAT2, the better admissions can anticipate the student doing in regards academic achievement. Secondly, there isn't enough data yet to show that ESL level is significantly effecting academic achievement in the school. As more data is collected, however, this may be analyzed again as it is reasonable to assume that it would have some bearing on academic achievement.

The adjusted R square of .16 shows the fraction of variance that can be explained by the NAI score, when predicting academic achievement. When it is taken in conjunction with additional objective and subjective analysis as defined by the school's administration, it can be a valuable tool in the admission process. On its own, however, it leaves a wide margin for error. As in a study by Lakin (2012), this study does not support exclusive use of the NAI in predicting academic achievement.

Conclusion

On its own, the NNAT2 should not be utilized to place students into programs. As part of a larger admissions process that takes into account other factors predetermined by an administrative team, it may be a valuable tool in properly placing students.

Other predictors that may be identified for use in the admissions process include constructs such as self-efficacy or motivation predictors. In recognition of the diversity of applicants, the admissions team should continue working towards avoiding bias during the

admissions process. This may not remove testing in language completely, but may minimize the reliance on language scores. These scores may be better served for placing students in programs and courses rather than to exclude students.

The study and its interpretations may be used to modify future admissions practices within the school and to provide data to other private schools looking to modify their admissions practices to reflect growing diversity and avoid language bias when possible.

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TEACHNJ: An Evaluation of Two Years of Implementation

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Abstract: The Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act was adopted by the New Jersey legislature in August 2012 with the intent to raise student achievement by improving the quality of instruction. This research explores the impact TEACHNJ has on teacher evaluations and professional development.

The funding to support TEACHNJ comes from the federal reform initiative Race to the Top (RTT). Background on RTT provides insight as to why so many states, including New Jersey, introduced legislation to reform their teacher evaluation systems and tenure decision processes. In July 2009, the Obama administration launched its \$4.35 billion Race to the Top (RTT) Fund, one of the largest competitive grant programs in the history of public education in the United States. As such, it significantly altered the level of federal involvement in public education through the sheer size of its financial investment and through the articulation of specific federal priorities that were to be met through RTT funding.

In an effort to secure RTT funds, at a time when state budgets were eviscerated by the economic crisis, many states enacted new legislation that would reform the standards for teacher evaluations and tenure decisions. Many states rushed through hastily crafted legislation to secure federal dollars that were needed to close the revenue gap and forestall drastic cuts in personnel.

TEACHNJ

The Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act (TEACH NJ) was signed into law on August 6, 2012. In 2011, after two failed rounds of competition, New Jersey was awarded \$38 million to “reform” education. According to the NJ Department of Education, RTT funds would be used to pilot and develop a new educator evaluation system, which is the foundation of the TEACH NJ Tenure Reform Act. The TEACHNJ Act calls for a four-level evaluation system of teachers that links individual student data to teachers and creates a more difficult process for teachers to earn tenure.

Under the new law, teachers work for four years, with one of those years under the guidance of a mentor, before the tenure decision is made. During their first four years, new teachers must consistently earn good grades on annual performance evaluations in order to attain tenure.

Beginning in September 2013, all of New Jersey’s teachers were to be evaluated on an annual basis. The evaluations were to be based on multiple observations of classroom performance as well as student learning outcomes. Rather than relying on absolute standardized test scores, a statistical formula was devised to determine student growth from year to year (called value-added) and compare that growth to that of their peers. Every teacher would receive a summative rating of “highly effective,” “effective,” “partially effective,” or “ineffective,” which replaced the binary system that rated teachers as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.”

Teacher Evaluations

In theory, a teacher evaluation system should measure a teacher's strengths and weaknesses through an accurate and consistent process that provides timely and useful feedback. The evaluation and feedback should inform instruction and professional development opportunities to improve classroom instruction and educational outcomes (Marzano, 2012). According to Kelley and Maslow (2005), "Teacher evaluation systems ideally should foster improvement in both professional development opportunities and teaching practices" (p. 1). However, in the real world, theory often fails to inform practice. Marshall (2005) demonstrated that "the theory of action behind supervision and evaluation is flawed and the conventional process rarely changes what teachers do in the classrooms" (p. 274).

Inadequate assessments are all too common, which means poor performance is not addressed, teaching excellence goes unrecognized, new teachers do not receive the feedback they need, and professional development is not aligned with areas of need. The evaluation process can play an important role in developing teachers' instructional capacity, which in turn contributes to the academic achievement of students (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002); however, teacher evaluations, as currently conducted, fall short. Overall, teacher observations are brief and infrequent and they fail to differentiate among teachers.

Proponents of education reform rightfully argue that the current teacher evaluation systems are inadequate (Danielson, 2001; Marzano, 2012; Weisburg et al., 2009). Often, these evaluations involve a short "walk through" visit by the principal or other administrator. The evaluators rely on a rubric that serves as a checklist of what they observe in the classroom. These rubrics tend to focus on trivial items that can be measured and have little to do with learning outcomes, school improvement efforts, or professional development opportunities (Donaldson, 2008; Varlas, 2009).

Decades of research show there is a significant relationship between teacher effectiveness and student learning (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Weiss, & Klein, 1999; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). According to Darling-Hammond (2000), the "effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status" (p. 39). And yet, existing teacher evaluation systems often illustrate no relationship between teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. In New York City, a school system with 89,000 teachers, only 1.8 percent of teachers were rated unsatisfactory (Brill, 2009) and in Chicago, where roughly 25 percent of high school students do not graduate on time, and 33 percent of fourth graders are not reading at grade level, 99.7 percent of teachers are evaluated as satisfactory to distinguished (Rich, 2012). Weisburg and his colleagues (2009) conducted research on the rigor of teacher evaluations of 12 school districts in four different states and found "less than one percent of surveyed teachers received a negative rating on their most recent evaluations" (p. 10).

According to Donaldson (2009), "Multiple factors, often working in tandem, produce this effect. External constraints decrease evaluators' inclination to evaluate rigorously – vague district standards, poor evaluation instruments, overly restrictive collective bargaining agreements, and a lack of time all contribute to this problem" (p.2). Internal constraints including a school culture that discourages negative ratings and a district culture that offers little oversight and few incentives contribute to the inflated teacher ratings.

The American Federation of Teachers (2010) and the National Education Association (2010) have acknowledged the need to reform teacher evaluation systems, as the existing systems are inadequate. Both associations highlight the importance of using multiple measures

to assess teacher effectiveness, such as classroom observations and district-wide assessments, as well as additional opportunities for feedback. They also emphasize the importance of targeted professional development.

Measuring teacher performance is complicated, and there is no formula for what makes a good teacher, which means there is no formula for what should be included in the evaluation. Evaluation systems have multiple purposes. Danielson (2012) believes that teacher evaluations should focus on accountability and improvement, while Marzano (2012) identified the dual purpose of teacher evaluations as measurement and development. Both experts agreed that one system of evaluation cannot effectively serve both purposes.

Although efforts to move quickly in designing and implementing more effective teacher evaluations systems are laudable, we need to acknowledge a crucial issue – that measuring teachers and developing teachers are different purposes with different implications. An evaluation system designed primarily for measurement will look quite different from a system designed primarily for development. (Marzano, 2012, p. 15)

Professional Development

Research demonstrates that professional development opportunities, when properly designed and developed, have the potential to enhance classroom practices and ultimately improve student learning outcomes (Fullan et al., 2006; Guskey, 2002). The key is providing professional development that is timely, relevant, and effectively delivered. Professional development that is provided in an effective way can have a measurable impact on school improvement and student achievement (Schmoker, 2006; Mathers, Olivia, & Lane, 2008).

Historically, professional development programs were developed with little input from teachers. Research shows that when professional development programs are mandated, and there is a “pre-determined political agenda for instructional change and teachers’ perspectives are not valued during professional learning,” little professional development takes place (Grierson & Woloshyn, 2013, p. 403). When teachers have the opportunity to inform the professional development training agenda, positive learning outcomes are realized and the transfer of knowledge is more effective (Alderman, 2004; Gregoire, 2003).

Moore (2002) conducted a study of 224 teachers and 23 administrators to assess their perception of New Jersey’s professional development opportunities. The findings highlighted “considerable disjuncture between what teachers value and what they do in the area of professional development” (p. 156). According to Moore (2002), professional development was a “compliance vehicle” (p. 158) with teachers attending random workshops to accumulate the mandatory 100 hours of professional development required by the initiative. The focus was compliance, not on professional or personal growth.

Chappuis et al. (2009) found “it’s essential to emphasize the long-term, ongoing nature of professional development as opposed to a short-term, commercially promised quick fixes [sic]” (p. 57). A one-time professional development seminar for hundreds of teachers is not as effective as ongoing and personalized professional development that is found in professional learning communities and realized through peer coaching (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Research demonstrates that professional development is most effective when it is offered on-site, is job-embedded, sustained over time, centers on active learning, and focuses on student outcomes (Chappuis et al., 2009; Sparks, 2003).

Although there is a substantial body of research on professional development that identifies the essential characteristics of professional development, there is growing evidence

that only a small percentage of what is known to work is actually being implemented (Hawley & Valli, 2000; Spicer, 2008).

Method

This research explores the current teacher evaluation and professional development practices in the state of New Jersey. The survey we administered was designed to ascertain teacher perceptions of (a) the evaluation system in their school, (b) the level of communication between teachers and administrators, and (c) the availability, frequency, and effectiveness of professional development opportunities. In addition, we wanted to ascertain if teachers are encouraged to participate in professional development activities as a result of their evaluations.

The survey was pre-tested with a random sample (N = 50) of New Jersey schoolteachers. Based on the feedback from the pre-test phase, the survey was revised and administered to a random sample (N = 1235) of New Jersey schoolteachers and yielded a 21% response rate (254 completed surveys). The researchers did not include data from partially completed surveys. Sixty-six percent of the survey respondents were female and 34 percent were male. An overwhelming majority (94%) of the respondents worked in public school districts, and over half (54%) worked in a school district that was participating in the state pilot system. New Jersey piloted the new teacher evaluation system in eleven school districts during school year 2012-13. Thirty percent of the teachers worked in high schools, while 21 percent were elementary school teachers (K-8), and 19 percent represented other (K-2, K-4, 5-8). In terms of tenure, 72 percent of the respondents were tenured teachers, while 28 percent were untenured.

Findings

After analyzing the data, we categorized the responses into four themes: “formal evaluation process,” “impact of evaluation on teaching practice,” “perceived administrative value” and “professional development needs.”

Formal Evaluation Process

We asked our respondents to indicate how often they received a formal evaluation by their school principal or assistant principal, other teachers, members of the school management team, or from an external individual such as a supervisor from a central office (See Figure 1). Twenty one percent of respondents indicated having never been evaluated by their principal or assistant principal during the school year, whereas only 15 percent indicated having been evaluated three or more times. Only 23 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the evaluation was a fair

assessment of the quality of their work.

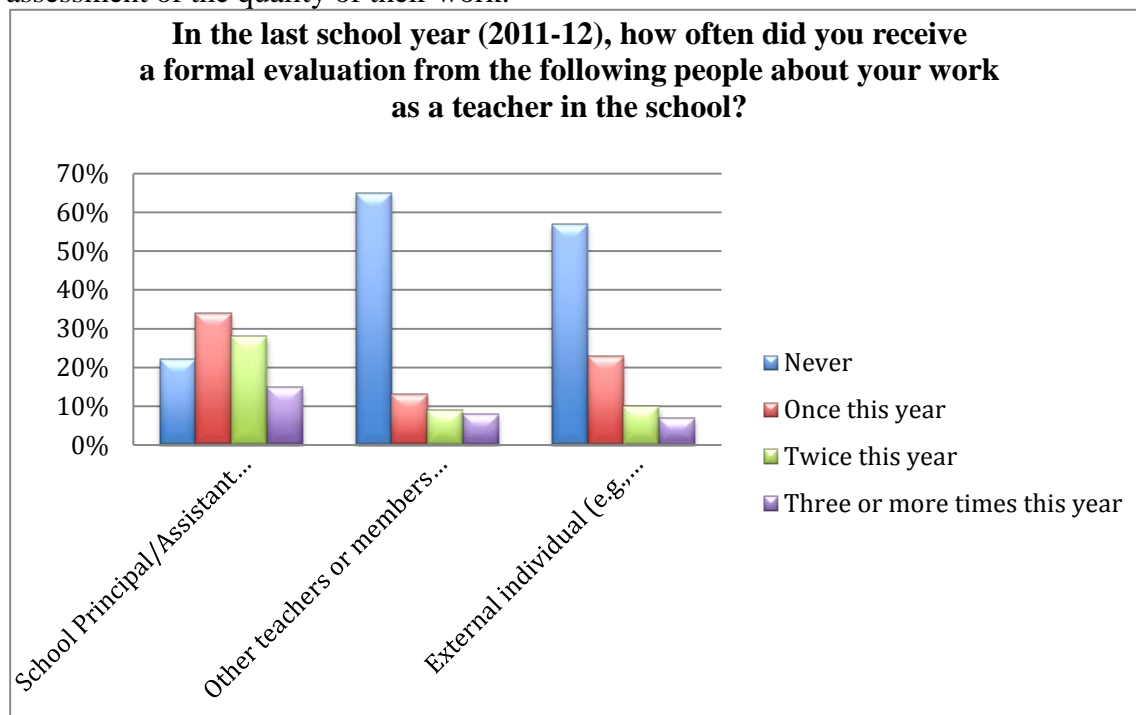


Figure 1. Formal Evaluation Process

Impact of Evaluation on Teaching Practice

We asked the respondents to what extent the formal evaluation they received led to changes in teaching children with special needs, raising student test scores, handling student discipline, knowledge of subject pedagogy, and classroom management. Across all five categories, over half of the respondents felt the evaluation had no impact and resulted in no change (See Figure 2).

Interestingly, when asked about engaging in peer observations with colleagues, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (87%) felt this had a moderate to large impact on their teaching practice. Additionally, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they engaged in informal dialogue with colleagues and the impact that had on improving their teaching practice. Over half of the respondents (56%) engaged in informal dialogue and of those, 66 percent felt it had an impact on their teaching effectiveness. Finally, respondents were asked whether they agreed that the use of teacher evaluations has little effect upon the way they teach. Over half of the respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that their evaluation did not have an effect on their teaching pedagogy.

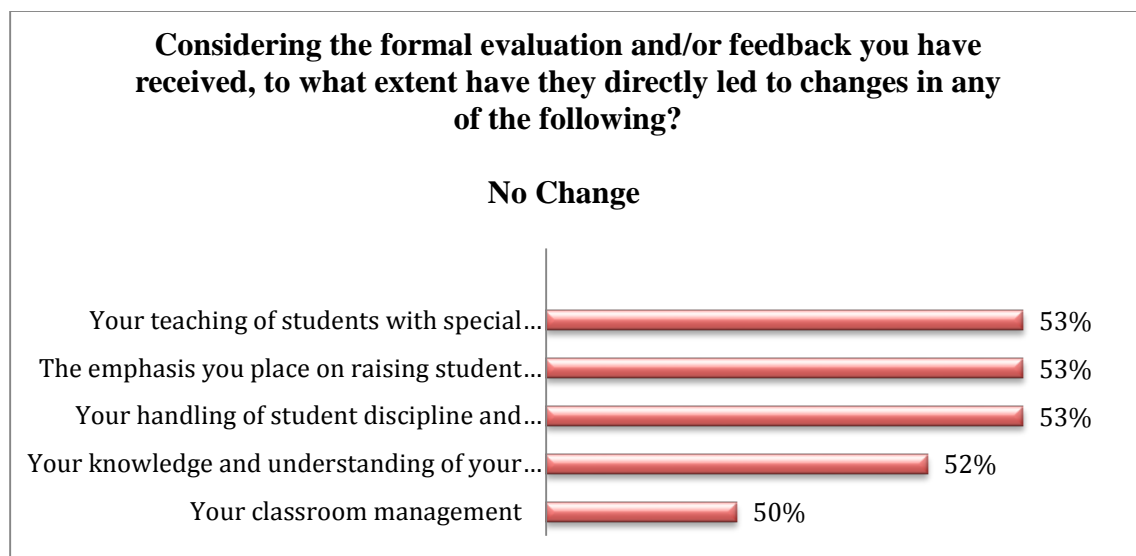


Figure 2. Perceived Effects of Formal Evaluation

Perceived Administration Value

In an effort to develop a better understanding of the administrative value of the teacher evaluations, we asked respondents to indicate how and if the outcomes of evaluations impacted personnel decisions (See Figure 3). Only 25 percent of the respondents agreed that a teacher would be dismissed because of sustained poor performance. Slightly more than 30 percent agreed that administrators work with teachers to develop individual professional development plans and 25 percent of the respondents indicated that the administration offers no incentives for improved teaching practices.

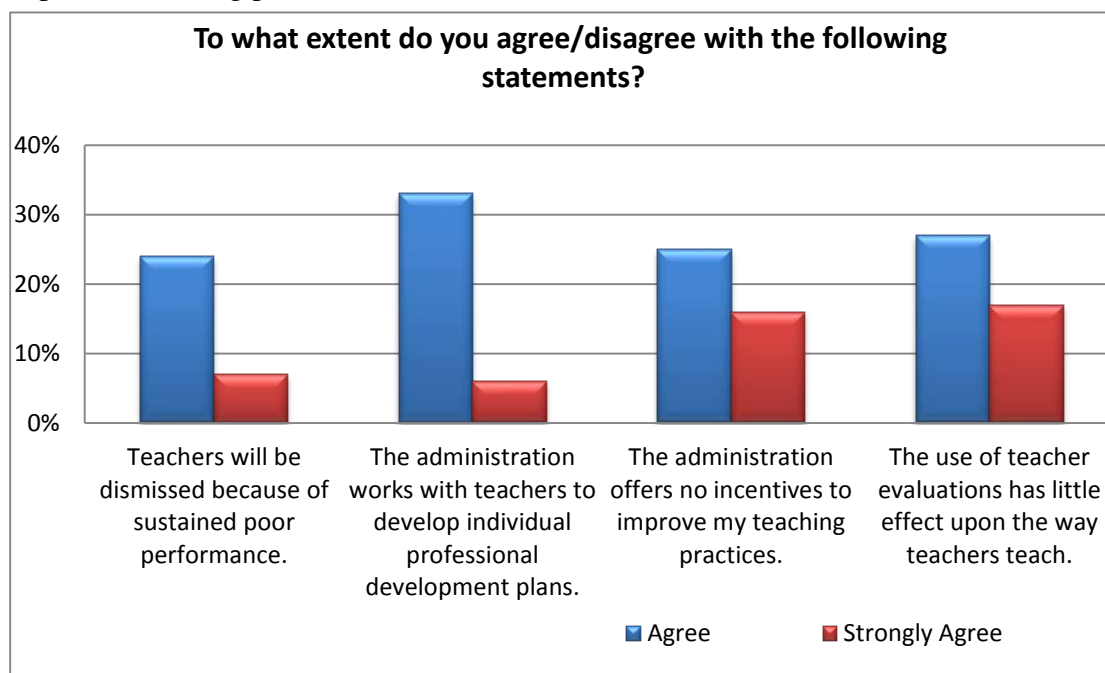


Figure 3. Perceived Administrative Value

Professional Development Needs

The survey asked a series of questions related to professional development. Overall, a majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they wanted more professional development but felt there were barriers that prevented them from doing so (See Figure 4).

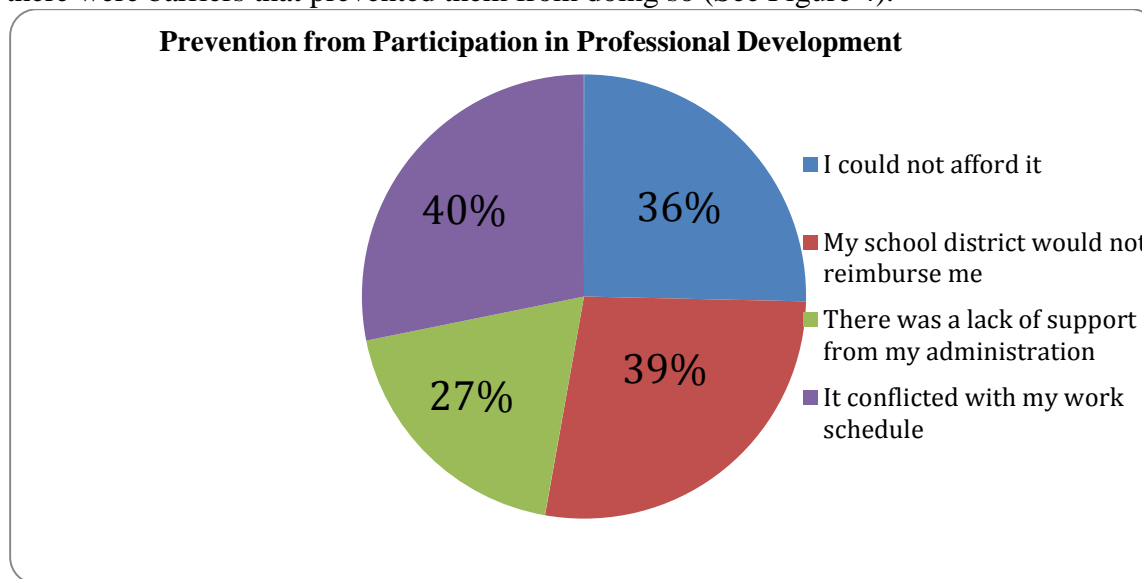


Figure 4. Barriers to Professional Development

Additionally, we asked teachers if they participated in professional development activities such as engaging in informal dialogue with their colleagues and/or conducting peer observations. We found that over half of the respondents did participate in informal dialogue with their colleagues and over 60 percent found it had a moderate to large impact on their teaching. The informal dialogue was perceived to have more impact on teaching pedagogy than formal professional development.

Discussion

The findings of this survey support prior research on teacher evaluations and professional development. We found that formal evaluations are conducted infrequently with a varying degree of accuracy and impact. Nearly half of the teachers indicated the formal evaluations did not lead to improvements in their classroom as measured by five different indicators. In addition, a majority of the teachers thought the formal evaluations they received were not an accurate assessment of their teaching abilities. Some of the teachers were not observed at all and many indicated they were only observed once, and often not by a school administrator. This raises questions about the administrative burden associated with conducting teacher evaluations.

In addition, teachers questioned the administrative value of formal teacher evaluations with the majority questioning rewards and sanctions associated with the outcome of the evaluations. They agreed that the poor performers were not sanctioned nor were the effective teachers rewarded. Again, this raises questions as to the value of the evaluation system.

Clearly, the teachers perceive the greatest value from peer mentoring and observations. Nearly everyone took part in mentoring and peer observations, and the majority felt the peer relationships and feedback had a moderate to large impact on their professional development as teachers. This is also consistent with prior research which indicates that districts often offer the same training workshops year to year without determining which are most appropriate for their

teaching faculty. Professional development is most effective when it is offered onsite, is embedded in the classroom, is continuous, and is sustained over time.

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Analysis of Students' Misconceptions and Error Patterns in Mathematics: The Case of Fractions

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Abstract: This study analyzed three fifth grade students' misconceptions and error patterns when working with equivalence, addition, and subtraction of fractions. The findings revealed that students used both conceptual and procedural knowledge to solve the problems, and made connections to other mathematical concepts and to daily life topics.

In the past decade, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has conducted several studies to compare student achievement in mathematics. There are three content domains covered in the assessment including *number*, *geometry and measure*, and *data*; and the last study showed that *number*, including fractions, was one of the areas that needed improvement (Gonzales et al., 2009). Additionally, the TIMSS results showed that U.S. fourth graders performed better on the lower function cognitive domain of *knowing*, than on *applying* and *reasoning* domains (Gonzales et al., 2009). Furthermore, the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has stressed the importance of reforming mathematics instruction by moving from teaching only-content-skills objectives to using problem solving, reasoning, communication, connections, and representation. The teaching of fractions, sometimes considered one of the most challenging concepts for students, has gone through this reform but students still struggle to understand them. By analyzing students' responses to the current mathematics curriculum and instructional practices, teachers and researchers can investigate and understand how students create and apply math concepts.

Elementary students often have difficulty in computing, comparing, and ordering fractions correctly. At times, students develop erroneous patterns (Ashlock, 2006) and have difficulty acquiring conceptual understanding of fractions (Siegler, Fazio, Bailey & Zhou, 2013). Understanding the types of knowledge that students use when working with fractions and what error patterns they develop is important in order to create better opportunities for them to use fractions both in the classroom and outside of it.

The mathematics curriculum follows the five content standards including number sense and operation, algebra, geometry, measurement, and data analysis and probability, and the five process standards consisting of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation delineated by NCTM (2000). To improve student learning in mathematics, the standards require students to build new knowledge through solving problems, to apply their knowledge to new situations, and to monitor and reflect about their solutions. Students should be given opportunities to investigate problems, evaluate results, organize information, and communicate their findings, thus creating a system of effective methods to solve math problems (NCTM, 2000). The NCTM (2000) states that students in third grade to fifth grade will be able to do the following:

Develop understanding of fractions as parts of unit wholes, as parts of a collection, as locations on number lines, and as divisions of whole numbers; use models, benchmarks, and equivalent forms to judge the size of fractions; recognize and generate equivalent forms of commonly used fractions; develop and use strategies to estimate computations

involving fractions in situations relevant to student's experience; and use visual models, benchmarks, and equivalent forms to add and subtract commonly used fractions. (p.25)

Fractions are first introduced as early as in second grade. At this level, students are asked to use concrete models to show the relationships between wholes and their parts (Florida Standards, 2013). Students at the intermediate elementary grades (third to fifth grade) are required to use manipulatives, pictorial representations, and procedures to order fractions, to find equivalence, and to add and subtract fractions (Florida Standards, 2013). Students are required to use a variety of materials and strategies to understand and apply fractions in order to construct conceptualizations. However, Charles (2008) argued that in reality, most state standards communicate only mathematical skills or procedural fluency rather than conceptual understanding. Textbooks, being the primary curriculum material in math classrooms, tend to focus on the mastery of skills rather than in concept understanding. Hodges, Landry, and Cady (2009) concluded that conventional math textbooks usually provide a plethora of resources for teachers but are deficient on pedagogical approaches to promote student conceptual learning. Additionally, the need to align high-stakes assessment to the national and state mathematics curricula has had an impact on the instruction of mathematics as well.

Assessment is an integral part of curriculum and instruction. In traditional classrooms, tests were given at the end of a lesson, chapter, or unit in order to assess students' understanding of math concepts. Nowadays, assessment is as much a tool of final evaluation of student knowledge as it is an ongoing measurement of students' progress. Using questioning and listening, teachers can informally assess students' conceptual development (Borgioli, 2008). Teachers can also use observations, student journal entries, admit-exit slips (Altieri, 2009), small group responses, activity sheets, and diagnostic interviews (Aslock, 2006) to evaluate students' understanding of a math concept.

When assessing how students understand and apply fractions, teachers can observe that students' misconceptions lead to error patterns that students repeatedly use (Ashlock, 2006). Students make generalizations in part-whole relationship, equivalence, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of fractions that show error patterns, and these mistakes are due in part to students using procedural knowledge rather than a combination of procedural and conceptual knowledge in order to solve fraction problems (Ashlock, 2006). Zambo (2008) added that general math misunderstandings are based on perceptual (visual or auditory), memory-based, or integrative (connecting abstract ideas) difficulties. Thus, assessment, both formal and informal, plays an important part in helping students make meaningful connections to create mathematical conceptions. When teachers understand what error patterns students use, they can develop an appropriate activity or lesson that re-teaches the concept successfully. Voza (2011) found that identifying the types of errors students make when working on a math problem is important for teachers to use to determine the appropriate activities to reteach the concept. When teachers do not recognize the errors patterns students have, they create an unmotivated and discouraging environment for children (Voza, 2011).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study analyzed what type of knowledge students used (e.g. conceptual and procedural knowledge) when working with fractions. An examination of students' tasks and student interviews was conducted in order to determine students' understanding of equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions. For the purpose of this study, conceptual knowledge is defined as knowledge of math facts and properties that are recognized as being related in some

way; and procedural knowledge is defined as the set of rules and algorithms used to solve math problems (Hiebert & Wearne, 1986).

To investigate these issues, the research questions that guided this study were as follows: (a) What error patterns or common misconceptions do students portray when working with fractions? (b) When doing so, what type(s) of knowledge, conceptual and/or procedural, do students depict when they solve problems about fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction?

Method

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted within a fifth grade class of a southeastern suburban public elementary school during the winter of 2013. A fifth grade class was selected as the students had had at least 3 years of instruction on the concept of fractions and would be able to explain their thinking patterns coherently. The study was divided into two sections: (a) a whole class task in which students answered 12 questions about fractions, and (b) individual student interviews to determine their use of procedural and/or conceptual knowledge and misconceptions patterns when working with equivalence, addition, and subtraction of fractions. The class of students was chosen purposely based on the fifth grade student demographics within the school. A total of 14 students completed the first part of the study, which included a completion of a task with 12 fraction questions. Out of the 14 students, 3 students were interviewed for the second part of the investigation. They were purposely chosen based on their answers to the 12 fraction questions. An analysis was conducted on the answers students gave to each of the 12 questions and based on the results, 3 students were chosen to be interviewed. Both the class activity and the interviews took place at the school site.

Whole Class

The class that participated in the study had a total of 15 students. However, one of the students in the class did not receive parental permission to participate in the research study and thus was not included. The class was described as “gifted,” meaning the students are receiving a fast-paced curriculum as they are academically advanced. However, the teacher explained that all the students had been placed in this class because they were advanced in the subject of Reading. The children performed on average when compared to other fifth graders in the area of mathematics. The mathematical ability of the children was determined by the use of the previous year’s high stakes test and weekly benchmark assessments. Five visits were done to the classroom in order to explain to the students what the research study entailed, conduct the first part of the study in which the students completed a worksheet with 12 fraction questions, and finally to interview the students. The class was observed once for 30 minutes while the students were completing the task.

Individual Participants

For the second part of the study, 3 students were interviewed. The participants were chosen by using purposeful sampling. The students’ task (12-question worksheet) was analyzed and 3 students who had errors in their answers were chosen to be interviewed using Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) research interviewing recommendations.

The first student who was interviewed was Cathy. She is a mostly attentive participant in class. She often raised her hand to answer her teacher’s questions. She was eager to explain her thinking during the interview as she emphasized phrases such as “the higher number” to explain her fraction addition and subtraction answers. She used pictures of what she understood as equivalent fractions to explain what she had done in the first part of the worksheet (Equivalence of Fractions).

The second student who was interviewed was Sergio. He seemed a little nervous at the beginning of the interview. He gave shorter answers to interview questions, as well as to follow up questions and probes. However, he was involved in classroom discussions as he often volunteered to answer questions in whole class activities.

The third student who was interviewed, Ivan, also seemed comfortable during the interview. He gave long responses to the researcher's question, many followed by a story.

Student Tasks

For the purpose of investigating the error patterns and misconceptions students have when working with fractions, a worksheet with 12 questions was used. These were divided into three sections: (a) equivalence of fractions, (b) addition of fractions, and (c) subtraction of fractions. The 12 questions were open-ended so the students could answer using a variety of methods. Simple directions were given for each section. Additionally, for this section the first two fractions were commonly used fractions and were given in simplified form: $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$. The last two fractions were not simplified: $\frac{3}{9}$ and $\frac{10}{15}$. For the second and third sections (addition and subtraction of fractions) two problems had fractions with equal denominators, and 2 problems had fractions with different denominators.

Research Design

The first task included a worksheet with 12 questions about equivalence of fractions, addition and subtraction of fractions. These 12 questions included a variety of problems which demonstrated students' understanding of the types of knowledge (conceptual, procedural or both) they used when working with fractions. These questions were open-ended questions and the students showed their work in the space provided. Subsequently, Ashlock's (2006) ideas were used when creating the task. Following his examples the addition and subtraction questions were written horizontally (e.g. $\frac{4}{3} - \frac{1}{6}$), and the questions also included same and different denominators. Two fifth grade math teachers reviewed the questions, including format and content, before the task was given to the students.

When the students completed the task, three students were chosen from those who made mistakes in their answers. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour. This was done to find what type(s) of knowledge students used when working with fractions: conceptual and/or procedural, as well as to investigate patterns and misconceptions students had. In addition to the students who were interviewed, random students were asked to explain what they had done in specific questions. The interviews helped in discovering how the three students thought about and understood fractions and how they used both procedural and conceptual knowledge to make sense of this concept. The original interview protocol included six questions, an introduction section and closing remarks. The protocol was discussed with a group of four elementary teachers who are also conducting research in the area of mathematics education. After the first interview was transcribed and analyzed, six more questions were added.

Data Analysis

The data collected during this research study included the class observation, students' worksheets, and transcripts. The data for this study included the researcher's notes on the class observation, an analysis of the whole class task, and a transcript of each of the three interviews. First, the whole class task was analyzed to find patterns the students were using when answering each section (equivalence, addition, and subtraction of fractions). Out of the 14 students, only 4 had erroneous patterns when solving equivalent fractions, but most students answered addition of fractions incorrectly and missed most subtraction questions. The three students who were interviewed were chosen randomly out of the students who had repetitive error patterns.

Transcripts of all interviews were used to start analyzing the students' responses. The transcripts were coded in order to find what type of knowledge, procedural, conceptual and/or a combination of both, the students used to understand fractions. The following sections present the specific findings for the class as a whole and for the three individual students who were interviewed.

Results

The results of the study are reported in two main sections: (1) whole class task and (2) individual student interviews. The results of the whole class task were divided into the three fraction topics that were part of the task: equivalence, addition, and subtraction of fractions. The individual student interviews' analysis included the examination of each of the three students' interviews based also on the three fraction topics of equivalence, addition, and subtraction.

Whole Class Task, Equivalence of Fractions

The majority of the students answered the four questions about equivalence correctly (10 students out of 14 total students). Only two students' papers showed they had used pencil-and-paper multiplication to find the equivalent fractions. Another student made a computation error when dividing to find an equivalent fraction to $\frac{3}{4}$, but was able to correct it when he was asked to explain it orally. Three students made the same mistake when asked to find two equivalent fractions for $\frac{10}{15}$. They found a multiple of the numerator, but added five to their multiple to find the denominator; for example, they wrote $\frac{10}{15}$ is equivalent to $\frac{20}{25}$, $\frac{30}{35}$, $\frac{40}{45}$, $\frac{50}{55}$, $\frac{60}{65}$. Some students were unable to state that their equivalent fractions were equivalent to each other unless the numerators and denominators are were connected as factors or multiples; for example a student wrote $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4} \& \frac{3}{6}$, but did not recognize $\frac{2}{4}$ as equivalent to $\frac{3}{6}$. In addition, five students drew pictures; however, unless interviewed, it was difficult to understand what some students meant with certain pictures. Also, some students found the first equivalent fraction and worked on from that one (multiplied or divided mostly) to find the second equivalent fraction.

Whole Class Task, Addition of Fractions

Fractions had not been taught this school year yet, according to the classroom teacher. When working in solving the addition problems in this section, some students said they did not remember how to add fractions. Most students added the fractions with equal denominators correctly but did not find the least common denominator for unlike denominators. Error patterns were observed, including adding both numerators and denominators (e.g. $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{4}{2} = \frac{5}{4}$), keeping the same numerator and adding the denominators (e.g. $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{3}{12}$), writing the least denominator and adding the numerators (e.g. $\frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{4}{5}$).

Whole Class Task, Subtraction of Fractions

During this section, some students mentioned again they did not remember how to subtract fractions. Similar to the addition of fractions, some students subtracted fractions with like denominators correctly. Most mistakes when students subtracted fractions with unlike denominators. Some unique error patterns were found in the class. The students either subtracted both numerators and both denominators (e.g. $\frac{4}{5} - \frac{2}{5} = \frac{2}{0}$); if the answer was zero for the denominators, some wrote the zero and some did not. These responses show that students at this level still do not understand the concept of undefined fractions. Some students subtracted the numerators and chose the largest denominator (e.g. $\frac{5}{9} - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{4}{9}$). Another student explained $\frac{4}{3} - \frac{1}{6} = \frac{3}{0}$ because "since you can't do $3 - 6$, I put 0." This student still does not understand negative numbers.

Interview Student 1: Cathy

Cathy used pictures of fractional parts to explain how she found equivalent fractions. She defined concepts by giving examples of what she understood to be a fraction. This is evident when she said, “that is a fraction because it represents 4 parts of 6 in total.” When explaining what $\frac{2}{3}$ represents, she said, “it will be 3 parts and I only color 2 of them.” She uses procedural understanding together with conceptualizations. For instance, when she was explaining how she had solved the fractions equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ she said, “I was thinking [of] multiplying by 2 (procedural). 2 times 1 is 2, and 2 times 2 is 4, and that is a half because 2... because out of 4 ...[draws four-part rectangle, shades 2 sections] ...2 are colored so it’s a half, 2 and 2 is 4 (conceptual).” She did not consider that her two equivalent answers for $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{15}{20}$, were equivalent to each other. Based on her procedural knowledge of multiplying numerator and denominator by the same number, she stated that they are not equal because 15 is not a multiple of 6, and 20 is not a multiple of 8. When asked if these two fractions were equal to $\frac{3}{4}$, she answered positively because 6 and 15 are multiples of 3, and 8 and 20 are multiples of 4.

When Cathy started explaining her thinking when she answered the second section, she said she added the numerators and found a number that was common to both. She used a number that was the largest factor for the denominators, or the greatest common factor. For example when she worked with $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{3}{8}$, she said the common denominator will be 4 because 4 is the greatest number both denominators have as factors. She used this same error pattern for like and unlike denominators. To solve the subtraction problems she followed her same error pattern of finding the greatest common factor but subtracted instead.

Cathy uses both conceptual and procedural knowledge to explain her thinking. The error patterns are present only when she uses procedures.

Interview Student 2: Sergio.

Sergio used multiplication and division to find equivalent fractions at first. He said “I know $\frac{1}{2}$ is equal to $\frac{2}{4}$ ‘cause I multiplied it... and it’s equal to $\frac{8}{16}$ because I divided 16 by 2 and [it] gave me 8.” However, as he continued his explanation he started thinking more conceptually. This is shown when he answered the second problem $\frac{3}{4}$, and said “I remember the quarters, the dollar and the quarters. And I knew $\frac{3}{4}$ is 75 hundreds [or 3 quarters].” By making connections to other concepts (e.g. money) the student was conceptualizing fractions and was making meaningful math connections to daily life concepts.

When adding fractions, he also used procedures to solve the problems. The error pattern was consistent throughout this section as he added numerators and denominators for all his answers (e.g. $\frac{5}{7} + \frac{1}{7} = \frac{6}{14}$). When he subtracted fractions, Sergio followed the same patterns he used for addition. He subtracted the numerators and then he subtracted the denominators.

At the beginning it seemed as if Sergio did not have a clear definition of a fraction as he mentioned that it can be something divided into equal and unequal parts. However, to clarify the “unequal” parts to a fraction, he explained that an improper fraction when converted into a mixed number can have unequal parts: a whole and another divided into 4 parts for $1\frac{1}{4}$, for instance.

Interview Student 3: Ivan

When Ivan started explaining how he solved the equivalent fractions he referred to something his teacher taught him last year. Then, he used conceptualization of what $\frac{1}{2}$ means to him. He said, “Pretty much all you have to do is find something that’s half. If they give you one half think of other things that are halves like two fourths, 50 one-hundredths.” He also goes on to

explain how the angles inside a circle help him understand equivalent fractions. He said, “90 and 90 is 180, and that’s half of a circle” that’s how he understands $90/180$ as equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$.

He also used pictures to solve the questions while the other two students who were interviewed used pictures during the interview. When he solved the other questions about equivalence, he used procedural knowledge. When explaining how he got $27/36$ for $\frac{3}{4}$, he said, “You could multiply...3 times 9 is 27, 4 times 9 [is] 36.” He referred to his teacher again when solving the third question and when he used the procedure of multiplication. He simplified the last question first and then found two equivalent fractions from the simplified one.

To solve the addition problems Ivan added the numerators and the denominators. He changed his first answer to a mixed number (e.g. $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{4}{2} = \frac{5}{4}$ became $1 \frac{3}{4}$). He also used an erroneous pattern to convert the improper fraction into a mixed number. For the subtraction of fractions section, he followed the same error pattern he used with addition, but subtracted the numbers instead.

Discussion

As the class started the whole class task, the researcher noticed the directions for the first section, equivalence, were not clear to students. The students asked for clarification of the directions and for the meaning of the word “equivalent.” After these were clarified, all the students finished the task without further concerns. Some of the error patterns observed in the student task and throughout the interviews included (a) multiplying numerator and denominator by the same number (e.g. $\frac{3}{4} = \frac{15}{20}, \frac{6}{8}$); (b) adding five (or the difference between numerator and denominator) to the equivalent numerator to find the denominator (e.g. $\frac{10}{15} = \frac{20}{25}, \frac{30}{35}, \frac{40}{45}, \frac{50}{55}, \frac{60}{65}$); (c) adding both numerators and denominators (e.g. $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{4}{2} = \frac{5}{4}$); (d) keeping the same numerator and adding the denominators (e.g. $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{3}{12}$); (e) writing the least denominator and adding or subtracting the numerators (e.g. $\frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{8} = \frac{4}{5}$); (f) subtracting both numerators and both denominators (e.g. $\frac{4}{5} - \frac{2}{5} = \frac{2}{0}$); (g) subtracting the numerators and choosing the largest denominator (e.g. $\frac{5}{9} - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{4}{9}$).

It was difficult to understand what some students meant with certain pictures unless they were interviewed. This method, drawing pictures, is usually connected to conceptual understanding (Ashlock, 2006; Davis, 2000). However, it may be also used as a rote procedure in which no real understanding of fractions takes place. The most commonly used procedure in this class of 14 students to solve for equivalence was multiplying numerator and denominator by the same number.

In conclusion, this data shows that students used both conceptual and procedural knowledge when working with equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions. The students used mostly procedural knowledge. Conceptual knowledge was used less often through pictures, examples, and connections to other math concepts and to daily life topics. The students would benefit from using manipulatives and the number line to conceptualize equivalence of fractions. They would also benefit from adding and subtracting fractions vertically to find the least common denominator, using area models to help solve addition and subtraction problems, and by estimating answers before computing so that they can see whether the answers make sense (Ashlock, 2006).

Implications and Future Research

The information learned from this study can guide teachers to enhance instruction of fractions in mathematics. It is important to give students a variety of methods to discover what fractions are, how they can be computed, and how they can be understand by making connections to other topics in mathematics. Methods of instruction can include the use of

concrete and virtual manipulatives, making connections between procedural and conceptual lessons to help students make sense of the steps taught to solve fraction problems. Teachers can also use of formal and informal interviews to assist students in correcting their error patterns and misconceptions, as well as to challenge students who have more conceptual understanding of fractions.

If this study is replicated, it may be helpful to have a variety of materials (e.g. number lines, fraction tiles, fraction circles, Legos, etc.) available for students when answering the questions. These materials can give the students the opportunity to use them, if needed, and can help teachers scaffold students' knowledge. Additionally, the task directions can include a statement saying "Show your work" to remind the children to use the space provided to draw or replicate what they are doing mentally. This may help in understanding what some students who were not interviewed were thinking about.

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The Effectiveness of an Intervention Package on Math Computation

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Abstract: Four second-grade students participated in a math intervention consisting of self-monitoring, performance feedback, and reinforcers. Participants completed math probes. Accuracy and productivity were calculated. Results demonstrated that the intervention improved math computation for all participants. Thus, educators can use these techniques to improve math performance for any given student.

Education aids students in becoming independent and self-sufficient individuals. As independent and self-sufficient individuals, they can manage their behaviors without the assistance of others (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007; Lan, 2005; Rafferty, 2010). Students who can manage or regulate their own behaviors do not rely on external controls. Self-management or self-regulation interventions can be used with students of differing abilities and grade levels (Montague, 2007; Rafferty, 2010). There are different types of self-management interventions. The most researched are self-monitoring interventions (Cooper et al., 2007). Self-monitoring begins with the student observing his or her own behavior and then recording the occurrence of that behavior (Rafferty, 2010). Self-monitoring has been utilized in both academic and social behavioral domains. It has been implemented to improve reading and math proficiency as well as to improve social behaviors in the classroom (Rafferty, 2010; Rathvon, 2008).

Mathematical competency even in its most basic form (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) aids individuals on the daily basis (i.e., use of money, time, etc.). Students who have a performance deficit in mathematics may benefit from self-monitoring interventions that can improve their mathematical proficiency (Rafferty & Raimondi, 2009). Several studies support the use of self-monitoring in mathematics across students of differing abilities. Typically developing students as well as students with cognitive or behavioral disabilities can benefit from self-monitoring interventions in mathematics (Falkenberg & Barbetta, 2013; Lannie & Martens, 2008; Maag, Reid, & DiGangi, 1993; Rock, 2005; Shimabukuro, Prater, Jenkins, & Edelen-Smith, 1999). These studies have also shown that if implemented correctly, self-monitoring interventions in mathematics improve mathematical proficiency by increasing accuracy and productivity.

Two important studies combine self-monitoring with an additional component in the intervention phase. Lannie and Martens (2008) incorporated self-monitoring with reinforcers. They examined the effects of self-monitoring and reinforcers on children's math computation. Four fifth grade students participated in this study. The students were presented with math probes (frustration-level math probes). Three performance dimensions were measured: percent intervals on-task, percent correct digits, and digits correct per minute. During the intervention, students were taught to self-monitor time on-task, accuracy, and productivity in sequence. They recorded their behaviors on a self-monitoring checklist and graph. Students obtained rewards after meeting their individualized goals in each performance dimension. Results showed that three out of the four students increased digits correct per minute when self-monitoring productivity plus rewards, but only after meeting on-task and accuracy criteria (Lannie & Martens, 2008).

Falkenberg and Barbetta (2013) incorporated self-monitoring with performance feedback. They investigated the effects of a self-monitoring package on math and spelling homework completion and accuracy rates of four fourth grade students with disabilities. The self-monitoring package consisted of two self-monitoring components and a brief conference with the special education teacher to review the self-monitoring sheets (performance feedback). Results provided strong support for the effectiveness of self-monitoring and performance feedback in improving completion and accuracy of spelling and math homework for students with disabilities (Falkenberg & Barbetta, 2013).

The present study examined the effectiveness of an intervention package, consisting of self-monitoring, performance feedback, and reinforcers, on math computation of students in a general education classroom. Unlike the previously mentioned studies, this intervention combined self-monitoring with reinforcers and performance feedback. An intervention package was assembled to cater to the varying needs of learners (visual learners-self-monitoring, kinesthetic learners-reinforcers, auditory learners-feedback, or any combination of those). This intervention was implemented in a B-A-B withdrawal design.

Method

Participants

Four second-grade students in a general education classroom participated in all phases of this study (three males and 1 female). All four students were 7 years of age. Their class was composed of 36 children, and two teachers instructed them. The teachers randomly selected the four students from the average achieving group in their classroom. Average achievement indicated that the students possessed the skills to complete math computations but were not necessarily consistent in their performance. After the teachers chose the participants, they gave the students consent forms to take home to their parents/legal guardians. All four students brought back the consent forms signed by their parents/legal guardians consenting to their participation in this study.

Setting

This study was conducted in South Florida in a school that serves grades K through 8. All experimental sessions took place in the classroom during the morning announcements and instruction. The study lasted 3 weeks. The session length varied according to the study phase. Each session was conducted individually at a table located near the teachers' desk with the experimenter seated next to the student. While each of the four students participated in this study, the teachers continued classroom instruction.

Materials

Math computation probes were created using an online generator on interventioncentral.org, which randomly created problems according to the math skills chosen. Each participant was given one math probe per session for all phases of the study. The math skills chosen were appropriate for second grade. Based on the students' second grade curriculum, the following types of math problems were included in the computation probes: 1-to-2 digit number addition without regrouping, two 3-digit number addition without regrouping, 1-to-2 digit number addition with regrouping, two 1-digit number subtraction, and 2-digit number subtraction without regrouping. Each probe contained 20 problems arranged in four rows by five columns.

The self-monitoring graph was used for each session of the intervention phases. It was used to graph the number of items answered correctly (accuracy score) per session of the intervention. The graph served two purposes it allowed students to record their behavior as well

as monitor their progress. It was printed on both sides of an 8.5 inch by 11 inch sized sheet of paper. On each side of the sheet, there were six columns representing six sessions and twenty rows representing the total number of math problems per probe.

After each intervention session, the researcher reviewed the self-monitoring graph with each participant. The researcher drew the participant's attention to the previous session's score and commented on each participant's progress throughout the intervention sessions. During performance feedback, the researcher and participant collectively decided whether the participant surpassed the previous intervention session's accuracy score. If the participant surpassed his or her previous accuracy score, he or she obtained a reinforcer from the reinforcer menu.

The reinforcer menu used was composed of a list of objects that possessed a reinforcing quality for the students participating in this study. It was developed by consulting with the participants' teachers and observing the subjects to find out their likes/dislikes. The completed reinforcer menu consisted of the following: pencils, stickers, and erasers. Subjects were allowed to choose one object every time they surpassed the previous session's accuracy score. Although other stimuli (things to eat, activities, and types of praise or statements) could have been incorporated into the reinforcer menu, they were not due to the potential for classroom disruption.

Measurement

The participants' performance on each math probe determined their accuracy scores. The researcher also noted each participant's productivity per math probe. Participants were given 2 minutes to complete each math probe per session. Accuracy was measured as the percentage of math problems answered correctly. It was calculated by dividing the number of problems answered correctly by the total number of problems (correct and incorrect), then multiplying by 100. Productivity was measured as the percentage of math problems completed. It was calculated by dividing the number of problems completed by the total number of problems (completed and not completed) then multiplying by 100. During the intervention phases (B_1 and B_2), each student counted the number of problems he or she answered correctly (accuracy score). Next, each student graphed his or her results per intervention session (# correct). Then the researcher calculated and recorded accuracy. Productivity was independently calculated and recorded by the researcher for each student per session. During the baseline phase (A), the researcher counted the number of problems each student answered correctly (accuracy score) and the number of problems he or she completed per session. Then the researcher also calculated and recorded the accuracy and productivity for each student per session.

Experimental Design and Procedures

The B-A-B withdrawal design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention package consisting of self-monitoring, performance feedback, and reinforcers on math computation. This design was chosen for practicality and the time constraints of this study. The intervention phases (B_1 and B_2) consisted of the participants completing a math probe per session for 2 minutes. Participants then checked their answers with an answer key that was provided. Next participants graphed the number of problems answered correctly (accuracy scores) on their self-monitoring graph. The researcher reviewed the self-monitoring graph with each student and commented on his or her progress (performance feedback). If the student surpassed his or her previous score, he or she earned a preferred reinforcer. Students moved onto the next phase when a stable accuracy score was established. The baseline phase (A) solely consisted of each participant completing a math probe per session for 2 minutes. None of the components of the intervention package were employed in this phase. Next, the researcher counted the number of

questions answered correctly (accuracy scores) and the number completed. Then the researcher also calculated and recorded accuracy and productivity for each session.

Before starting the experimental sessions, each student was taught the procedures for each phase of the study (intervention and baseline phases). The researcher modeled the procedures of each phase.

During the intervention package phase, accuracy and productivity were measured. The participant was given the following materials per session: a pencil, crayon, self-monitoring graph, math probe, and answer sheets. The answer sheets corresponded to each math probe. They were identical; the only difference was that the answer sheets included the answers to the problems (www.interventioncentral.org). The participant was given 2 minutes to answer a math probe per session. While the participant completed a math probe, the answer sheets were laid face down on the table. Upon completion, the participant checked his or her answers using the answer sheets. He or she counted the number of questions answered correctly (accuracy scores) and then illustrated the results on the self-monitoring graph using a crayon. The researcher independently counted, recorded, and calculated the number of problems completed (productivity). Performance feedback was given after each session. The experimenter reviewed the self-monitoring graph with each student and commented on his or her progress. Each participant had the opportunity to earn his or her choice of a preferred reinforcer at the end of each session. The student must have surpassed his or her previous accuracy score to obtain a reinforcer. The intervention package phases continued until each participant demonstrated performance stability on both accuracy and productivity. Performance stability was established by calculating a mean line. Once a mean line was drawn for each phase, if at least 80% of the data points fell within a 15% value range of the mean line then the phase was complete and stability was established (Tawney & Gast, 1984).

During baseline, the participants were given 2 minutes to complete a math probe per session. No additional materials were provided to the students. For each session, the participants were instructed to complete math problems until the experimenter said stop at the 2-minute mark. The researcher independently measured accuracy and productivity. Performance stability of the data was also established with a mean line.

An independent observer collected reliability data. The independent observer was one of the classroom teachers. The independent observer accompanied the researcher on approximately 30% of the observations. The independent observer and researcher checked each participant's responses and recorded data, the number of problems answered correctly and the number of problems completed per math probe. Inter-observer reliability was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the sum of the agreements and disagreements and multiplying by 100. This resulted in an inter-observer agreement of 100%.

Visual analysis involves the interpretation of the level, trend, and variability of performance occurring during baseline and intervention conditions (Carr et al., 2005). Judgments are made by examining various aspects such as the immediacy of effects following the onset and/or withdrawal of the intervention, the proportion of data points in adjacent phases that overlap in level, the magnitude of changes in the dependent variable, and the consistency of data patterns across multiple presentations of intervention and nonintervention conditions (Carr et al., 2005). The information gathered via visual analysis was used to determine the presence of a functional relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Results

One out of the four participants demonstrated a clear improvement in accuracy of math computation. Student 1 demonstrated a high volume of correct responses during the intervention phases and a decrease in correct responses during baseline. During the first intervention phase B_1 Student 1 obtained a mean of 19.25 correct responses. For the baseline phase, A the mean of correct responses decreased to 16.33. In the second intervention phase, B_2 the mean increased to 18.50 correct responses. For the remaining participants' the data illustrate an increase in correct responses from the baseline phase to the second intervention phase. Student 2 obtained a mean of 16.25 correct responses in B_1 , a mean of 17.77 correct responses in A and a mean of 19.25 correct responses in B_2 . Student 3 obtained a mean of 15.25 correct responses in B_1 , a mean of 16.33 correct responses in A , and a mean of 18.25 correct responses in B_2 . Student 4 obtained a mean of 15.75 correct responses in B_1 , a mean of 17.33 correct responses in A , and a mean of 19.25 correct responses in B_2 (see Figure 1). The median performance across participants was calculated to further examine the effects of the intervention on students 2, 3, and 4 (see Appendix B for Figure 3). The median performance across students 2, 3, and 4 depicted an improvement in accuracy with the implementation of the intervention package. A decrease in accuracy was visible in the baseline phase.

Data depicted similar results for productivity as it did for accuracy for each participant. Student 1's performance in productivity illustrated an increase in the intervention phases and a decrease in the baseline phase. During the first intervention phase B_1 Student 1 obtained a mean of 20 completed problems. For the baseline phase, A the mean of completed problems decreased to 16.67. In the second intervention phase, B_2 the mean increased to 18.50 completed problems. For the remaining participants' the data also illustrate an increase in completed responses from the baseline phase to the second intervention phase. Student 2 obtained a mean of 17 complete responses in B_1 , a mean of 18.67 completed problems in A , and a mean of 19.25 completed problems in B_2 . Student 3 obtained a mean of 15.50 completed problems in B_1 , a mean of 17 completed problems in A , and a mean of 19 completed problems in B_2 . Student 4 obtained a mean of 16.25 completed problems in B_1 , a mean of 17.33 completed problems in A , and a mean of 19.50 completed problems in B_2 (see Appendix A for Figure 2). The median performance across participants was calculated to further examine the effects of the intervention on students 2, 3, and 4 (see Appendix B for Figure 4). The median performance across students 2, 3, and 4 depicted an improvement in productivity with the implementation of the intervention package. A decrease in productivity was visible in the baseline phase.

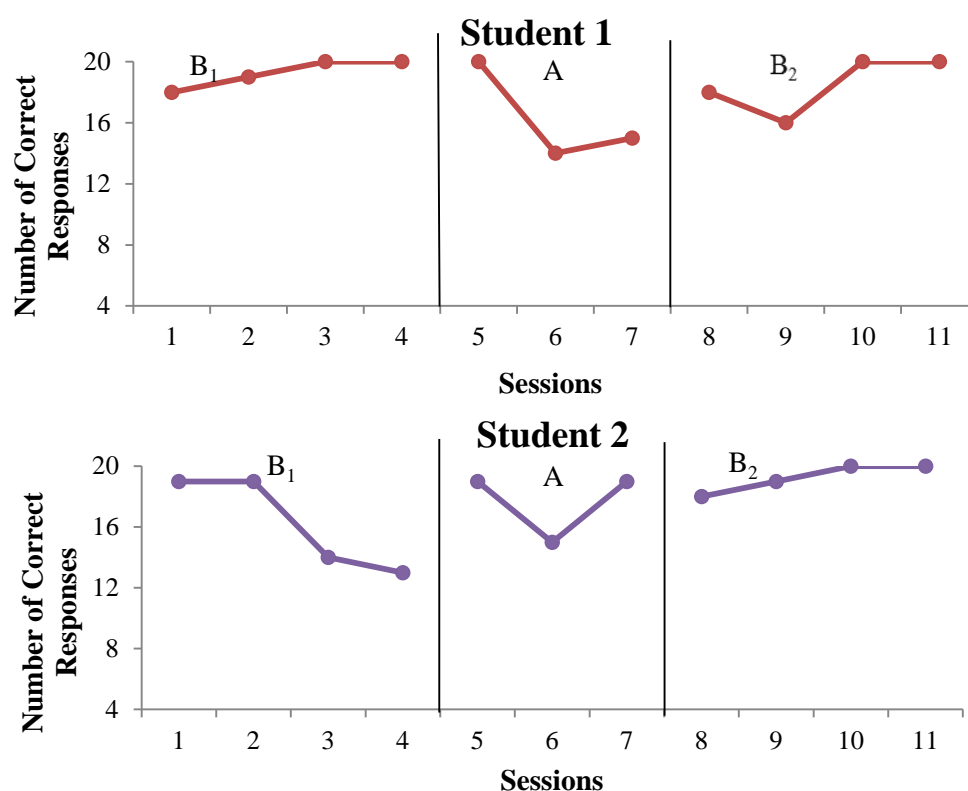
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention package consisting of self-monitoring, performance feedback, and reinforcers on math computation of four second grade students in a general education classroom setting. It was found that the intervention package had a positive effect on math computation for one participant (Student 1). Both accuracy and productivity increased during the intervention phases. During the baseline phase accuracy and productivity decreased. The intervention package was effective to varying degrees for the remaining three participants (Student 2, Student 3, and Student 4). The intervention package seemed to improve accuracy and productivity the most across baseline and the second intervention phase (B_2) for each of the remaining participants.

The students chosen to participate in this study were average achieving in math computation. According to their teachers, these students were inconsistent in their performance of math computation. Thus, intervening on the target behavior, accuracy and productivity of

math computation, was beneficial for the students. Results showed that the intervention package increased accuracy and productivity for all four participants. Future research could be conducted with more students and using different designs, such as the multiple treatment design, in order to establish a strong functional relationship between one of the components of the intervention package and the target behavior.

Overall, it is unknown whether a particular component of the intervention package is responsible for the effectiveness of the intervention or whether the combined components are responsible for the overall effectiveness. Hence, this study encourages educators to use multiple research-based techniques in one intervention. Using more than one research-based strategy allows educators to individualize instruction for any given student. This in turn may increase a student's gains. Furthermore, the varying degrees of accuracy and productivity across participants can be explained by carryover effects of the first intervention phase on the following baseline phase for each participant. Efforts were made to minimize threats to internal validity by implementing the intervention with fidelity. However, it is probable that external factors influenced the results of this study, such as the participants' history and classroom environment. Replications of this study could provide more information on the effectiveness of the intervention package used.



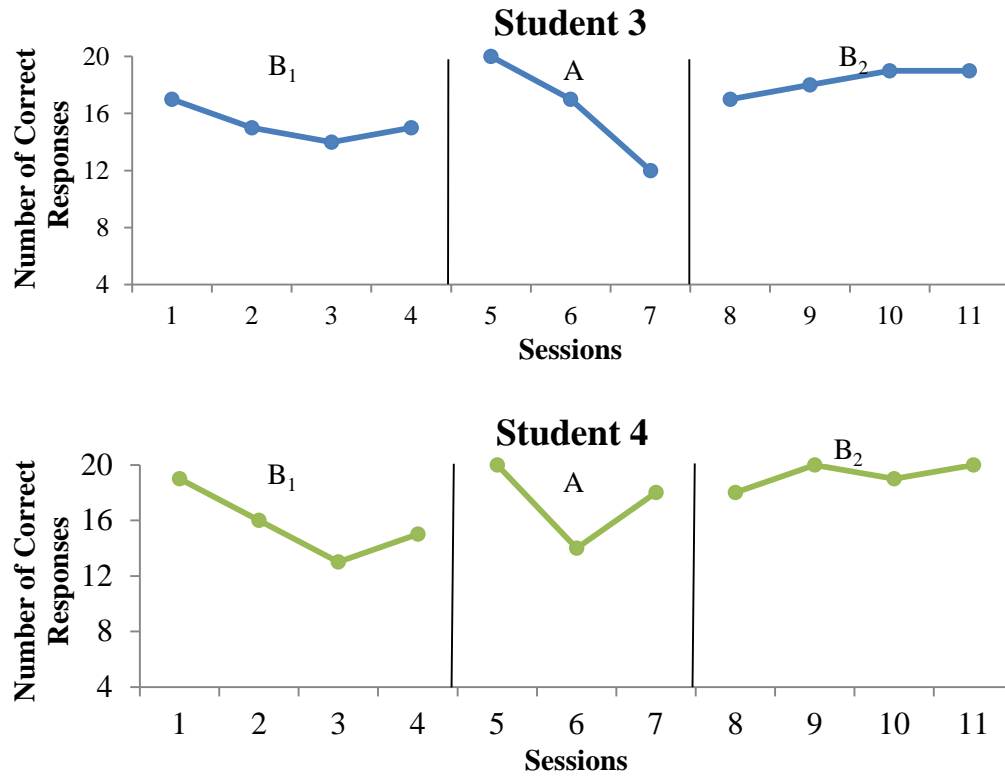


Figure 1. Math Computation Data: Number of Correct Responses

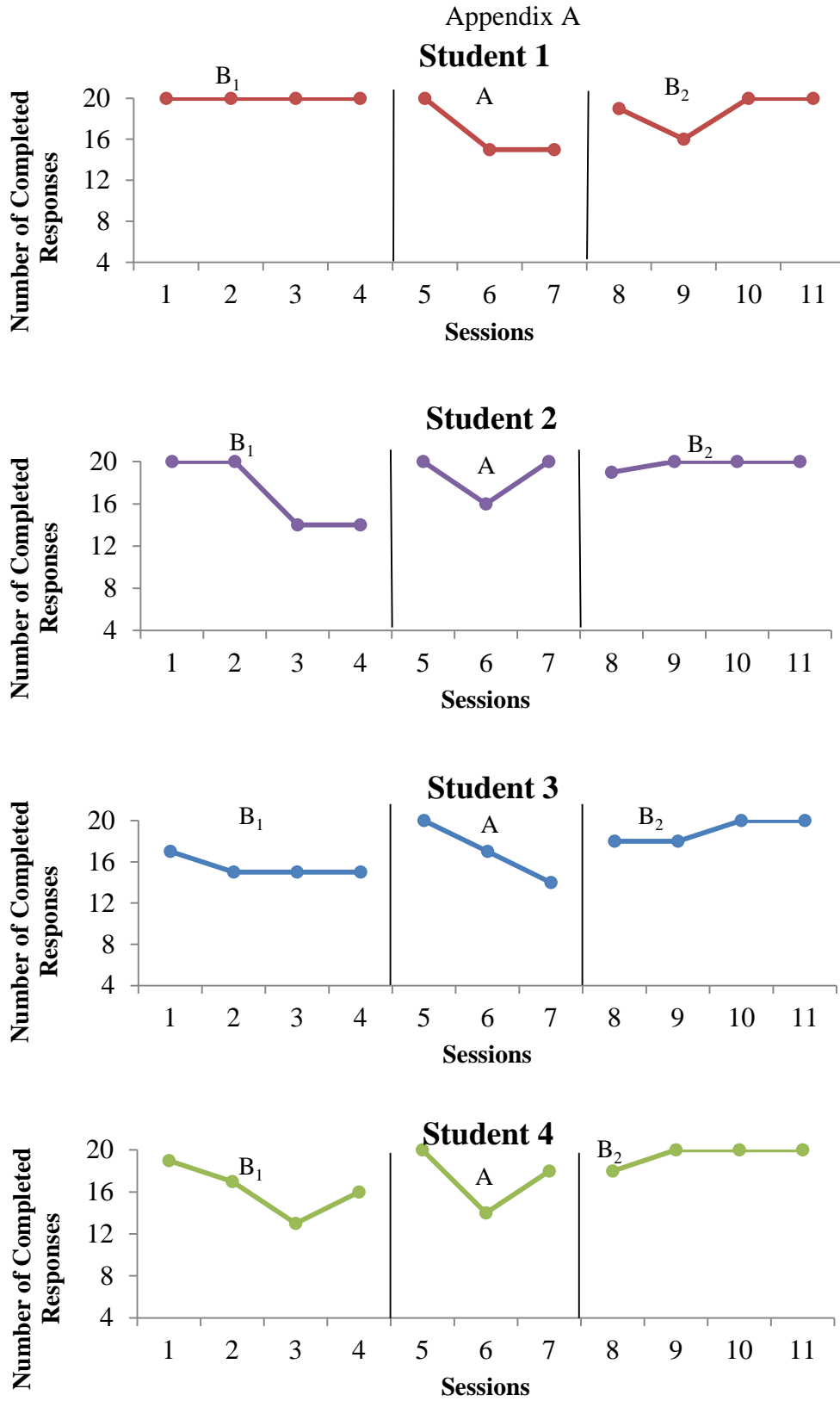


Figure 2. Math Computation Data: Number of Completed Responses

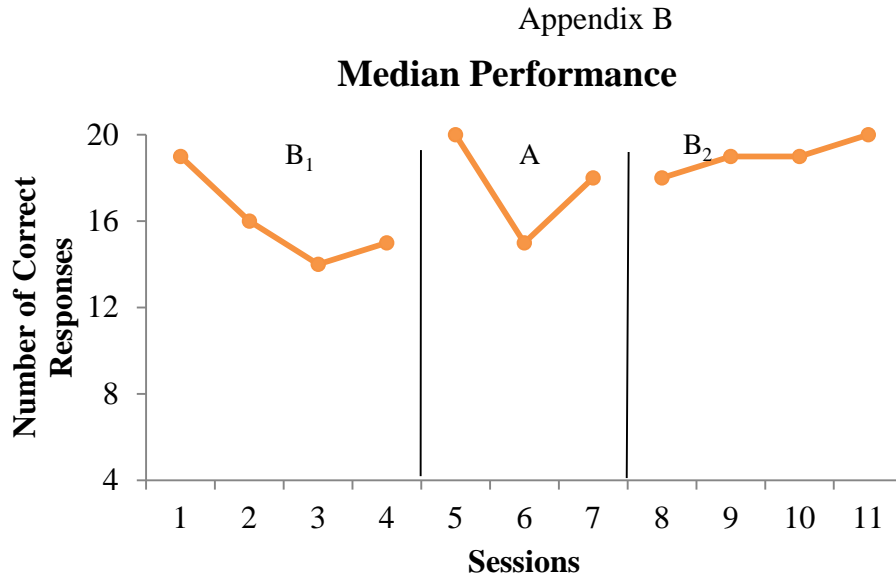


Figure 3. Median Student Performance: Number of Correct Responses

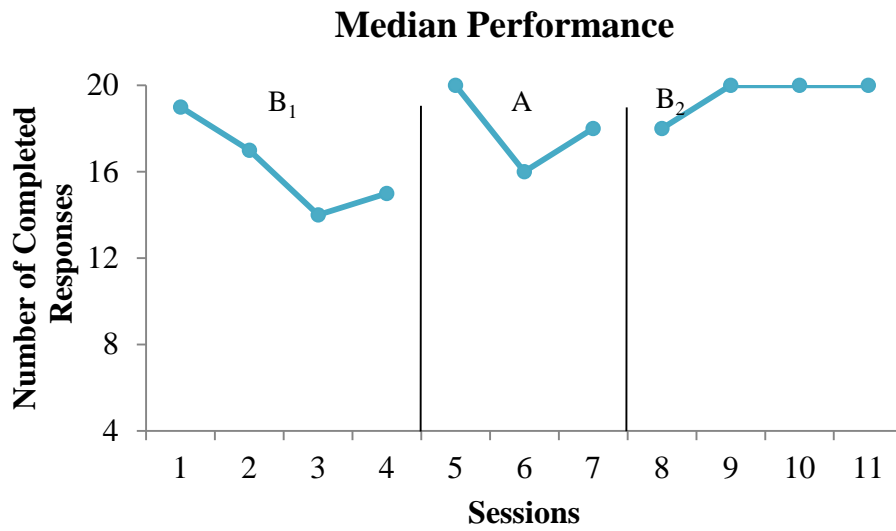


Figure 4. Median Student Performance: Number of Completed Responses

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On the Possible Implementation of Nondirective Teaching for English Class in Post Secondary Public Schools in China

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Abstract: The paper explores the appropriate approaches that Chinese English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers could adopt by the applying nondirective teaching model to classrooms. It attempts to discuss about the essential role that the nondirective teaching model plays in promoting students to be powerful learners in English learning.

With the spread of globalization, English plays a more and more important role in international communication. Nowadays, as China has more cultural and economic exchanges with English speaking countries, more and more competent English personnel are needed in China. In such circumstance, how to facilitate Chinese students' self-learning in English study has become a major issue at Chinese schools (Hu, 2004; Jin, 2007).

During the past two decades, an increasing number of privately organized English training schools have sprung out across China (Hu, 2004). Typical successful examples include *New Oriental English Training School*, *New Channel English Training School* and *English First English Training School*. The nondirective teaching model that focuses on facilitating learning has been integrated into a lot of their English training programs (Hu, 2004). As most students in the English programs offered by these schools have the purpose to be finally admitted by universities in English speaking countries with a higher score in the TOEFL or IELTS, they have more motivation in improving their linguistic and pragmatic performance in English learning (Hu, 2004). In short, their goals for passing the international English language exams makes the nondirective teaching being implemented at the curriculum provider in these private English training schools possible.

However, the mode of teaching and learning in English at Chinese public schools ranging from secondary level to college level, still remains in the traditional way. In majority of public schools, there is a one-way transmission or delivery rather than a variety of two-way communication regarding teaching and learning English (Jin, 2007). A typical scenario is one teacher lectures to fifty or more students while the students take class notes without asking questions or engaging in discussions. In this learning environment, the students tend to be bored and inattentive, do poorly on tests, get discouraged about the course, and may conclude that they are not good at the subjects of the course and give up (Oxford, 2001). It is apparent that the normative curricular regime politically and culturally mandated in these educational contexts could be seen as being far from adequate in terms of enabling Chinese ESOL learners to use English for communicative purposes (Du, 2002).

For Chinese public schools, the goal for students in learning English is to cultivate students' ability in searching information, and reading articles and scientific publications in English. With this goal, grammar and vocabulary are emphasized so that students have fewer troubles in English reading. With lots of homework and project assignments from other classes, the students in public schools generally treat English class as all the other classes: all they need to do is to complete the assignments required by teachers. Therefore, with insufficient

motivation in improving their linguistic and communicational capability with English, students rarely complain to their teachers about their teaching mode.

Although English education at public school has its specially pre-defined goal in terms of academic reading, one could still argue that a two-way communication instead of a one-way transmission is a necessary component in language learning, because it could help enhance students and teachers' interaction and cooperation in English learning. Re-defining the roles of teachers and students in those programs is also needed when implementing nondirective teaching model in classrooms at secondary and college level public schools in China.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore how Chinese English teachers could assume appropriate roles in applying nondirective teaching model to classrooms. It aims at assisting Chinese ESOL teachers to be better facilitators for college English language learners and stimulating learners' intrinsic motivation on English learning, and eventually enhancing the overall quality of English language teaching and promoting students' abilities in English learning. Specifically, it invites teachers to reconsider English learners' role in the design of learning objectives and choice of teaching materials. It actually emphasized students' major role in English learning under the guidance of Chinese ESOL teachers.

It first has the literature review regarding theoretical underpinnings of nondirective teaching model, traditional teaching model in Chinese ESOL class at college level, and the necessity in applying nondirective teaching model in practice, and then it introduces the features of nondirective teaching model. Finally, it analyzes the possible ways of implementing it in those public curricula.

Method

For the literature review, an integrative research method was used in April, 2013. The research sources that I acquired are from Proquest, Eric, Worldcat, and Chinese WanFang Database. I first searched the key words such as *Chinese ESOL Education* and *nondirective teaching model*. Once I collected relevant articles, I put them into three categories: (a) theory, (b) ESOL education in China, and (c) applying in practice. By doing so, I was able to identify the feasibility of applying the nondirective teaching model in current Chinese ESOL classroom at post secondary public schools.

Results

In this section, I focused on four themes that emerged from the literature review. They are as follows: (a) theoretical underpinnings of the nondirective teaching model; (b) traditional teaching model in Chinese ESOL classes at the college level; (c) the necessity in applying the nondirective teaching model in practice; and (d) features of the nondirective teaching model.

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Nondirective Teaching Model

As the founder of nondirective and client-centered therapy, Rogers (1969) proposed that in nondirective counseling, therapists need to respect and nurture clients' capacity so that their clients could deal constructively with their own life. Connecting it with the educational field, Rogers argued that the primary goal of education lies in facilitating the whole and fully functioning person. Rogers (1969) stated, "The facilitation of learning as the function which may hold constructive, tentative, changing, process answers to some of the deepest perplexities which beset man today" (p. 105). Rogers advocated students should play the central role in the classroom. In other words, Rogers was against the traditional teaching model that places teachers at the center in the classrooms. In Rogers' views, students are always the passive

receptors of knowledge instructed by this model; therefore, it might be difficult for them to play active roles on learning.

Traditional Teaching Model in Chinese English Classes at the College Level

Although English courses take up a lot of time for Chinese college students, many students still have no clear idea about the learning content, the learning procedure and the learning objective in learning English on their own (Song, 2009). Song (2009) concluded that the directive teaching model in English courses led to the problem mentioned above. Guo and Li (2004) stated that the English curriculum for Chinese students at college level tended to emphasize teachers as the dominant controller of the class while ignoring the facilitation of students' self-learning ability in English study. Influenced by traditional teaching concepts, teachers simply instruct students on how to give an accurate response to the texts with all the materials included in the textbooks rather than to teach them the relevance of language knowledge for pragmatic use (Guo & Li, 2004). Such an instructional method impedes students in dealing with their English learning constructively and flexibly.

The Necessity in Applying the Nondirective Teaching Model in Practice

Reflecting upon the educational procedure, in Dewey's (1983) view, teachers should provide students more opportunities to construct knowledge on their own, since knowledge could be acquired from a variety of sources. Also, Dewey (1983) suggested that teachers should engage students in the classroom so that students could construct their own thinking and direct their own educational decisions creatively rather than simply receive knowledge passively.

Brookes and Grundy (1988) argued that the learners' subjectivity should be emphasized through the whole learning process, since the ultimate goal of the education is to cultivate independent learners. Therefore, Brookes and Grundy (1988) suggested that in the teaching practice, teachers need to ensure the classroom activities, curriculum design, textbook compilation, and teachers' decisions should be aligned with each individual student's needs, which could eventually help them to develop personal growth on learning. Gagne (1993) pointed out that teachers should utilize learners' learning abilities to motivate them to complete the current and future learning tasks. Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009) emphasized that students need to play an active role in the learning. Bruner (1966) argued that students identify their own problems and formulate solutions by themselves in the learning.

Features of the Nondirective Teaching Model

The nondirective teaching model adopts students-centered approach that aims at creating an atmosphere in which the students' self-direction can be nurtured and developed (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2009). When applying the nondirective teaching model into English classes, teachers play the role in orienting students into the right direction on English language learning and in supporting students to formulate solutions in the learning process; students are encouraged to discover the problems on their own in the learning process and develop their interest on language learning. In this way, students could attain greater personal integration, effectiveness, and realistic self-appraisal (Joyce et al., 2009). Compared to traditional directive teaching, the nondirective teaching that considers students as a priority has the following characteristics: (a) creating empathetic communication between teachers and students; (b) building equal partnership between teachers and students; (c) encouraging a student-centered approach in the classroom; and (d) respecting each individual student's difference in learning.

Creating empathetic communication between teachers and students. The core of the nondirective teaching is to create empathetic communication between teachers and students (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009). Teachers create an atmosphere of empathetic communication

with students and courage students to construct learning by their own. Teachers no longer play the role as knowledge authority and decision maker. Moreover, it considers students' nonintellectual factors in the learning process. Teachers provide psychological assistance to students to help them overcome difficulties in the learning process.

Building equal partnership between teachers and students. The nondirective teaching emphasizes equal partnership between students and teachers. The equal partnership between students and teachers is the prerequisite to developing nondirective communication. Teachers are required to treat students equally, sincerely, and trustfully. Meanwhile, teachers are required to respect students' abilities, to understand students' inner world and to support them to develop their potential as fully as possible (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2009). At the same time, students' trust in teachers could guarantee the successful implementation of nondirective teaching in the class.

Encouraging a student-centered approach in the classroom. The nondirective teaching adopts a student-centered approach (Rogers, 1969). In each step of nondirective teaching, students' empathetic experience is highly encouraged. It requires students to structure, reflect and improve their study plan, and commit themselves to the study. Under the instruction of nondirective learning, students could take full advantage of their strengths in learning based on their interest. As teachers demonstrate to students all the necessary learning resources and create a kind of two-way communicating environment for students, students learn on their own with great freedom.

Respecting each individual student's differences in learning. In the nondirective teaching, each individual student's learning habits are respected by teachers (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009). Based on different students' characteristics, teachers design special instructional strategies for them, and instruct them how to make great use of available resources on learning. To teach students learning methods is the basic requirement for teachers.

Implementing the Nondirective Teaching Model in the Public Schools

According to Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009), the syntax of the nondirective teaching model includes five steps: "(a) defining the helping situation, (b) exploring the problem, (c) developing insight, (d) planning and decision making, and (e) integration" (p. 332). Based on this framework, the nondirective teaching model could be implemented in China for English programs at public schools in the following ways: (a) students are placed into different groups based on individual needs in learning English. For instance, students who need to expand English vocabulary in a group, students who need to improve their writing skills in another group. (b) Students within a group analyze the problem that they commonly have by themselves under the guidance of teacher. For instance, concerning expanding vocabulary, students categorize English words under words roots and affixes. While students have questions in learning, they could seek assistance from teachers. (c) Students develop their insights toward a certain issue in language learning deeply. Teachers facilitate students' ability in observing and analyzing problems in language learning from multiple perspectives. (d) Students plan and decide what they will learn next in order to make progress in the language learning. Teachers orient students to set up a goal for their future study. (e) Students report their learning outcome in a certain procedure and teachers give them feedback and useful suggestions in language learning for student for their future improvement. One could implement the nondirective teaching model at the public school English classrooms with more emphasis on vocabulary, grammar and reading.

Teachers' Roles in Chinese English Classrooms in Applying the Nondirective Teaching Model

When nondirective teaching is applied in the real teaching practice, teachers should fully understand their roles. Although the nondirective teaching leaves much room for students to do self learning, the teachers still play important roles in instruction. To be specific, under such circumstances, teachers are required to have more creativity and interaction to cope with all kinds of requirements from diverse learners. They need to help students identify their cons and pros on learning; they need to stimulate students' interest in learning. Most importantly, since teachers no longer inoculate knowledge in a unified form to their students, it is crucial for them to know much about each student's individualized characteristics and their individual needs in learning. In this way, a reliable reciprocal relationship between teachers and students could be established, and thus students might benefit a lot from nondirective teaching.

In applying nondirective teaching model in practice, teachers need to assist students to develop the following learning abilities: set up a learning objective, select the appropriate content material and adequate learning method and skills, suggest the learning pace, monitor the learning progress, and evaluate the learning effect.

On the whole, teachers in Chinese English classrooms could play the roles as facilitators, coordinators, and resources.

Teachers as facilitators. In the nondirective teaching model, the major role of the teacher is to be a facilitator who nurtures and develops student self-direction in learning (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2009). Teachers need to transform their role from those who are inclined to take control of their students in every aspect in learning into facilitators who are good at orienting and educating students to study independently and think creatively. Good facilitators in English class have the following abilities: (a) they have sound personal qualities in teaching and learning, for instance, with regard to their scholarly attainments, they need to have broad knowledge in a variety of disciplines, professional expertise in English language; With regard to their teaching abilities, they need to possess the skills in coaching and supporting students on learning, which includes the applied abilities to use multimedia technology, patient temperament and tolerant mind, etc. (b) Second, they need to inspire students to take initiatives on learning, which includes encouraging students to commit themselves to learning, assisting students to overcome all kinds of obstacles on learning, communicating with students, and avoiding manipulation and intervention on students' learning process. (c) Third, teachers need to make students aware of the significance of self-directed learning. In the nondirective teaching, it is crucial for teachers to help their students realize the key to success in leaning lies in the learners themselves. As facilitators, teachers have the responsibility to instruct students in how to be independent learners who could manage their learning effectively and efficiently. Specifically, teachers could suggest students how to develop their self learning progress and self learning strategies by analyzing each individualized learner's requirement, short term or long term goals, study plan, and content material selection on language learning.

Teachers as coordinators. In order to facilitate students' English learning, teachers need to play the role as the coordinators who develop all kinds of interpersonal relationship that focuses on students' English learning. Concerning creating learning environment for students in English study, teachers could provide students various opportunities to nurture their talents in English Contests, English Lectures, English Film Week, etc. In addition, considering that students might be confronted with learning difficulties in English vocabulary learning, listening comprehension and reading comprehension, English teachers should provide students general

learning strategies in English learning rather than simply instilling them with specific English knowledge, since such instruction might be helpful for students to identify their own ways in English language learning.

Teachers as resources. In nondirective teaching, teachers could provide students a variety of learning resources. Teachers could also participate in the students' learning process and give them proactive support in various aspects of language learning. In the information society, knowledge is always updated. There is no exception in English learning. In order to assist students to keep pace with the development of English vocabulary, teachers could teach students how to take full advantage of online learning materials for their English learning. For instance, teachers could orient students to read English newspapers in English online, study English on a variety of English forums, play English video clips in YouTube, etc. Appropriate online English materials with good quality could broaden students' perspectives as much as possible.

Further Implications

Compared to the traditional mode, nondirective teaching concerns the class organization and specifies different roles for teachers and students.

For teachers, they not only have the equal role with their students, but also reconstruct themselves as students. They are required to orient students to think independently, to offer assistance and to organize teaching activities that satisfy each individual student's needs. It is apparent that the tasks that teachers are confronted with in the classrooms are more difficult to deal with, since they are not only expected to have professional knowledge in language teaching but also to have general knowledge on psychology and pedagogy. Therefore, it is necessary for them to improve comprehensively in teaching and learning.

For students, they are required to be responsible for their own learning. Therefore, they need to identify their own problems on learning and formulate solutions by cooperating with others and learning from others.

In order to assist with the implementation of nondirective teaching with Chinese public schools at secondary level, three additional suggestions could also be considered: (a) Reduce the class size from above 50 to around 25. In this way every student will have chances for class participation; (b) reform student evaluation system from one exam mode to a combination of exam and project based evaluation. In this way, the students are required to engage more in the self-learning environment and the application of their English knowledge rather than purely memorizing the linguistic content; and (c) set up nondirective teaching training programs for teachers as a pre-requisite of being an English educator in public schools. In this way, the teachers have a better understanding of their newly assigned role in the classroom.

Conclusion

Numerous earlier works have confirmed the significance of the nondirective teaching model. It should take an increasingly higher share of the Chinese ESOL classrooms in order to provide more effective English teaching and learning. Implementing such a model in reality, however, requires that both the teachers and the students face up to the challenges of adjusting to their new roles. In particular, the Chinese ESOL teachers need to make more effort in encouraging students' critical and independent thinking and in assisting students in establishing and chasing their learning objectives. Concerning the Chinese ESOL students, the most urgent task is to escape the traditional passive learning habits and get used to the self-responsive learning style. Only by accomplishing this can they identify their own questions and formulate respective solutions with or without the help of their teachers.

On the whole, applying the nondirective teaching model could help nurture students' English learning out of their interest rather than dominate students' English learning in every aspect, because the students play a positive role in English learning. Although currently it stays at the starting stage in Chinese English classes for post-secondary students, it has much potential to develop further, as the ultimate goal of English teaching is to ensure students participate in the English learning activities that incorporate the pragmatic use of language on the daily basis.

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Doctoral Students: Online, On Time, On to Graduation

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Abstract: As post-secondary institutions continue to expand online offerings, increased numbers of students are enrolling in online doctoral programs. The results of this study can guide the development of retention strategies for students who are at risk of academic failure and who might ultimately drop from online doctoral programs.

The expansion of online programs and student enrollment continues through post-secondary education at all levels, including the doctoral level. The number of online students increased by approximately 1 million to 5.6 million in fall 2009, demonstrating an increase of 21% (Bollinger & Halupa, 2012). Although doctoral online programs are gaining popularity, student persistence remains comparable to the 50% undergraduate retention rates. It is unclear which factors contribute to student persistence at the doctoral level; however, faculty are deemed integral contributors for the support of doctoral students. Yet, despite mentoring, increased academic support systems, and implementation of retention strategies, student retention at the doctoral level remains nearly 50% (Stallone, 2009).

Bollinger and Halupa (2012) noted that students have been opting for online education because the courses tend to fit their busy lifestyles. They analyzed 84 first course doctoral students in four areas related to anxiety and satisfaction and explored student anxiety expressed over the use of the computer, the Internet, and online course delivery, as the literature supported each of these areas as potential areas of anxiety for students. Anxiety provoking experiences reported by the students included their lack of information literacy that highlighted their inability to navigate the Internet and locate appropriate resources. Bollinger and Halupa (2012) noted a correlation between higher levels of satisfaction and reduced anxiety. Enhanced student orientation, utilizing student-centered approaches, and planned interventions to lessen student apprehension were recommended. Faculty lack the online experience and literacy skill sets in their interactions with doctoral students in online doctoral programs to generate increased student satisfaction. Although the study did not directly examine faculty/student time in the online course room, the relationship between satisfaction and anxiety may relate and therefore pertain to this study and issues of student retention.

The doctoral curricula has been studied to identify how to strengthen and guide individuals in doctoral programs (Kumar, Dawson, Black, Cavanaugh & Sessums, 2011) with the application of research-based knowledge and the link of context-based knowledge to enhance and improve the practice (Shulman, Golde, Conklin, Bueschel & Garabedian, 2006). Stallone (2009) assessed four characteristics associated with doctoral student retention: (a) persistence, (b) cultural diversity, (c) psychological characteristics, and (d) college engagement. It was noted in Stallone's (2009) research that psychological factors are the most identified cause for student attrition. The human quality factors related to cultural diversity sensitivity are what assisted the student in achieving doctoral success. Kumar et al. (2011) reported 94% of the doctoral students agreed that their expectations were met during the initial year of their doctoral training, with most students identifying faculty members' support as the key ingredient of doctoral student persistence.

Understanding the necessary skills and relevant experiences faculty would need for successful online doctoral studies is significant for administrators who seek to increase online doctoral persistence. Green et al. (2009) reported previous studies had identified motivating factors that enhanced faculty retention to be flexible hours, innovative pedagogy, acquiring new technological skills, and expanding faculty career opportunities. The authors also reported unfavorable aspects that included added time and effort required to teach online courses, lack of monetary compensation, limited organizational support structures, faculty inexperience, and the faculty member's lack of technological skills. The greater problem was in the perceived lack of vision by administration for online education. Green et al. informed this study as it related to population demographics, such as faculty years of experience teaching online, gender and others.

Encouraging factors, as noted by these researchers included mentoring, continual training, collaboration with on-site faculty, and enhanced engagement within organizational community of the college. Lovitts (2009) discussed students not being prepared to make the transition from student to independent scholar. For example, in the first years of doctoral programs, students begin to deal with isolation. Further development was based upon the connections made that support or understands the student. The researchers concluded that online faculty would benefit from assistance in instructional design, added training, and early mentorship for new online faculty to reduce online faculty turnover.

Seaman (2009) found the faculty delivering online courses to be both experienced and novice, part-time and full-time. The researcher reported the top ranking concern among faculty surveyed was that online course preparation required more time than conventional classroom delivery. The data also indicated they needed assistance with support and incentives. Only one third of the surveyed faculty had taught an online course, and even fewer were currently online instructors at the time of the inquiry. The faculty paradoxically expressed some concerns about online programming while most had at some time recommended it as a viable option to students. The contradictory nature of the faculty responses was reflective of the distant role of administration to the unique support needs on online programming at their colleges. Seaman (2009) reported faculty who had never taught an online course view that the online student outcome was inferior as compared to faculty that had taught an online course found student outcome as good or superior to traditionally taught courses. All faculty surveyed identified the lack of support services for online programming (Seaman, 2009).

Mentoring, according to Columbaro (2009), had all of the benefits in the virtual environment and few of the historical limitations. Columbaro (2009) contended that exemplary professors could mentor doctoral students and prepare them for professional challenges in the real world. She explained that mentorship was essential to describing the relational quality of the professor and student and preparing them for professional placement. The students who were unengaged in mentoring needed to be motivated, a significantly different problem. Online faculty had few incentives to reinforce student productivity.

Understanding student productivity in the online environment was addressed by experienced online faculty in several different ways. Meyer and McNeal (2011) in a qualitative study interviewed 10 online faculty to determine what methods maximized student productivity in the online environment. Faculty reported pedagogical methods that increased student productivity were creating relationships, student engagement, timely responding, planned intervals for communication, assignment reflection, well organized course structure, applied technology, adaptable, and having the utmost in expectations for the student.

Literature indicates student persistence is negatively impacted by anxiety, and was positively affected by faculty presence that contributed to student satisfaction (Baltes et al., 2010; Bollinger & Halupa, 2012; Kumar et al., 2011; Stallone, 2009). Faculty status, training, incentives, and experience contributed significantly to both faculty and student retention (Green, Alejandro, & Brown, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Seamon, 2009). The literature review has indicated that course room time has needed intensive instructional design that was best accomplished collaboratively with other faculty and modeled after institutional mentoring practices (Columbaro, 2009; Meyer & McNeal, 2011).

Gaps in the research of online doctoral student's persistence have common features. None of the studies indicated that actual measurement of time spent online, frequency of faculty contacts, and correlation to course outcomes. These measures would provide good markers of student progress, persistence, and engagement throughout the doctoral level course. If such indicators could be benchmarked, it is reasonable to use them throughout a given course by experienced online instructors as flags warranting potential intervention.

In online doctoral programs, the completion of the coursework has become a challenge and concern. The purpose of this research was to determine whether a correlation exists between faculty and student time spent in online doctoral course rooms and student persistence.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study: (a) Is there a statistically significant correlation between faculty time in the Educational Leadership and Instructional Design and Technology doctoral online course rooms and doctoral student persistence? (b) Is there a statistically significant correlation between student time in the Educational Leadership (EDL) and Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) doctoral online course rooms and doctoral student persistence?

Method

The study was quantitative, using archived data--*expo facto*--to determine whether a correlation existed between the dependent variable, student persistence, and the independent variables, faculty and student time spent in doctoral online course rooms. The data was collected from the Educational Leadership (EDL) and Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) 3-credit courses from years 2009 to 2012, at a Level 6, not-for-profit institution in South Florida. The IDT program began in 2012.

Population

Students enrolled in the EDL and IDT PhD program represent diverse backgrounds and locations. Thirty states are represented, as are China, Ghana, and Puerto Rico. Racial distribution is equally diverse with 46% of the students being White, 38% African American, 11% Hispanic, 1% native Hawaiian, and 4% Other. Ages of the students range from 27-81 years and 67% are female and 33% are male. Fifty-five percent of the students are married, 25% are single, 17% are divorced, and 3% are separated. Although the main research questions were concerned only with the relationship between faculty/student time in courses and student retention, addition analysis was completed on demographic information and any statistically significant items of interest.

Faculty teaching in the EDL and IDT online doctoral programs have varied online teaching experience ranging from 1-10 years. All hold a terminal degree in the content area related to the courses they teach.

Procedures

Archived data consisted of 1782 records of students who took online doctoral classes in EDL and IDT programs. Students could have taken more than one course; therefore, individual students were pulled out to identify better the number of courses that each student took. The data were aggregated (collapsed) to a single, individual case to determine the average amount of time each student spent in all course work. This was done so that we had independence. To conduct an independent sample T-test, the assumptions of that statistical test--independent samples--needed to be met.

Because the same students appear more than once in the data set, with most students having taken multiple courses, a correlation was not initially conducted because the cases were not independent of one another. For example, student A would be highly correlated with student A. Student A could appear in the data as many as 17 times in the data set, which makes students highly correlated with themselves. In addition, students who spent a lot of time in their first class all the way through to their 17th class were going to be very similar to themselves. There were 179 persisters and 69 students who dropped, weighting the data to favor persisters, which violates our assumption of independence. The data was then collapsed so that each student appears in the data only once. An average was determined. The learning platform (LMS) provides a total number of minutes students and faculty spend online in the course room. The total time spent in all classes was divided by the number of courses taken. Persisters' time in courses was compared to students who dropped out of the program, allowing the independent assertion to be made. The instructors' minutes spent in the course and the students' time spend in the course created a mean called I average time and S average time. Instructor time spent off-line was not calculated. The files were each collapsed to create unique, aggregated file that consisted of 260 students. A total of 260 students took between 1 and 17 courses. Of those 260 students, 63 dropped at some point and 197 persisted (coded as 1 and 0 respectively). An independent sample T-test was selected for the analysis because it allows for comparisons between two variables, two dichotomous groups, and to find out if those who were coded as 1, persisters, and those who were coded as 0, non-persisters, were significantly different in the amount of time that they spent in their courses on average.

Results

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the average amount of time individual instructors spend in an online doctoral program spent in course rooms and the persistence or non-persistence of their students in the program. These results were highly significant as indicated by the alpha level was 0.001 suggesting counter intuitively, those students who did not persist had on average instructors who spent significantly longer amounts of time in the courses than those who persisted. A significant difference exists in the scores for Instructor Average Amount of Time in Courses and ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.3$) and students who persisted and those who did not ($M = 9516$, $SD = 2628$); $t(257) = 4.565$, $p = 0.000$.

Table 1
Independent Samples t-Test

	Dropped ($N = 62$)		Persisted ($N = 197$)		<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	
Male	.31	.059	.32	.033	.787
Student Average Time	4397	387	5187	217	.076

Instructor Average Time	9516	333	7999	154	.000
	Dropped		Persisted		
	(n=62)		(n=197)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i> Test
Male	30.6%	.06	32.5%	.03	
Student Average Time	4397.2	387.19	5187.6	217.26	†
Instructor Average Time	9516.1	333.76	7999.8	154.01	*
Number of Courses Taken	3.8	0.46	7.8	.38	*

† $p < .10$, * $p < .001$

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the average amount of time individual students in an online doctoral program spent in course rooms and their persistence in the program. There was no significant difference in the scores for Student Average Amount of Time in Courses ($M = 4397$, $SD = 3048$) and students who did not persist and those who did ($M = 5187$, $SD = 3049$); $t(257) = -1.780$, $p = 0.076$. These results suggest that the time students spend in online courses does not play a role in persistence. Specifically, our results suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between persisting students and non-persisting students in the average amount of time they spend in their online courses at the .05 alpha level. It was shown to be significant at an alpha level of .1, suggesting that those who dropped out of the program spent significantly less time, on average, than those who persisted.

Additional Analysis

None of the additional variables of interest, including faculty gender, faculty full time vs part time status, faculty years of experience, or average time faculty spent in the course per student were correlated with student persistence. The proportion of students who persisted (PropPerst was our Dependent variable) was computed by taking the total number of students a particular faculty had had in an online course during the study period (ranging from 5 to 213 students) and calculating the proportion of students that persisted compared to those that dropped from the program (range .6 or 60% persisted to 1 or 100% of that faculty's students persisted).

Table 2
Additional Variables

		Correlations				
		IMGender	FTPT	IYrsExp	InstaverageTime	PropPerst
IMGender	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	27				
FTPT	Pearson Correlation	.371	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074				
	N	24	24			
IYrsExp	Pearson Correlation	.362	.635**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.082	.001			
	N	24	24	24		
InstaverageTime	Pearson Correlation	.058	.387	.474*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.774	.062	.019		
	N	27	24	24	27	
PropPerst	Pearson Correlation	-.227	-.295	-.117	-.075	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.255	.161	.587	.711	
	N	27	24	24	27	27
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Discussion

EDL and IDT doctoral course rooms revealed a statistically significant correlation between the faculty time in course rooms and students who did not persist. Interestingly, the results do not reflect the current thinking that faculty are productive and available while logged on. Meyer and McNeal's (2011) study indicated faculty effectively used access to content, their faculty role, increased their interaction, encouraged student effort, required real world applications, and stressed time usage consistently over their course, regardless of their discipline. Although both studies seem to be contradictory, the question still remains: what do faculty do when logged on? Some faculty might grade lengthy papers while logged on and others might download all papers and grade while offline. Others might be answering phone calls and e-mail while logged on. The data indicated that the more experienced faculty spent more time logged into their online classes. Seidman (2005) asserted faculty members have the most influence on the attitudes of students, and therefore, the "greatest effect on retention" (p. 223). The current study indicates that faculty time online alone is not a factor in student persistence. The results of this study can guide the development of retention strategies for students who are at risk of academic failure and who might ultimately drop from online doctoral programs.

The findings of this study revealed that student time online in EDL and IDT online courses at the doctoral level was not a significant factor in student persistence and time was not a predictor for students who might drop out. A limitation of this study was the inability to gauge how students were using time when logged into the EDL and IDT online course rooms. Some students might prefer to download materials and work offline, which results in fewer minutes counted as "online" compared to students who are logged in while reading, writing, or just away from their computers. Another consideration is the computer expertise of students. Because many students have not taken online courses and/or have been out of school for many years,

learning to maneuver in the course room and in the programs needed to complete assignments might have added to the login time. Time logged in doctoral online courses is only one piece of the retention puzzle. Other factors mitigate student decisions to dropout (see Table 2).

Summary

Retention rates in PhD programs have gained increased attention (Cassuto, 2010). The focus has been on the dissertation stage, not the coursework (Cassuto, 2010). All students, regardless of interventions and best practices offered, are at risk of dropping out. Although connectedness to the faculty and the university have a positive influence on retention rates (Seidman, 2005), the student time logged into the EDL and IDT doctoral programs was not a factor in persistence. However, faculty time logged in had a negative impact—more time, higher dropout rates. Suggestions for future research might include a qualitative study exploring what faculty and students do while logged into online course rooms.

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The Relationship Between Online and Onsite GED Preparatory Courses

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Abstract: Students take online or onsite courses are taken in order to prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) Test. This paper discusses the benefits and challenges associated with online and onsite GED preparatory courses. It compares both methods of delivery and ends with conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Technology is a part of everyday life. There is an increasing demand for online learning options. The General Educational Development (GED) test is also referred to as the General Education Diploma. It is a series of five tests that are given to determine whether or not the test taker has high school level academic skills. It consists of Social Studies, Science, Math, Reading, and Writing. The American Council on Education created the GED in 1942 to help World War II military personnel obtain the credentials to enter college (Rose, 2013). Legally, the GED is the equivalent to a high school diploma (Rose, 2013). Since its creation, the GED has changed with the times and gone through many revisions in order to cover the material that is needed to enter college and the workforce.

Adults who are seeking to earn high school credentials take preparation courses before taking the actual GED test. These courses are widely available online and onsite. Places like the GED Marketplace, an online company, offer to assist adults in GED training online by teaching basic skills, computer skills, and access to the Official GED Practice Test online (“GED Testing Service Unveils,” 2012). Each state has different age requirements for GED test takers. In most states, test takers must be at least 18 years old to sign up for the GED test, but there are waivers that allow 16 year olds to sign up under certain circumstances.

Nearly 800,000 GED tests are taken every year through the GED Testing Service (“Online GED,” 2012). The GED test must be taken at authorized testing centers (Lipke & Farrell, 2013). There are numerous fraudulent websites that claim they can provide an online “GED Certificate” (“Online GED,” 2012.) There is no such thing as an online “GED Certificate” although there are online practice tests and GED preparatory courses. If the credential is not issued by the state, it is unlikely to provide any benefit to the test taker in regards to seeking a higher paying job or college acceptance (“Online GED,” 2012).

In our current job market, openings are not easy to find. The minimum requirement for most jobs is a high school credential (Khandaroo, 2009). People want to better market themselves to a prospective employer by furthering their education. This means that many people will be taking the necessary steps to earn their GED if they have not completed high school. Enrollment in GED preparatory classes has risen in past years so much that it was necessary to have waiting lists (Khandaroo, 2009).

As technology has become integral to our day to day lives, the GED Testing Service offers computer based tests at testing centers in nearly half of the United States (GED Testing Service Reports, 2012). Giving test takers the option to use a computer, rather than pencil and paper, opens up several opportunities that make the testing process more efficient, for instance immediate results and enhanced test security. The New 2014 GED test will only be offered as a computer based test at official testing centers; there will no longer be the option to take the test using pencil and paper (“GED Testing Service Reports,” 2012).

The American Council on Education partnered with Pearson to create a more challenging computer based GED test (Adams, 2014). The focus of the GED has shifted from testing general knowledge to college and career preparedness (Sieben, 2011). The goal is to prepare individuals for a job, college, careers or a trade. The skills required to meet these goals 12 years ago has changed, so the test needed to be updated as well. The new GED requires at least a basic level of computer literacy. Past tests did not require any sort of computer literacy at all. Digital literacy skills needed for the test are similar to those used while browsing the Internet or using a word processor (Lipke & Farrell, 2013). These basic computer skills are also necessary to succeed in college. Shifting the GED to a computer based test is keeping up with technological advancements and demands of a changing workplace. Registration, scheduling, testing and scoring are done on a computer.

This paper discusses the options for General Educational Development test preparatory courses. The purpose of this paper is to compare GED preparatory courses that are taught onsite line to those that are taught online. The paper will begin by discussing the benefits and challenges of onsite preparatory courses, as well as the benefits and challenges of online preparatory courses. The paper will compare both methods of delivering the GED preparation course material and end with conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Onsite GED Preparatory Courses

A lack of a high school diploma or its equivalent affects adults personally, socially, and economically, and extends out to influence their communities (Koenig, 2011). High school credentials are normally the minimum academic requirement when applying for any job. It is very difficult for a high school dropout find employment. High school drop outs influence our communities because they make up a disproportionate number of prison inmates (Koenig, 2011). The GED offers high school dropouts a second chance for success.

In past years, onsite GED preparatory classes filled up quickly around the United States, especially in areas that have been hit hard by the economic times. (Khandaroo, 2009). The economic recession has been driving people back into the classroom and furthering their education to improve their chance of landing a job. In the spring of 2008, 40 states reported that they had waiting lists for onsite GED preparatory classes, and this was before the recession deepened (Khandaroo, 2009).

Benefits of Onsite GED Preparatory Courses

Taking GED preparatory courses onsite can be beneficial to the traditional learner. The courses are structured just as a regular classroom would be, in which students meet at a school, community center, or adult learning facility. Some GED programs moved to colleges, which has served both as a motivator and a self-esteem booster (Khandaroo, 2009). Having an instructor who attends every GED class and builds relationships with the students can inspire them to do well (Khandaroo, 2009).

Many high school dropouts stated that their reasons for dropping out were feeling disconnected from teachers, the school and the curriculum (Koenig, 2011). Onsite classes provide students with the opportunity to connect with their instructor in a more personal aspect than through a virtual medium. In addition to a relationship with the instructor, peer-to-peer relationships are important amongst a learning environment. When students work toward the same goal, it creates a bond. This bond gives the learners a sense of belonging, which they may have missed in high school. It is of great importance in the facilitation of learning to feel connected to the learning environment.

Onsite classes allow for personal contact with instructors and face-to-face interactions with other students (Adams & Defleur, 2006). Sometimes learners need one-on-one attention. People learn in various ways. Some people need to be walked through a concept in person to fully understand it. There are instances in which an instructor tries to convey material to the learner by verbally explaining it, yet it does not sink in until the instructor demonstrates. This type of personalization and individual attention is what sets onsite GED preparatory courses apart from ones that are taken online.

Challenges of Onsite GED Preparatory Courses

People every so often use the phrase “life happens.” Many events are beyond the control of an individual that has caused them to drop out of high school. Events such as a parent becoming disabled and the student having to get a job to pay the bills, becoming a caregiver to a parent, or becoming a parent themselves have been reasons why students drop out (Koenig, 2011). These individuals have very time-consuming responsibilities that they prioritize over finishing high school. Just as hard as it was to make time for high school, it is equally as difficult to find time to attend onsite GED preparatory classes. An hour class takes more than an hour out of their day. When people are pressed for time, they must take into account the time it will take to travel to the location where the class is being held and the time it takes them to get ready.

Transportation is another issue that may be encountered when attempting to take onsite GED classes. In high school, students have the option of taking a bus that is provided by the school district. That is not the case with GED preparatory courses. Students must arrange their own transportation to and from the onsite GED preparatory courses. Monetary issues may arise when searching for a way to get to class. Students must be able to afford the gas or transportation. If transportation is a problem, this may cause students not to attend the courses and in turn not pursue a GED (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012).

Some students may have dropped out of school because of social issues. They could have been associating with the wrong crowd and having a hard time focusing on academics (Khandaroo, 2009). There are students who may have difficulty learning in a large group. For those students, large classrooms may not be the best way to learn new material. One of the challenges with onsite GED classes are that they may not be beneficial to individuals who are not social learners.

Adults may not at this time in their lives have the family arrangements, support systems, or work schedules that make attending GED courses and passing the exam feasible (Rose, 2013). Making time in a busy schedule for the GED is difficult if students have to juggle family responsibilities and work (GED Testing Service Reports, 2012). Some GED preparatory classes meet in the evenings to accommodate people with a full-time day job (Melkun, 2012). However, this causes difficulty for people who work on weekends--other hours for example, those in the restaurant business. Everyone’s work schedule or family obligations vary, which makes scheduling difficult. Another problem with onsite classes is that seating is limited.

Online GED Preparatory Courses

GED preparatory classes are also offered online. Students are able to register for online GED preparatory classes online. They also can access a GED pretest online. The pretest serves as a placement tool that allows the software to identify which areas the student needs to concentrate on (Koenig, 2011). Students are able to work at their own pace until they complete their personalized GED preparation program. Once they complete the online program, the student goes to an official GED testing center and the GED is administered in person.

Benefits of Online GED Preparatory Courses

Convenience is the most significant benefit of taking online GED classes. Students typically work full-time and struggle to balance competing priorities; therefore, studying online is very convenient (Melkun, 2012). Students can log in and work on their online program as much or as little as they want. There is no pressure or any sort of time constraint when the student is working online.

Students are able to work at a self-directed pace. While taking GED preparatory classes online, they are not able to see how far along their peers are in the program. This alleviates any stress that may come with working slowly. Working online, whether the GED student is working on modules or participating in an online chat room, usually allows for anonymity. Visual anonymity decreases apprehension and creates an egalitarian environment (Melkun, 2012). In an online learning environment, there is less anxiety about saying the wrong answer or being an active learner.

Some people did not do well with the social aspect of high school, leading them to drop out. An online learning environment is safe, non-threatening, free of violence, drugs, and alcohol (Koenig, 2011). Social interactions with peers are completely monitored in online classes. Designers of these online GED preparatory courses desire to make the learner completely comfortable. Students can feel safe in the comfort of their own home while completing their GED preparatory program.

Being able to log in to their course from any computer is beneficial to GED students. Having access to their course wherever they are allows students to manage their other responsibilities and obligations. An online student never has to deal with transportation issues or tardiness.

Online GED preparatory classes can be taken from anywhere with Internet access. They can be done at any time of the day or night. Because courses use virtual classrooms and GED software, there is no limit to the number of students who can be enrolled at any time. In addition, most online GED preparatory classes offer rolling admission (Melkun, 2012).

Younger students may even prefer learning online. Students who grew up using the Internet and other digital technology tend to work online easily. Studies suggest that people growing up in the digital age have brains that are wired differently than those who have not (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012). People must have computer skills in order to stay abreast in our society. Some Millennial students are bored with traditional school settings, and that causes them to drop out (Koenig, 2011).

Online GED preparatory courses offer immediate feedback on student responses. Online assignments eliminate the traditional lag time between the student submitting an answer and the instructor giving corrections (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012). Immediate feedback is beneficial because of how interactive it is with students. If students are given immediate feedback, they are able to understand what they did wrong immediately and correct themselves next time. Immediate feedback on student work facilitates learning in GED preparatory programs. Some students prefer working on a screen with animated clickable graphs that provide immediate feedback rather than working on paper (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012).

Challenges of Online GED Preparatory Courses

Learning on a computer is different than learning online. Sitting in front of a screen and actively engaging in learning can be a daunting task. There is evidence that information accessed on a computer is less likely to be recalled than print information (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012). There are also many distractions that come along with using the Internet.

Students can listen to a lecture and surf the web at the same time, which will not allow them to focus fully on the information being presented. Instructors are not present to prevent the student from being sidetracked by the Internet. Online reading is less focused and more scattered (Hernandez-Julian & Peters, 2012).

Online learning is constantly questioned. Issues of reliability, validity, authenticity, and security are more problematic than in traditional learning settings (Oncu & Cakir, 2011). Some websites serve as “diploma mills” that prey on vulnerable people, take their money, and promise to send them a GED certificate in the mail (“Online GED,” 2012). The GED must be taken in person at an official testing center (“Online GED,” 2012).

Some GED preparatory programs are designed in a way that parallels reading a test preparation book. They do not give the learner opportunities to ask questions. Many difficulties arise from these self-study techniques of learning. Depending on the course, there may not be instructors available through the online course to facilitate learning. This may be discouraging for the learner. They may feel alone in the learning process. Other GED preparatory courses do give access to instructors using systems such as Angel, Moodle, Desire2Learn, and Blackboard (Melkun, 2012). Even then, there could be difficulty in effectively communicating.

Every day individuals use digital devices and have become accustomed to using abbreviations in their writing. Although these abbreviations are acceptable in informal settings, according to Melkun (2012), they are not appropriate forms of communication in an academic setting. There is a frequent complaint about the unprofessional appearance and tone of students’ digital writing (Melkun, 2012). Some students are not able to differentiate times when it is inappropriate to use abbreviations and slang that has grown to be normal in their lives. This is an important issue to consider not only pertaining to online preparatory courses but also since the New 2014 GED test is computer based.

Technology is not always reliable. With any technological tool, problems can occur. Problems arise because of the students’ computer. Other issues can occur from insufficient bandwidth to work on the program. Sometimes problems could arise with the Internet service provider. Another factor to consider is the availability of an Internet connection at home. Internet is not readily available to everyone, so it can be difficult for a student to acquire Internet access on a regular basis to work on their GED preparatory program.

Most students are accustomed to in-person learning at traditional elementary, middle, and high schools. It is a significant transition from traditional learning environments to online learning (Melkun, 2012). There is no one who hovers over a learner to make sure the learner completes the work when taking online GED preparatory classes. For an individual to be successful in these programs, self-motivation is required.

Conclusion

People return to educational settings to earn a GED mainly to make themselves more marketable to prospective employers. Both methods of delivering the GED preparation material are very different from one another, but different does not mean one is better than the other. For those who prefer traditional classroom learning, an onsite course should be taken. For those who prefer convenience and flexibility, an online course should be taken. There is no definite superior method of delivering GED preparatory courses to students because no two students are the same. Preparatory classes may not have significant differences in learning outcomes but the delivery medium of the GED itself does. Students who finish the test faster have more time to review their responses. According to the Florida Department of Education and the GED Testing Service, adults who take the GED test on the computer pass at higher rates and are finishing

faster compared to those who took the pencil-and-paper test (New GED Test, 2013). That said, if the GED is exclusively offered as a computer based test, preparatory classes should align with the test and also be computer based (Seiben, 2011).

There is no definite data that determines which method of delivery, whether online or onsite GED preparatory classes, is best for the older version of the GED. The direction of the research should be shifted to account for the differences between the new and the old GED test. Future research can be conducted to explore the differences between online and onsite preparatory courses that have changed to tailor to the New 2014 GED. The GED Testing Service began implementing the new GED in January 2014 (Adams, 2014). There is a need for research to be done to explore the outcomes of this change.

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Minding the Digital Gap: Trending Toward Older Online Students

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Abstract: The results of this study suggest that online students are significantly older than face-to-face students. The average GPA of online students in the sample was equal to that of face-to-face students. This study serves to guide designers in creating online courses that are appropriate for the population they serve.

Online education offers unique opportunities for the non-traditional student. The continuing development of technology has enabled the creation of new educational platforms. In the digital age, younger students tend to be more familiar with the technology used in online instruction, but it is the older students who have become the majority in online education. Studies show that the average online students are 34 year-old women (Kramarae, 2001).

Today's online learners are older than originally noted in research. *Digital natives* (Prensky, 2001) are not necessarily digital learners; therefore, online education may not be appealing to younger audiences (Thompson, 2013). Studies suggest that older students prefer online courses, despite possible technological concerns, because older students have family and work obligations that make time and place-bound courses difficult to attend (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2004; Wyatt, 2005).

Online education is a growing trend in higher education. A study spanning 10 years showed that 32% of students are enrolled in at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Additionally, the number of fully online programs rose from 34.5% in 2002 to 64.2% in 2012 (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Online education, however, remains a fairly new field that is constantly changing, making it difficult for educators to identify the online student population.

It is presumed that online students are typically younger students, digital natives, who are comfortable with technology. Digital natives are people born after 1980 who have been exposed to technology throughout their lives. Digital natives (members of the generational cohorts Generation X and the Millennials, also known as Generation Y) are used to receiving information quickly and like to multi-task (Prensky, 2001). They prefer on-demand access to media, to be in constant communication with their peers, and to have accessibility in creating their own content and work environment (Duffy, 2007). They tend to learn best through trial and error and solve problems best within a collaborative learning environment. Prensky (2001) suggested that the US educational system was not designed for teaching this high-tech generation that now thinks and processes information radically differently than previous generations. Research has shown that today's learners "regardless of age, are on a continuum of technological access, skill, use and comfort. They have differing views about the integration of social and academic uses and are not generally challenging the dominant academic paradigm" (Bullen & Morgan, 2011, p. 65).

Digital immigrants have been obligated to adapt to a world of digital media (Prensky, 2001). Consequently, they lack the sense of confidence of digital natives and retain habits from the pre-digital world (Prensky, 2001). Job loss has caused many older workers to return to school in order to remain competitive in the workplace (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Online

courses make it easier for students to balance work and family life while pursuing their education.

Research indicates that digital immigrants tend to be socially-reliant and show more interaction online. Older students perform better on transferring learning from task to task and exhibit more active participation compared to digital natives (Bennet, Marton, & Kervin, 2010). Studies show their social reliance and critical thinking skills to be advantageous to their success (Bennet et al., 2010).

The use of technology among the digital native generation is not homogeneous. The digital native label does not provide evidence of a better use of technology to support learning (Gros, Garcia, & Escofet, 2012). Gros et al. (2012) found that the instructor's suggestion of technological resources is a stronger predictor of a student's perception of technology as a useful tool in supporting his or her learning than whether or not the student is a digital native. Age-related differences do exist in regard to experience and technology use; however, the use of technology to support learning is not related to being a digital native (Gros et al., 2012). There needs to be a greater focus on effective learning in the digital age rather than the characteristics of generations.

The assumption that online students are younger has led to the latest trend in online education, the integration of social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter into learning management systems. Fifty percent of Facebook's users are between the ages of 12-24 (Charnigo & Barnet-Ellis, 2013), yet most studies show that 40% or more of the online learners are older than 26 (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Although the 26 and older population still fit into the digital native category, their motives for taking online courses span beyond the technological divide. Older students are socially reliant; integrating social media applications into online education may create a new learning curve for older students.

Although the online student is aging and there are characteristic differences between digital natives and digital immigrants, there is no significant finding that a generational divide exists between digital learners. The assumption that a generational divide exists has become a poorly defined educational issue in adult education with an unknown impact on adult learners. The rapid growth of technology in education makes it difficult for researchers to keep up with student demographics and to know the motivation of online learners.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the average ages of the online business students versus the average age of the face-to-face students in the same program. This study not only investigated the differences in the two populations, but also whether these two groups are consistent with previous research findings. To get a better picture of the history of these online business students versus face-to-face students, the ages were analyzed in 4-year intervals running from 2004-2012.

A secondary part of this research investigated whether there is a significant difference in the GPAs of online business students versus face-to-face business students. By comparing the GPAs, we hoped to determine whether instructional modality creates more successful outcomes for any particular age population. The GPAs were also analyzed in 4-year intervals running from 2004-2012.

Our research specifically looks at age to determine whether a correlation exists with online enrollment among business students. Our goal is to identify the online student population to provide a starting line for further research about online educational settings that fit the lifestyle and expectations of the population.

We first provide a brief literature review on the most current studies in the field. Next, we state our research questions and then provide our statistical analysis of the data. This is followed by a discussion section which includes implications for future research.

Research Questions

This study addressed three age-related research questions: (a) Is there a significant difference between the ages of the online students and the face-to-face students? (b) Is there a significant difference between the ages of the online students and the face-to-face students over the course of each four year interval? and (c) Is there a significant difference between the ages of the online students and that of the students in previous research studies?

This study addressed two GPA-related research questions: (a) Is there a significant difference between the mean GPAs of the online students and the face-to-face students? and (b) Is there a significant difference between the mean GPAs of the online students and the face-to-face students over the course of each four year interval?

Method

The purpose of this study was to determine if our student population was within the age range norm described in previous studies when it comes to online education. We also compared the age ranges of students within the same academic year to try to understand the population of students to which online education should be catered. We used a comparison of the two groups' GPAs to assess the quality of the work of the students in the two groups. The secondary data was made available by a large, public university in Florida.

This study focused on two groups of students within the university's College of Business: those enrolled in face-to-face (traditional classroom setting) and online courses for academic years 2004-2005, 2008-2009, and 2012-2013. An academic year is defined as a year beginning in the fall term and ending in the following year's summer term. These years were chosen for the purpose of comparing the ages and GPAs of students during the first year that the university offered both online and face to face College of Business programs and then comparing those results to years 4 and 8 (the most recent year).

Year 1 (2004-2005) included 971 online student participants and 17,601 face-to-face participants. Year 4 (2008-2009) included 2,069 participants and 19,585 face-to-face participants. Year 8 (2012-2013) included 5,327 online participants and 16,550 face-to-face participants. Members of the sample range in age from 13 to 77.

This study used secondary data obtained by the university from their student database. The data was reported to us by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research upon our request. The data set included student ID number, program code, semester of enrollment, gender, GPA, academic units transferred into the program, total cumulative units completed, Florida residency status, ethnicity, international residency status, age at the beginning of the term, and instructional mode (face-to-face or online). We chose to focus on the students' ages and GPAs for the purpose of learning more about the needs of our online student population.

For the purpose of this study, face-to-face education is defined as a course that requires students to be at a physical location (such as a room on a college campus) at a scheduled time on a regular basis (such as 8:00 pm on Mondays). An online course is defined as a course that takes place, either synchronously or asynchronously, via a learning management system (LMS). Students work from home, a library, or various other locations. They do not all have to be in the same physical location to participate in the course.

We used the *t*-test to compare the mean ages and GPA of each instructional mode. A one-way ANOVA was used to test for the changing effects of the categorical independent

variables of age and GPA among the span of eight years. The level of significance for all tests was set at a .05 significance level.

Online only students were clustered into the following five age groups: 24 and younger, 25-31, 32-38, 39-45, and 46 and over. This was done using SPSS to transform our variables into age groups. We analyzed the frequencies of our variables to obtain the descriptive statistics of the age groups among our online students.

Results

The results are examined in two sections. Objective 1 covers the differences in age between the two groups. Objective 2 covers the differences in GPA between the two groups.

Objective 1: Examine the relationship between the age of online and face-to-face students.

To examine the relationship between GPA and age in the three groups, four tables were generated.

Table 1 (see Appendix) clusters online students into age groups and represents each group's frequency and percentage of total students for each of the three academic years studied (2004-2005, 2008-2009, 2012-2013).

Table 2 (see Appendix) presents descriptive statistics for online students clustered by the three academic years studied. Online students' mean age showed insignificant change from 2004-2008; however, a significant increase occurred in 2008-2012 with a mean age of 29.17 compared with mean age of 26.69 in the 2008-2009 academic school year. This is a 2.48-year increase in the mean age of online participants. This increase is statistically significant and consistent with the findings of previous literature.

Table 3 (see Appendix) presents descriptive statistics for face-to-face students clustered by the three academic years studied. Face-to-face students' mean age stayed consistent over time (24.77, 24.83, 24.60). Thus, online students in the sample are older than the face-to-face students in every academic year.

The *t*-test result (see Table 4 in Appendix) comparing the mean age of online students versus face-to-face students showed a significant difference between the academic years studied.

Objective 2: Examine the relationship between the mean GPA of online and face-to-face students.

Tables 2 and 3 (see Appendix) also display data regarding the mean GPA of online and face-to-face students.

Table 2 (see Appendix) presents the mean GPA data for online students for each of the three academic years studied. The mean GPA of the online students has gone up 0.46 points over the course of the eight year span. Table 3 (see Appendix) presents the mean GPA data for face-to-face students for each of the three academic years studied. The mean GPA of the face-to-face students has also gone up 0.30 points over time.

The *t*-test result (see Table 5 in Appendix) comparing the mean GPA of online students versus face-to-face students in 2012-2013 did not show a significant difference ($t = -2.52, p = 0.801$). In contrast, the GPA differences between online and face-to-face students in 2004-2005 and 2008-2009 are significant, resulting in *t*-values of $-7.951 (p = 0.000)$ and $-8.478 (p = 0.000)$, respectively.

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of the study was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the average ages of the online business students versus the average age of the face-to-face students in the same program. A secondary part of this research investigated whether there is a significant difference in the GPAs of online business students versus face-to-face business

students. The study was conducted using secondary data provided by a large, public university in Florida. The researchers found that the two populations, online students and face-to-face students, are significantly different with respect to age. A significant difference in GPA existed, but that gap has since been closed.

Current Age of Online Students versus Face-to-Face Students

The findings indicate that in the 2012-2013 academic year the average online student in the university's college of business was significantly older than the average face-to-face student in the same program. A significant increase in age occurred in this academic year as compared to prior academic years. There was a 2.48 years increase in the mean age of online students (29 years) while the face-to-face students mean age remained steady (24 years).

Previous studies have indicated that 40% or more of the online learners are older than 26 (Allen & Seaman, 2013). In this study, the percentage of online learners who are older than 26 is closer to 68%. This highlights an important issue in online education; the vast majority of the online students are older than the average social media user as cited in previous research (Charnigo & Barnet-Ellis, 2013). It is important for instructional designers and educators in higher education to realize that the population that is the driving force behind social media trends is vastly different than the population entering our online education programs. Based on literature and current trends in online education, it seems that the two populations have been confused for one and the same.

Current Age of Online Students versus Face-to-Face Students Over Four-Year Intervals

Over four-year intervals, the average age of online students has gone up, while the average after for the face-to-face student has remained steady. In the 2004-2005 academic year, 52.1% of the online students were older than 25 with a mean age of 26.69. The face-to-face mean age for this academic school year was 24.77. From 2008-2009, the over 25 online student population went up to 53.1% with a mean age of 26.72 and a mean age of 24.83 for face-to-face students. The biggest jump in the ages of online students occurred in the 2012-2013 academic year. The age of the average online student went up 2.48 years from the previous year to 29.17. The 25 and older population went up from 53.1% to 68.5% while the median age of face-to-face students was 24.60.

The fact that the students are getting older is an issue that needs to be addressed in the design of online courses. Research suggests that convenience and flexibility of a learning environment are more important to older learners than socialization in learning environments (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Therefore, instructional designers and educators should consider ways to make courses more flexible and appealing for older students to whom accessibility is important. For these students, self-paced courses might be a better alternative than courses with weekly deadlines. Also, chunking lessons into small parts that can be worked through in small increments of time, such as 20 or 30 minutes, may be easier for older students to fit into their schedule.

Differences between the Ages of the Study Sample and Those in Previous Research

Our findings on the ages of online students is consistent with the findings of previous research which states that 40% or more of the online learners are older than 26 (Allen & Seaman, 2013). However, in this study, the percentage of online learners older than 26 is currently closer to 68%.

Differences between the Mean GPAs of Online Students versus Face-to-Face Students

A *t*-test comparison of the current mean GPA of online students versus the current mean GPA of face-to-face students did not show a significant difference. This means that online students are achieving the same GPA as their face-to-face counterparts.

Differences between the Mean GPAs of Online Students versus Face-to-Face Students Over the Course of Each Four-Year Interval

Although the current mean GPAs of online students versus face-to-face students are not significantly different, this was not always the case. In 2004-2005 and 2008-2009, the *t*-test result of the mean GPAs between the two groups did show a statically significant difference. An explanation for this could be that when the online programs began in 2004, students had to deal with the learning curve in regards to the technology. This could have caused students not do as well with the online courses as their face-to-face counterparts. Over time, students have become more familiar with the expectations and technologies used in online courses. This year's online students have known online education as an alternative for their entire school career. Florida Virtual School was opened in August 1997 (Hart, 2008), when this year's mean age group (29) was in middle school. Growing up with online education as an alternative may have given this year's students understanding of what online education requires, thereby producing better results.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations of our study include secondary data given to us by the university. We do not know the integrity of this data because we did not collect it firsthand. In a future study, researchers should collect their own data.

Another limitation of our study was that it was not a longitudinal study, which could provide more insight into how the online students fared over time versus their face-to-face counterparts. GPAs from person to person could be based on external factors, such as ability, making GPAs an unreliable way to assess the quality of the work of students in each group.

Equally limiting is the fact that we do not have the same professors teaching the courses in face-to-face and online. Although not every face-to-face professor is capable of teaching well online, for the purpose of evaluating student outcomes, it would even the playing field if the professors were the same.

Suggestions for future studies include longitudinal studies of the same group of students in face-to-face settings and online settings. Variables to control for would be the professor, the course content, the technical ability of the students, previous experience with online courses, and level of interest in the course.

For older online students, suggestions for future studies could include an investigation into the motives for taking online courses alongside their technical ability and expectations of online courses. A list of best practices for designing for older online students would be a beneficial outcome of this study. Researchers could investigate the tools older online students use and do not use or expect to have available in an online course. A study of the social media aspect of online education as it is used with older online students could also be beneficial in narrowing down the expectations of older online students.

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Appendix

Table 1
Age Group Clusters for Online Students

Groups	1: 2004-2005		4: 2008-2009		8: 2012-2013	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
24 and younger	465	47.9	974	46.9	1678	31.5
25-31	332	34.2	747	35.9	2081	39.1
32-38	108	11.1	211	10.2	913	17.1
39-45	45	4.6	101	4.9	416	7.8
46+	21	2.2	45	2.2	239	4.5
Total	971	100%	2078	100%	5327	100%

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Online Students

Year	Sample Size	Mean Age	Mean GPA
1: 2004-2005	971	26.69	2.68001069
4: 2008-2009	2078	26.72	2.84625195
8: 2012-2013	5327	29.17	3.14498491

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Face-to-Face Students

Year	Sample Size	Mean Age	Mean GPA
1: 2004-2005	17601	24.77	2.85233851
4: 2008-2009	19585	24.83	2.97822662
8: 2012-2013	16550	24.60	3.14760933

Table 4
Independent Samples Test of Age (Online versus Face-to-Face)

Year	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
1: 2004-2005	8.963	.000
4: 2008-2009	12.370	.000
8: 2012-2013	42.298	.000

Table 5
Independent Samples Test of GPA (online versus face-to-face)

Year	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
1: 2004-2005	-7.951	.000
4: 2008-2009	-8.478	.000
8: 2012-2013	-2.52	.801

Users' Acceptance of Online Enrollment Processes in a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract: Little is known about acceptance of online enrollment processes. Satisfaction is part of the assessment, but evidence suggests that administrators are oriented to retention and graduation rates instead of user perceptions. This study validated a tool that enables the measurement of online enrollment processes by the analysis of perceptions.

Little is known about the acceptance of the online enrollment processes (Noel-Levitz, 2010). Service evaluation is an essential component of the assessment process required for accreditation nationwide, but institutions are traditionally focused on student satisfaction, retention, and graduation rates as the main cohorts in self-studies (Noel-Levitz, 2010). Educators and administrators must understand how students perceive online enrollment processes but they are focused on the development of online education programs.

Online education is the subject of research, but online enrollment and other ancillary services have received little scholarly attention because they are considered operational activities. A standardized tool that enables the academic administrators to evaluate online enrollment processes as the business component of an online education program does not exist.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to develop a tool that enables the measurement and analysis of online enrollment processes in a higher education institution (HEI). With this tool, enrollment managers and academic administrators could demonstrate the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness as proposed by Davis (1998) and the perceived satisfaction (PS). This proposed model can be used in the evaluation of online enrollment processes. The following is the research question and the attendant hypotheses that were developed for this study:

RQ. Do virtual enrollment processes in a higher education institution improve students' acceptance of online enrollment?

H1. Acceptance increases as the student perception of ease of use increases.

H2. Acceptance increases as the student perception of usefulness increases.

H3. Acceptance increases as the student perception of satisfaction increases.

The research question and hypotheses were addressed by using a modified version of the technology acceptance model (TAM) adapted to fit higher education institutions. By the inclusion of the variable perception of satisfaction as a third variable to the model developed by Davis (1993) it was possible to measure students' acceptance of online enrollment processes in a higher education institution. The research variables for this study were based on TAM as developed by Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989) and one introduced to the model. The dependent variables for the research were PEU, as the degree to which the individual users perceive that their use of the target system would be mentally and physically effortless (Davis et al., 1989); PU, as the degree to which individual users perceive that their use of the target system would increase their work performance (Davis, 1993); and PS, as the degree to which the individual users perceive that their use of the target system would satisfy their needs. The

independent variable for this study was the acceptance of the online enrollment processes as the business component of an online education program in a higher education institution. According to TAM, there are intervening variables that should affect the PU and the PEU.

As a researcher, I used a single overall statistical test on this set of variables instead of performing multiple individual tests. To account these dependent variables, I grouped them together into a weighted linear combinations or composite variables. The research question and hypotheses were addressed by using a modified version of the TAM adapted to fit higher education institutions.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The conceptual framework for this study was based on TAM. TAM is the most valid framework for studying the user acceptance of technology and virtual processes (Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005). By using TAM, educators will have a tool for better understanding the factors that influences user acceptance of the virtual processes in an online enrollment, giving the potential to improve the design and implementation of the student support component in a higher education institution (Shen, Laffey, Lin, & Huang, 2006). TAM informs the study by providing a structure and background to develop the research question and subsequent survey.

TAM has been shown to be a valid model that enables the perception of system acceptability (Masrom, 2006). It suggests that user perceptions of a system are formed early, after only minimal exposure to the system (Al-Gahtani, 1998; Davis et al., 1992; Malhotra & Galleta, 1999). These perceptions have a powerful influence on whether users will actually use that system in the future (Davis et al., 1989, 1993; Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1992). In particular, TAM suggests that designers must consider not only the system's ease of use, but also its usefulness in order to encourage end user acceptance of that system (Morris & Dillon, 1997).

TAM proved to be a viable and accurate model for predicting whether systems will be successful and offers to the designers a cost-effective model, which can be used to evaluate systems throughout the design lifecycle. In addition, higher education institutions have the challenge to migrate to online education using this verified model for implementation (Kim, 2008). TAM as initially presented by Davis (1989), has a structure in which the PEU and the PU are the main variables as presented in Figure 1.

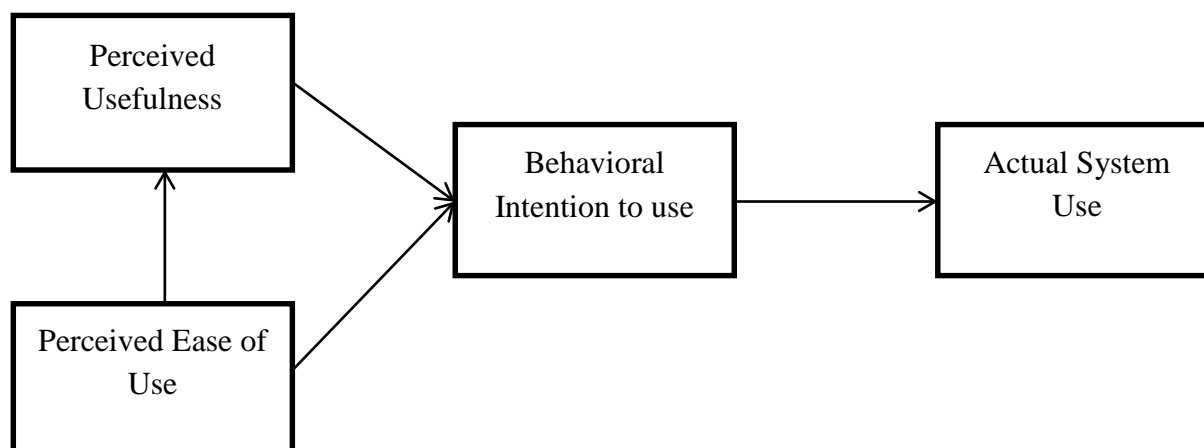


Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model Diagram.

The modified TAM as presented in Figure 2, was proposed as a model that enables the measuring and analysis of the perception (perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and perceived satisfaction) of students attending an online program about the enrollment component of an online education initiative in a college or a university. This model was proposed to fill the gap in the evaluation of the perception and acceptance of the virtual enrollment processes component of higher education institutions.

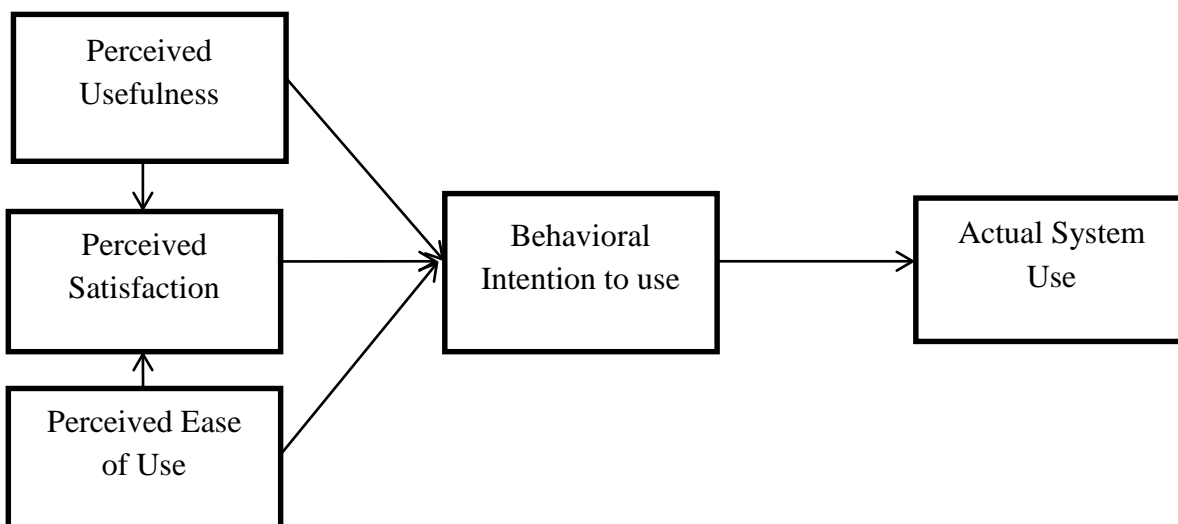


Figure 2. Proposed Modified TAM

Method

The survey was used to gather data about the perception of the students as users of online enrollment processes as developed to serve students enrolled in a higher education institution based on the constructs PEU, PU and PS. The study was conducted in phases: the pilot study phase, the data collection, and analysis activities. The pilot study consisted of a Cronbach's Alpha test to determine the validity and reliability of the tool. Collectively, these two phases were conducted over several weeks. Data were collected from a sample of students enrolled in a higher education institution in which the enrollment processes had been virtualized. For the two phases, the pilot study phase was the shortest in duration and was used to determine the reliability of the modified TAM survey. This survey was written originally in English and translated into Spanish or the understanding of the individuals who are the subjects, who are native Spanish speaking individuals. These students are actively enrolled in the online Latin program of higher education institution.

The survey consisted of a set of questions in the form of a Likert scale that enabled participants to rate the acceptance of the online enrollment processes from the higher education institution. Questions in the survey were organized in sets according the category of measure: Perceived of usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEU) and perceived satisfaction (PS). A set of five questions were drawn in which the participants rated the service rendered by the university by using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree."

After determining the reliability of the questionnaire in the pilot study, I proceeded to conduct Phase 2. A participation request was sent out to the whole population of 230 individuals enrolled at a higher education institution and 63 surveys from the expected sample of $n = 144$ were received. This decision was made to (a) grant at least the response of 144 participants or more than 50% of the population, (b) enhance the reliability of the findings, and (c) reduce sampling error. An invitation to participate was sent to the entire population, In order to avoid incurring a non-response bias, I took the following contingency measures: (a) in addition to the initial invitation to participate, two reminders were sent asking for participation; (b) the sample for this study was homogeneous. Factors such as age, gender, or ethnicity were not taken into consideration because it was not part of the study; and (c) all participants' e-mail accounts were verified as active.

Assumptions

Two assumptions were made related to the study. The first assumption was that all participants were already exposed to and were familiar with online enrollment processes rendered by a higher education institution. The second assumption was the participants would be willing to express their perceptions about the online enrollment processes from their institution without fear of retaliation due the anonymous nature of this study.

Significance of the Study

This study provided an insight about the understanding of how students perceived online enrollment processes and represent a practical approach to the virtual business component of a higher education operation, specifically the online enrollment management area. Online enrollment should be analyzed from a customer service perspective to obtain the voice of the customer. The assessment of the students' acceptance of online enrollment processes was addressed based in the relationship between student perceptions and acceptance.

Findings

After conducting a Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire based on the variables perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEU) and perceived satisfaction (PS), the SPSS output delivery was an average raw alpha over .95 for all the variables of the study which is good considering that .70 is the cutoff value for being acceptable. This demonstrates that the Modified TAM as a proposed tool to evaluate acceptance of online enrollment processes based on perception is fit to be used to address this issue in a higher education institution. The following is an overview of the results.

There were 63 responses of the survey, it represent a 44% response rate from the 144 individuals expected as the statistical sample size for the study. The analysis of the results from the variable PU revealed the following:

1. Fifty nine percent of the participants responded they mostly agree that using the online enrollment process would enable them to accomplish tasks more quickly while 10% responded mostly disagreed.
2. For the construct using the online enrollment process would improve their enrollment process performance, 49% of the respondents mostly agreed with the statement while an 11% mostly disagreed.
3. For the construct using the online enrollment process would increase participants' productivity, 49% responded that they mostly agreed while 6% of the participants responded in disagreement.

4. The fourth construct, using the online enrollment process would enhance their effectiveness on the enrollment process, 52% of the participants mostly agreed with the statement while the 6% mostly disagreed.
5. For the construct how the students perceived that using the online enrollment process would make it easier to do their enrollment process, 56% mostly agreed that the online enrollment processes made it easier for them while 11% mostly disagreed.
6. For the variable PU, an average of 53.4% mostly agreed that the online enrollment processes would increase their work performance while an average of 8.8% mostly disagreed

Participants perceived that the online enrollment processes rendered by the institution were useful. The results from the variable PEU were the following:

1. Forty-two percent of the participants responded that they mostly agreed that learning to operate online enrollment process were easy for them while 6% responded mostly disagreed.
2. For the construct related about how participants found it easy to get to the online enrollment process to do what they want it to do, 48% of the respondents mostly agreed with the statement while 8% mostly disagreed.
3. For the construct that their interaction with the online enrollment process would be clear and understandable, 46% responded that they mostly agreed while the 11% of the participants responded in disagreement.
4. Finding the online enrollment process were flexible to interact with is the fourth construct related to the variable perceived ease of use PEU, the 56% of the participants mostly agreed with the statement while 11% mostly disagreed. For the construct related to how ease it was for the participants to become skillful at using the online enrollment process, 63% mostly agreed that the online enrollment processes made it easier for them while 8% mostly disagreed.
5. For the variable PEU, an average of 50.79% mostly agreed that their use of the online enrollment processes were mentally and physically effortless. While average of 8.8% mostly disagreed

Participants perceived that the online enrollment processes rendered by the institution was easy to use. Finally, the results for the variable perceived satisfaction were the following:

1. Forty-two percent of the participants responded that they mostly agreed that they found that the online enrollment processes were effective while 3% responded mostly disagreed.
2. For the construct related to how easy they found that the online enrollment processes were efficient, 54% of the respondents mostly agreed with the statement while 3% mostly disagreed.
3. For the construct that the participants found that the online enrollment processes were time effective, 56% responded that mostly agreed while 10% of the participants responded in disagreement.
4. Finding that the online enrollment processes were good as the on-campus processes was the fourth construct related to the variable perceived satisfaction (PS), 52% of the participants who choose to participate in the survey mostly agree with the statement while the 8% mostly disagree.

5. For the construct related to how the participants found that the online enrollment processes works the way they wanted to work, 52% mostly agreed that the online enrollment processes made it easier for them while 8% mostly disagreed.
6. For the variable PS, an average of 53.33% mostly agreed that their use of the online enrollment processes the participants as individual users perceived that their use of the target system would satisfy their needs while an average of a 4.2% mostly disagreed.

Conclusions

The study demonstrated the reliability of the modified TAM tool as a viable tool that enables enrollment managers and academic administrators the analysis of the acceptance of their enrollment processes from the perspective of their students. Processes rendered by the institution are useful, ease to use and satisfy their needs as users. This modified TAM could be seen by the perspective of the first step in satisfying customer needs by determining how students as customers attending a program in a HEI perceive the usage of online enrollment processes. Such a point of entry is needed because it enables the understanding of students' perception in order to study their acceptance. In addition the instrument enable the identification of areas for improvement due the analysis of those questions with lower ranking.

It is evident that the Modified TAM could be a viable tool to assist HEI's to become efficient and effective in the enrollment area as a strategic business unit by the understanding of how their students as customers perceived and accepts their online enrollment processes. If an institution, college, or university knows how its students as customers perceive and accept their services, it may become more efficient and effective in compliance and conformity to the requirements and the expectations of the industry (Brandon, 2005).

The results indicate that the online enrollment processes rendered by the institution satisfied participant expectations. The overall results for the variables reflect the participants perceived that the virtual enrollment processes rendered by the institution are useful, easy to use, and satisfy their expectations. The analysis of the opinion of the participants as customers regarding the perception of the online enrollment demonstrated that the participants as users perceived that the online enrollment processes rendered by the institution are useful, easy to use and satisfy their needs as users of online enrollment processes.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The following are the recommendations for further studies in the subject area of online enrollment in higher education institutions: (a) promote active collaboration within the faculty in order to increase the response of the participants of the survey, (b) implement the use of the Modified TAM survey regularly in order to have enough comparison data that helps higher education institutions to identify improvements and/or critical areas, and (c) promote this tool as a standard in the higher education business in order to benchmark good practices for online enrollment processes between institutions.

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Changing Corporations: The Role of HRDM

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Abstract: Human Resource Development (HRD) managers develop and deliver trainings that exacerbate economic growth, as profit is the priority for most corporations. There is a need for HRD managers to use their existing roles and capabilities to encourage employees to become aware of the inequalities harbored by “profit for profit’s sake.”

This is a time in social history in which the gap between the rich and the poor has never been greater. Over ten years ago, researchers agreed that “wealth ownership in the United States was extremely unequal, and inequality had worsened in recent decades” (Keister & Moller, 2000, p. 67). In 2011, 49 out of 100 of the largest economic entities were corporations, not nations (Keys & Malnight, 2012). This means that for example the Wal-Mart, Shell and EXXON MOBILE empires are greater than the economies of 159 countries (Keys & Malnight, 2012; White, 2011). For these corporations and many others, economic growth is what matters most. They aim to continuously grow their profit for profit’s sake, no matter at what expense, often jeopardizing the wellness of people. Capitalism seems to rule in times in which approximately 46.5 million people live in poverty in the United States, a number that continues to grow (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Bakan (2004) went as far as comparing corporations to psychopaths based on the notion that both are unable to be concerned for others, only advance for their own self-interest, and have trouble obeying the law and social conventions.

According to Levinson, Gross, Link, and Hanks (2012), Marx predicted that capitalism would strip individuality, turning society into a class-based system. Marx, according to Levinson et al. (2012), expressed that in such a system, a limited number of people owned and had control over the means of production. As can be experienced in today’s society, capitalism breeds an elite class who controls the labor power, hiring process, and wages through the market and means of production (Levinson et al., 2012, pp. 26-27).

Corporations are ultimately run and managed by people. Human resource management and development stand at the core of organizations and have access to communicating with all employees. Although they may not be directly in charge, they have the tools and opportunities to impact the organizational culture. Currently, most Human Resource Development Management (HRDM) practices are geared toward enhancing the profit-making capabilities of employees, which is what inherently drives capitalism. In fact, many of the activities of Human Resource Development (HRD) are focused on performance drivers rather than on actually improving employee performance (Swanson, 2001).

In the words of Swanson (2001), “Organizations (with some exceptions) are not in the business of valuing diversity, building employee expertise, e-learning, or establishing well-functioning work teams” (p. 2). These are called performance drivers, and are used as tools to accomplish other corporate goals. This means that organizations use performance drivers as a vehicle to enhance profits rather than employee capabilities. How employees conceive their value to the company by receiving training is a scheme to get them to feel important. What organizations truly value are the employee’s moneymaking capacities. Thus, to assess the

financial benefits of HRD, attention must be drawn to the outputs related to the organization's mission, in terms of goods and services produced (Swanson, 2001).

The purpose of this paper is to explore how current HRDM practices exacerbate capitalism, and how HRD managers can use their existing capabilities to stimulate change in employee behavior in order to encourage a more just distribution of wealth.

The reason behind this topic has to do with the morality (or lack thereof) of profit being a priority for corporations. Some organizations disregard completely the lives of people. Others create foundations in an effort to appear better in the public's eye. Few genuinely care about other people's lives (Orr, 2011). The capitalistic economic system breeds a society in which "short term wealth for a few is purchased at the cost of long-term prosperity" (Orr, 2011, p. 116). In addition, HRD managers and trainers are encouraged to develop and deliver trainings that exacerbate economic growth. The goal of this paper is to encourage HRD managers to use their existing roles and tools to change mentalities and encourage employees to become aware of the inequalities harbored by "profit for profit's sake," and thus, to encourage social justice in order to move away from a capitalistic system, into a new way of making business: one that is about people rather than profits, in which money is a means to achieve justice rather than the end goal. The paper will be divided as follows: an overview of the issues with capitalism, then an exploration the role of HRDM within organizations and their ability to manage change, and it is finalized with a conclusion.

Issues with Capitalism

Capitalism is defined as "a way of organizing an economy so that the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) are owned by individual people and companies rather than by the government" ("Capitalism," 2013a). This definition fits the current market economy, hence how capitalism was meant to work. Instead of the state having control of the economy, capitalism grants control to the people and "the invisible hand." The issue arises when human greed takes over, and growth for profit becomes the precedent, as seen in the current system, regardless of the system's intrinsic need for profit in order to survive. Thus, the definition used throughout this paper is that capitalism is "an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state" ("Capitalism," 2013b). This is in fact the modern interpretation of capitalism, and it best fits with the premise of Marx's critiques.

Karl Marx (1978) developed two critiques of capitalism from two different approaches, a normative and a scientific. The latter approach is based on the principles governing the classical political economy, whereas the normative approach is based on moral considerations regarding alienation, inequality, and exploitation (Marx, 1978). The scientific approach is how Marx ultimately predicted that capitalism would undo itself by "sowing the seeds of its own destruction" (as cited in Powers, 2010, p. 122). As previously stated, the ultimate goal of capitalism is the accumulation of capital. What drives corporations and people is the accumulation of profit, and work is aimed toward raising the rate of profitable growth of capital (Marx, 1978). Indeed, Marx indicated that, "the immediate purpose of Capitalism production is not the possession of other goods, but the appropriation of value, of money, of abstract wealth" (as cited in Cohen, 2000, p. 302). From this approach, capitalism is seen as a process. Capital is value in motion and profit is the result of that motion. Whether it works for the majority or not, as long as there is wealth to gain, capitalists will continue to run the show. In order to modify this system, it must also be explored from a moral perspective: Because a logical collapse is not

imperative from a scientific point of view, practitioners must explore the normative approach to understand the benefit that its demise would bring to society as a whole.

At the end of 2013, Wal-Mart ran its first ever food drive for employees. Surprisingly, a company worth \$446.950 billion cannot pay enough to its sales clerks and they have stooped to asking employees to donate food to other employees so they can eat more this holiday season (Nicks, 2013). The Wal-Mart example sheds light on how modern capitalism has widened the wealth gap even further, produced a class denominated the “working poor,” and compromised morals. While the Sam Walton family sits comfortably on its billion-dollar fortune, ground-level employees rely on others to make it to the end of the month (Nicks, 2013). Indeed, several factors affect income, as not all jobs require the same mental or physical capabilities, or the same amount of time. Many people go through years of higher education in order to achieve a certain level of economic stability, and it would not be fair that everyone is paid the same. With that said, there is still a factual need for a balance of wealth, as the material wealth in the United States is poorly and unequally distributed (Keister & Moller, 2013).

In addition, capitalism has created a need for profit, which has developed into an incessant search for new resources, new markets, and cheap labor, which has led to greater issues of injustice. In fact, “the imperative to create more profits creates an unsustainable system, both socially and environmentally” (Levinson et al., 2012, p. 32). Alperovitz (2012) concluded Chapter 18 of *America Beyond Capitalism* with these words:

Viewed in broader historical perspective, it is clear that the growth and power dynamics of large economic enterprises (private and public alike) present fundamental environmental changes in all political-economic systems. Corporate growth-driven priorities that are inimical to a regime of reduced consumption, reduced material resource use, and ecological sustainability are particularly difficult to contain...Especially important are those [strategies] that reduce key inequality and psychological consumption drivers on one hand, and measures designed to establish conditions needed to develop new community and cultural norms, on the other. (pp. 224-225)

Moreover, capitalism is an inherently socially constructed system, which means that it can be socially deconstructed. Although this is a difficult task, HRD managers are some of the agents with the tools to do so. HRD managers already possess the capabilities to change and transform the minds of businessmen and women; they just have to realize this fundamental power. Even though they are currently encouraged to develop and deliver trainings that exacerbate economic growth, they can use their skills to develop socially responsible employees.

HRDM Roles: Managing Change

As corporations seem to keep modern capitalism going, growing, and exploiting, most of them are run with a top-down approach, congregating the wealth to a few very powerful people who control workers and pay them a very small percentage of what the company makes (Alperovitz, 2012; Speth, 2012). With this in mind, Bakan (2004) maintains that people in fact are happier working for a company that is socially responsible. In addition, Bierema and D’Abundo (2004) assert that HRD managers have what is needed to transform corporations into more socially responsible entities. There is a unique opportunity to educate organizations about social responsibility and use HRD strategies to integrate social consciousness into organization activities that could potentially affect significant social change (Bierema & D’Abundo, 2004, p. 445).

The first order of business to change the perspective of HRD managers is to understand their roles and strategies. “HRD is defined as a process of developing and unleashing human

expertise through organization development and personnel training for the purpose of improving performance” (Swanson, 2001, p. 1). Thus, HRD plays a crucial role in any organization and in the development of employees. HRD managers have several roles: communicator, administrator, evaluator, writer, manager, psychologist, anthropologist, material developer, career-development advisor, instructor, facilitator, marketer, needs analyst, organization change agent, program designer, and researcher (Goad, 1989; McLagan, 1989). Not all HRD managers do all at once, but together, the Human Resources department should have all these roles covered. Thus, HRD managers indirectly have access to most people and processes within an organization. Understanding their individual roles and capabilities will give them an advantage at the time of explaining and delivering change.

In addition to managerial roles, all HRD managers have a specific set of competencies that need to be taken into account. There are four different kinds of competencies: technical (functional knowledge and skills), business (management, economics, or administration), interpersonal (communication skills), and intellectual (knowledge and skills related to thinking and processing information) (McLagan, 1989). Deeply understanding the competencies and what they entail will give HRD managers the tools to be change agents inside a company. These competencies help HRD managers understand their role to help employees work and learn, to better understand how their organizations work, how to communicate and get their message heard, and how to gather and apply knowledge. The tools and different roles HRD managers already have should be used to aid in the transformation of organizational culture in order to achieve social responsibility. It must be noted that “cultural change involves a complex process of replacing an existing paradigm or way of thinking with another” (Werner & DeSimone, 2009, p. 488). Changing an organizational culture is very difficult, and it requires HRD managers to specially pursue the roles of leaders, motivators, psychologists, and communicators. An example of a successful story of organizational change is found in the World Bank. The organization has undergone several changes brought about by newly appointed presidents every couple of years. These have been successful because the new presidents of the World Bank have worked with what they already had in terms of people and tools, implementing a good communication strategy to explain their vision and need for change (Denning, 2011).

Although the need for change rarely comes from HRDM and it usually is mandated by higher ranks in the organization, HRDM implements it. HRD managers are the agents who work to help the organization deliver change. With the need to shift the business model from profit to people, HRD managers should use McLagan’s (1989) competencies with a different perspective. Bierema and D’Abundo (2004) discussed the need for organizations to focus their work to achieve social justice. They contend that in the search for profit, the humanity aspect of human resources development has disappeared. They also argue that in fact “HRD has been accused of exploiting employees, the environment, communities, and even nations. HRD has been critiqued for promoting management interests while ignoring the wellbeing of employees and the wider community” (Bierma & D’Abundo, 2004, p. 444). In addition, they contended that HRD professionals have a “social responsibility to question performative practices and rediscover human development in the process” (Bierema & D’Abundo, 2004, p. 444).

Consequently, to be able to change the general culture of an organization, the internal culture has to be affected by making fundamental changes to existing paradigms (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). In this case, the change will require employees to reconnect with their humanity and values, in order to understand the need for social justice. They must comprehend how their business practices are negatively affecting the world. In fact, the roles HRD managers

must use to be able to reintegrate humane practices into the company processes are that of motivator, communicator, and psychologist (Goad, 1989).

Before change can happen, a clear vision has to be developed and communicated with employees. Gilley and Maycunich Gilley (2003) recommended seven steps to organizational change: (1) Communicating the urgency for change; (2) providing leadership for change; (3) creating ownership and support for change; (4) creating shared vision for change; (5) implementing and managing change; (6) integrating change into the culture; and (7) measuring and monitoring change. Steps one through three are when the change momentum has to be built, steps four and five are when the change is deployed, and steps six and seven are when change accountability comes into play.

Besides these steps, Gilley and Maycunich Gilley (2003) recommended ten phases to be followed as a comprehensive approach to be used as a guide for facilitating change initiatives. Since the change discussed in this paper should be internal, phases 1-3 can be disregarded, as they pertain to connecting and contracting with a client. Phases four (identifying problems), five (diagnosing problems), six (identifying root causes), and seven (providing feedback) are the most important. At this time, the reasoning behind the change has been developed, and it requires special time and attention. The background information that is the basis of this paper covers phases 4-7, and gives way to phase eight, change planning. This is also an important phase, as the change intervention will be identified and solutions should be discussed and planned. The last two phases are for implementing interventions (nine), and evaluating results (ten), and must be conducted carefully and thoughtfully. In these phases, HRD managers put into practice their roles as communicators, motivators, and psychologists to communicate and implement change (Gilley & Maycunich Gilley, 2003).

Further, HRD managers have to understand the limitations and challenges of such a task. Change is perceived as difficult and is met with resistance. Since change is often uncertain, unless it is understood, it will not be accepted. HRD managers have to be aware of employee characteristics that might make them resist change, such as age, nationality (individual culture), and values (Smith, 2005). Smith (2005) declared that resistance is a natural reaction because of the uncertainty of change (especially organizational change). In fact, fighting resistance only makes employees refuse change more. In order to better encourage change within an organization, HRD managers should not spend their energy and time trying to overcome the resistance of employees, because that only makes things worse. Smith (2005) also suggested that managers must engage with this resistance, and try to understand it. Their roles of communicator and psychologist must come into play at this time by listening to employees' feelings and thoughts about the change and how it personally affects them. HRD managers should actively listen to what employees have to say and take account of any feedback they may have in order to relieve anxieties and reservations regarding change. In addition, this approach to communicating change, while done from an understanding perspective, must be conducted with decisive action and authority. This authority is earned by listening to resistance rather than fighting it and remaining strong through a clear understanding of the need for change, and it can be extremely valuable to managers acting as change agents to overcome negativity and resistance (Smith, 2005).

Furthermore, once resistance to change has been overcome, HRD managers have to ultimately create the change discussed. In order to do so, they should employ transformational learning theory. Mezirow's (1981) theory of transformative learning focuses on the idea that as people learn, they should transform their thinking to reconstruct the way in which they conceive

themselves, and the world, in order to allow for a more inclusive integration of experience. Adults must understand roles and relationships within society as well as within themselves as a part of their learning process. Then they will take the necessary action and transform their perspectives (Mezirow, 1981). The altered perspective in the workplace does not necessarily require an overhaul of existing policies and procedures, but a change in the way HRD managers think about experiences to communicate them with other employees.

Mezirow (1981) proposed that there are four processes of learning: (1) To elaborate an existing point of view, (2) in order to establish new ones; (3) to transform such point of view through critical reflection; and (4) in the end to transform an ethnocentric way of thinking and become critically reflective in the way people think and view others. In order for learning to become meaningful, people must allow for thoughts, feelings, and disposition of new information to become part of the active learning process, thus transforming the frame of reference to understand experiences altogether. This should be the starting point for individual change.

Conclusion

This paper is a first glance at *how* to change organizational culture to encourage employees to be more socially responsible. More in depth research is needed to more deeply explore the “*why*.” The concepts of *corporate responsibility* and *social license* are relatively new but explore how corporations can benefit from caring about the well being of the people. Researchers exploring the future of HRD and management need to explore more deeply the benefits for businesses to change their practices in order to be socially responsible.

“Communism failed because it produces too little at too high a cost. Capitalism has also failed because it produces too much, shares too little, also at too high a cost to our children and grandchildren” (Orr, 2011, p. 242). As explored in this paper, modern capitalism is immoral based on the premise that it breeds profit for the sole purpose of accumulating profit. This is a time in history in which the inequality gap broadens rather than narrows down. CEOs’ salaries have grown while the minimum wage has remained stagnant and has actually gone down in relative digits.

It is estimated that employers in the United States spend \$50 billion in programs to develop their employees (Swanson, 2001). It is time to begin spending that money in the development of socially responsible business practices in order to reduce the poverty gap to achieve a fairer wealth distribution. In fact, as explored earlier, HRD has expertise in educating individuals and fostering organization change. Most of the trainings that take place in organizations today happen with the end-goal of profit increase. Employees sent to training and development exercises are expected to perform better, and thus bring in more money. Instead, this knowledge should be applied to teaching the organization about ethical management and leadership, to help managers implement practices encouraging social responsibility (Bierema & D’Abundo, 2004, p. 450). Employees have to regain their humanity in their work practices to be able to understand the deeply rooted wrongs in the profit-end model. They should use their roles and capabilities to benefit from change, along with transformational learning to show employees the big picture: Individuals need to understand that it is *not just about me and my job, but how my job affects society as a whole...how my job influences others inside the company and outside.*

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How Transformational Theory Can Be Used to Understand the Personal Experience of Being Bullied in the Workplace

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Abstract: Bullying is a growing problem in many organizations. This paper examines how transformational theory can be used to understand victims who are being bullied in the workplace. This research provides useful information regarding all aspects of bullying and how it relates to this theory.

Mezirow's (1994) transformation theory can be applied when someone's viewpoint has changed because of a life-changing event. In this type of learning, there is a noticeable change in the person's behaviors and perhaps their attitudes because of a life-changing event (Clark, 1993). Using this theory, this paper defines the terms transformational theory and bullying; looks at the types of bullying, the symptoms, the individual-level antecedents, the consequences, and the effects; and considers acceptance in different cultures and how transformational theory can be used to understand the personal experience of being bullied in the workplace.

Defining Transformational Theory

There have been many definitions over time but what holds true to the term *transformational theory* is the key point of people's views continuing to change or being *transformed* because of the person's lived experiences. Clark (1993) defined transformational learning as learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences. Mezirow (1994) explained that "transformational theory's assumptions are constructivist, an orientation which holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is central to making meaning and hence learning" (p. 222). Mezirow explained that transformational theory usually leads to a negative outcome for the person.

Defining Bullying

Bullying in the workplace has been an ongoing problem in the workplace in many societies. In today's workplace, regardless of the level of hierarchy or the type of industry, bullying is taking place. Organizations are trying to find a way for not just the Human Resources Department to deal with bullying, but also having every employee aware of how to handle this new phenomenon. Many people suffer abuse from co-workers, managers, and supervisors every day. Several people as early as 1990 have defined workplace bullying, the first being Leymann.

Leymann (1990) described negative workplace phenomena as:

"Mobbing," "ganging up on someone" or psychic terror. It occurs as schisms, where the victim is subjected to a systematic stigmatizing through, inter alia, injustices (encroachment of a person's rights), which after a few years can mean that the person in question is unable to find employment in his/her specific trade. (p. 119)

Leymann (1990) continued to state, "psychical terror or mobbing in a working life means hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual" (p. 120). Adams (1992) described workplace bullying as a type of disease that one does not realize is there and the side effects of which are not always noticeable. In some organizations, the victim of bullying may not always realize that he or she is

being bullied. For example, in the kitchen of a restaurant, having the chef always shout and insist that his or her employees are not doing a great job is a form of bullying. A classic example is the world-renowned chef, Chef Gordon Ramsay. He is a fantastic chef who is known by many around the world, but he continually shouts at his staff and belittles them in front of others; sometimes he may even engage in cursing at his employees. This is seen as bullying in a 'normal' work environment, but unfortunately not by him. For him, this is a way that he conducts his business. Bullying also takes place in this situation because other employees working for the chef might be affected by his shouting and, as a result, their performance might decline due to fear of being ostracized. However, as more studies were conducted, the term became more defined.

The editors of *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace* arrived at a relatively limited definition of bullying in the workplace as "harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks" (Hanfling, Einarsen, & Cooper, 2002, p. 15). This definition lacks or is slightly limited in that it omits the aspect of the victim being psychologically impacted as well as the culture of the organization being affected. The victim would be affected as well psychologically after facing the abuse of another employee. It puts the victims in a state where they are limited in their mental capacity and are not able to function in their job and therefore their performance would be affected. Hanfling et al., 2002 described this as a person who is feeling inferior and is now the target of negative social acts. Many authors have definitions for this term; however, Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2003) defined one definition that is commonly used:

Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g. weekly) and over a period (e.g. about six months). (p. 15)

Bullying occurs when there is inadequate monitoring by management, supervisors, and employees, where redress systems create dysfunction, and if left unattended can have undesirable outcomes. Some examples of these outcomes occur when a report is filed and the Human Resources Department deals with it very lightly trying to save each person's job. Through this lack of attention, bullying would occur again if not fully dealt with and the person is reprimanded for his or her actions. Another example is the lack of attention that the managers or supervisors may have with their employees. Some managers and supervisors are not engaged with their employees and sometimes ignore what is happening outside of the confinements of their office space. Because of this, they are not aware of what is happening on the other side of the walls, because as long as the deadlines are being met, they are happy. This form of neglect is also a form of bullying even though it is not happening directly (face-to-face) to the individuals. Consequences for the person who is bullying would have to occur in order for other employees to recognize that bullying is a serious problem in the organization.

Through the definition above, four broad attributes have been extracted and are common with other definitions of the term *workplace bullying*. These words include frequency, persistence, hostility, and power imbalance (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Monks et al., 2009). The term frequency in this context refers to the consistency in which something negative occurs over a particular period. Researchers vary on whether the minimum number of acts must be one or two per week (Einarsen et al., 2011). Persistency in this context refers to the duration of time in which the negativity occurs (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Some researchers are not in alignment about the frequency in which bullying has to take place to actually be constituted as

bullying. Bullying should not be considered as an act that has to take place within five months or two years for it to be considered as bullying. Once a person is affected by negative acts by a person or a group of people and it is affecting his or her job performance, then bullying has taken place. No time limit should be placed in the definition of bullying because this act can take place twice a month and it can be such a negative act that it affects the person physically and mentally. Hostility refers to the negative acts being portrayed. Power imbalance refers to the influence or control over another person in the workplace. Coercive power refers to the control one person has over the other. This usually occurs when a person fears for his or her job because of intimidating remarks that a manager might make to his or her staff. The manager uses their position to instill fear in his/her employees and threatens their job if performance levels are not met.

Understanding that workplace bullying does not just occur in a top-down position is very critical. Workers in an organization can experience workplace bullying from any of their co-workers regardless of the level of management or employment. While abusive supervision solely consists of downwards vertical mistreatment (Tepper, 2007), workplace bullying includes mistreatment that can occur: (a) from supervisor to subordinate, (b) from subordinate to supervisor, (c) between co-workers, and (d) from customers/clients to employee (Fox & Stallworth, 2005).

Types of Bullying

Workplace bullying does not just include the regular common demands and threats or offensive language to a person. Bullying comes in all forms in the workplace. Rayner and Höel (1997) grouped workplace-bullying behaviors into the following types:

- threat to professional status (e.g., belittling opinion, public professional humiliation, and accusation regarding lack of effort);
- threat to personal standing (e.g., name-calling, insults, intimidation, and devaluing with reference to age, sexual orientation etc.);
- isolation (e.g., preventing access to opportunities, physical or social isolation, and withholding of information);
- overwork (e.g., undue pressure, impossible deadlines, and unnecessary disruptions);
- destabilization (e.g., failure to give credit when due, meaningless tasks, removal of responsibility, repeated reminders of blunders, and setting up to fail).

Two other types of bullying that were not mentioned by Rayner and Höel (1997) were *relational bullying* (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), in which the victim's friendship networks are damaged by the bully and *indirect bullying* (Björkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994) perpetrated by a third party, such as rumor spreading. These two can be combined because when someone is being bullied and their friendship networks are broken down, it is a type of indirect bullying. For instance, in a group of five people at work, one person is a target of bullying and the other four people stop interacting with the victim; they are now aiding and abetting bullying for not talking to the victim because of those rumors. Another example of indirect bullying would occur if a manager takes his or her department out for a celebratory dinner and excludes one member of staff in his or her department. This is a form of bullying because the outcome is alienating that one person from his or her peers. Because of this effect, relational bullying exacerbates indirect bullying.

Symptoms of Bullying

Symptoms of bullying are warning signs that something is occurring in the workplace, which results in a negative impact to the organization and that should be dealt with. Symptoms

of bullying can be seen as physical and psychological. Some of these include weight gain; low self-esteem; people always being sick; people isolating themselves at work, even if there are group projects and deadlines; aggressive behavior toward peers at work or even their bosses; and drastic changes in weight gain or weight loss and anxiety. Some extreme symptoms are self-destruction habits with the use of alcohol or drugs, suicidal thoughts, violence at work, panic attacks, and skin changes. Of course, these all differ depending on the individual.

Antecedents, Consequences and Effects of Bullying

Some researchers have examined the antecedents, but not all findings were common. However, personality was the key attribute. Personality is the key to finding out who the targets and perpetrators are of bullying. Someone who is quiet and is usually a loner at work, for example the mail attendant who works in the basement of the organization who has no peers at work, may be a target of bullying. Likewise, a person who does not have any peers and who sits by himself or herself at the table for lunch could become a target of bullying. On the other hand, someone who is a leader and who possesses the attribute of not being socially awkward may not be a target of bullying. It is easy for someone to be picked on when he or she is a loner as opposed to not just being in a group of people, but also being confident and full of self-esteem. Authors in the field of research confirm this. For instance, Aquino and Lamertz (2004) and Zapf and Einarsen (2011) suggested that there are two target types: vulnerable and provocative. Therefore, practitioners can safely assume that extroverts will more often fall under the provocative while introverts may fall within the vulnerable type (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Samnani and Singh (2012) continued to say that people with low agreeableness are more likely to fall under the provocative type while those people with high agreeableness will more likely fall under the vulnerable umbrella. The table created below indicates this finding.

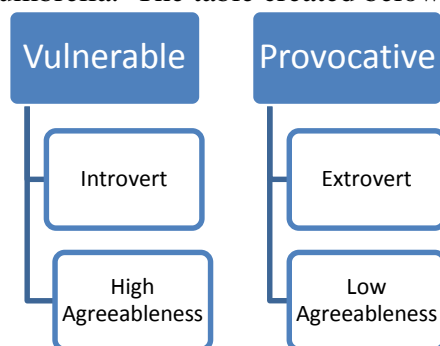


Figure 1. Two target types: Vulnerable vs. Provocative

Consistency can be seen with Aquino and Lamertz's (2004) study, where employees who keep to themselves and who are socially awkward are vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying. Therefore, these persons can be seen as vulnerable and can easily become targets because of lack of confidence, vulnerability, insecurities, and depression.

Not much research has been done on the consequences of bullying; however, some important facts still remain. The two categories that stand out are psychological and physiological. Bullying can lead to immediate effects on the victim's mental health as well as physical health. Researchers have found that bullying has adverse effects on physical and mental health (Hoel, Faraghe, & Cooper, 2004); depression, and stress (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002); sleep problems and mood swings (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007); and suicide (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002). For work-related outcomes, researches have found that bullying is associated with intent to leave (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008),

absenteeism (Hoel & Cooper, 2000), and job satisfaction (Lugten-Sandvik et al., 2007). In some cases of indirect bullying, the group of people who are affected (as was the case above with the example of the five friends) sometimes feel the effects of bullying. They might not be direct victims but seeing bullying take place over a period of time might have an effect on them as well because of the negative behaviors portrayed in the workplace. They themselves might not perform effectively and they might not want to perform group work with the bullies. They now start to shy away from group projects and their work has now taken a decline.

There are also negative impacts or consequences that the organization faces when bullying takes place. The victim of workplace bullying would sometimes be absent from work or would not be able to produce effectively. Targets of workplace bullying have greater absenteeism, along with reduced job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work motivation (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Burnes & Pope, 2007; Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006; Loh, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2010). When this occurs, the victims of bullying might be laid off from their job or in some situations, abandon their job without any notice of leaving. This impacts not just the victim, but also the other employees of the organization as well as the organization itself. The employees now have to fill the gap that becomes present and pressure occurs in the workplace. This could put a strain on the department and also on Human Resources for not being aware of the situation that was happening in the organization. Further organizational costs include displaced effort in helping staff cope with bullying incidents and the costs associated with investigations of all treatment and potential court action (Rayner & Keashly, 2005).

Comparing the symptoms to the effects of bullying in the workplace, reveals a cycle whereby the symptoms can be seen as effects and the effects as symptoms. The symptoms can be mistaken for the effects, but it is not to be confused because the symptoms are the feature that is indicating a condition whereas the effects are the changes that are a result of an action.

Acceptance in Different Cultures

Although bullying is distressing in many cultures (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003), culture may influence the degree of distress experienced and the type of bullying that causes the most distress (Sidle, 2010). For example, Chinese employees seem to react more negatively to indirect conflict than American employees and to experience more negative physical symptoms as a result (Liu, Nauta, Spector & Li, 2008). Studies in Ireland, Germany, and Austria find that victims report greater depression, irritability, and anxiety than other employees (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003). In the Korean culture, sports players may experience violence committed to them by senior players or coaches. An expert on sport leisure stated that this type of action was condoned as it enhanced the players' performance (Choi, 2009).

Ostracism can be seen as a form of indirect bullying by peers through exclusion. In different cultures, bullying takes on different forms, but how the Human Resources Department deals with it should always be consistent. Whether or not in some countries there is a more serious impact than others, everyone should be aware of dealing with bullying.

Using Transformational Theory to Understand Bullying in the Workplace

Transformational theory can be applied when a life-changing event has occurred in someone's life, altering the way of thinking and perspective of that person's mind-set. Being bullied is considered as life changing because of the extent of damage it has caused that person mentally and physically. For instance, some people might seek psychological assistance from professionals in the field, while some others might fall into a deep depression. The majority of people, according to the studies, have had negative effects after being bullied. So far, all the

evidence in previous research on the effects and the victim's way of thinking suggests that there is a negative outcome.

Aligning the effects of bullying in the workplace to transformational theory, it is evident that the victims are impacted in a negative way (the change). These life-changing events do not usually lead to the victims having a positive outlook on life. Some of the victims perform poorly at their workplace; their attention span is decreased; they sometimes turn to substance abuse; and some have suicidal thoughts or might look at committing homicide just to name a few.

Transformational theory for these victims can be applied because of a reaction to a stimulus. In some instances, these victims do not usually speak about their experiences and they try to stay engaged in the toxic environment. In these situations, the victims and the company suffer because of the lack of attention to detail that is applied to the job. In essence, transformational theory is relevant because the victim has now changed his or her way of thinking for economic reasons. However, while at work, the employee contributes less than what is expected; he or she is not engaged and he or she participates less.

Transformational behavior does not just occur with for the victim. From the bully's point of view, there could be traces of something profound happening in his or her life, which as a consequence, leads the person to become a bully (changing event). The bully could have gone through a life-changing event and as a result started behaving negatively toward his or her co-workers. Generally, the attributes would be just the opposite of the victim; they would be seen as extroverts. The bully might demonstrate that he or she is self-confident, possesses self-esteem and is at ease with himself or herself, hence the reason for the bullying of other co-workers (the change). However, in reality it is because the perpetrator lacks self-confidence and self-esteem that he or she bullies other co-workers who portray even greater signs of these attributes.

Workplace bullying is becoming a serious dilemma in organizations, and unless championed by the Human Resources Department and supported by the established framework of the organization, there will be continued failure in reducing the incidents of bullying.

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Engagement as Privilege: Deconstructing the Power and Privilege of Employee Engagement

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper was to critically examine the construct of employee engagement as a privileged state. Four principal questions were explored: (a) controls the context of work, (b) determines the experience of engagement, (c) defines the value of engagement, and (d) benefits from high levels of engagement?

Research has demonstrated the numerous benefits of an engaged workforce (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Consequently, scholars have examined a host of potential variables believed to influence the positive development of engagement, in addition to the study of outcomes that result from engagement surfacing in practice. For example, several scholars point toward antecedents of engagement such as job characteristics (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006), perceived organizational support, and fairness (Wollard & Shuck, 2011), as well as outcomes like turnover intention (Saks, 2006), knowledge creation (Hoon Song, Kolb, Hee Lee, & Kyoung Kim, 2012), task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010), among others. Numerous aspects of engagement have been and continue to be examined – theoretically, conceptually, and empirically – accounting for significant advances in the measurement and application of engagement to practice. This developing stream of research around engagement has been met with attention and acknowledgment.

Despite this, little research has specifically explored the unfolding of the phenomenon of engagement to the context of work as a positive psychological state. Most scholars agree that the experienced state of engagement is desired at the individual and organizational levels, and research focused on the outcomes of engagement support this claim (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Moreover, research has demonstrated that employees who experience engagement benefit from a variety of documented positive professional and personal returns, such as a reduction in stress and burnout, higher levels of psychological wellbeing, and personal accomplishment (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). Engaged employees dependably report increased levels of effort and production and lower intentions to turnover (Christian et al., 2011). Moreover, as a step toward understanding the phenomenon, engagement is thought to be “predicated by access to job (e.g., autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance feedback) and personal resources (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem)” (Bakker et al., 2008, p. 187). Despite this, we have found no research that has examined the questions of who controls such job resources, who or what determines the experience of engagement for employees, or who controls the target of activities meant to engage and how this control affects employees and their experience of engagement. Notwithstanding, within the definition of engagement lies an implied

process about how the phenomenon of engagement unfolds and under what conditions it is likely to emerge, not just what it produces and who benefits (Shuck & Rose, 2013). For example, most scholars would agree that the experienced psychological state of engagement is both positive and forward moving – defined as *an active psychological state* (Parker & Griffin, 2011). The implied process then concerns the juncture of cognitive and emotive energies into positive, forward moving states in ways that spur intention toward behavioral action and that identify employees through their observable actions as *engaged*. Although the development and surge of engagement focused scholarship has increased, the application of the construct itself could be unintentionally selective in who experiences it, either by some element of privilege, or embedded within the environmental conditions predicated by a privileged state. If the application of the construct in practice is, in fact, selective based on context, engagement would be by definition, a privilege.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The role of engagement as privilege has gone wholly unexamined in the literature. We argue that engagement may not be an equitable psychological state for all employees, at all times, and that access to this positive psychological state of work may hinge on conditions of work that are actually privileged. This frames engagement as a potentially privileged experience. Because of the potential for privilege to influence the experience of engagement, the purpose of our work was to critically examine the construct of employee engagement as a privileged state. The four main questions guided our inquiry: (a) who controls the context of work, (b) who determines the experience of engagement, (c) who defines the value of engagement, and (d) who benefits from high levels of engagement?

This paper unfolds in the following main sections: (a) the interplay of privilege, meaningful work, and engagement; (b) the intersection of privilege, meaningful work, and engagement; (c) an interrogation on the interplay and intersection of privilege, meaningful work, and engagement through our four guiding questions; (d) a discussion of engagement as privilege; and last, (e) implications for practice.

The Interplay of Privilege, Meaningful Work, and Engagement

In order to explore the construct of engagement as a privileged state, we present a discussion of both privilege, along with meaningful work and engagement, as a first step.

What is Privilege?

Privileges are assets, either earned or unearned, that help individuals advance or benefit over, and often at the expense of, others (Bailey, 1998). Earned privileges are “any earned conditions, skill, asset, or talent that benefit its possessor” (Bailey, 1998, p. 109). Earned privileges are often obtained through work, education, or learning how to capitalize on a particular skill set (Rocco & West, 1998). Unearned privileges are awarded by birth into a particular group, type, or classification of people. Rocco and West (1998) named eight attributes that determine privilege: (a) class, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) religion, (e) sexual orientation, (f) able-bodiedness, (g) ethnicity, and (h) age. Manifestations of privilege are “power, access, status, credibility, and normality” (Rocco & West, 1998, p. 173). These manifestations of privilege play out in simple taken for granted ways, for instance, the credibility and status of gender in the medical professions where historically most nurses are women and most doctors are men.

Both earned and unearned privileges denote social order, hierarchy, and support as well as contradict one another. For example, heterosexual White men generally experience a great deal of unearned privilege, even from young ages. For some of these men, the additional earned privilege of being college-educated may stem in part from advantages experienced in relation to

an already-privileged identity. Thus, being a college-educated, heterosexual White man may result in different outcomes than being a White woman, or a gay White man, or a person of color in a similar situation. Further, earned and unearned privileges may become conflated. Individuals from dominant groups with unearned privileges may believe that their success came solely as a result of individual merit. An example is a White college-educated male believing anyone with the same education could enjoy the same career trajectory and believing the reason others at his level are also White males is that they work hard and others do not. The benefits of privilege are often clear to those situated outside dominant groups (Bailey, 1998). Unearned privilege is context and time specific, and dependent on social values, laws, geography, and demographics. Changes in the status of characteristics that produce unearned privilege are subtle and gradual, yet powerful and influential.

The higher a person's position in an organization, the more likely he/she may be to be rewarded with money, status, and power. These privileges may grant greater leverage for career development and a greater sense that their work is meaningful because they feel cared for, listened to, have access to resources, and have a voice in what happens in the organization. The fact may be, however, that employees within their team have to act like they care, are required to listen, must give of their resources, and do what they are told. However, making it to these higher positions of power within organizational hierarchies could be easier for certain people than it is for others. It is at this intersection of privilege and meaningful work that we contend engagement itself becomes a potentially privileged state.

Employees who gain advantage, intentionally or unknowingly, from an earned or unearned privilege create states of privilege within an organization. A privileged state is an organizational condition created as a result of the collected experiences of privilege among a group of employees who benefit over, and at the expense of, others. For example, the well understood and little documented "old boys' club" creates conditions of privilege that can be very challenging to navigate without access to the "club." The "old boys' club" is therefore a privileged state. The privilege of being in the club may be both earned and unearned – some are well aware of their longstanding membership while others are unaware they even paid their dues at birth. Encountering "the club" as an outsider can be disorienting and disengaging. Few would argue, we believe, that the "old boys' club" is not an explicit artifact of privilege.

What is Meaningful Work and Engagement?

In Kahn's (1990; 2010) seminal work on *personal engagement*, he identified three psychological elements that an engaged employee experiences within a holistic appraisal of their wellbeing en route to bringing their full selves into work: (a) *meaningfulness*, (b) *safety*, and (c) *availability*. The sum of these elements is thought to elicit the phenomenon of engagement. As such, these appraisals are proportionately connected to the personal resources that an employee brings to the physical, emotional, and social space of work and are directly connected to the theory of meaningful work (Bakker et al., 2008; Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). An employee who feels that his/her work contributes to and is valued by the organization (degree of meaningfulness), feels as if he/she can express themselves without fear of condemnation (degree of safety), and is confident they have the resources to complete their work (degree of availability) may be more likely to both express and experience meaningful work en route to high levels of engagement (Chalofsky, 2003; Kahn, 1990).

Meaningful work has been defined in terms of three themes: (a) sense of balance, (b) the work itself, and (c) sense of self (Chalofsky, 2003). These three themes are linked together in their consideration of the holistic nature of individuals' experiences on the job. Using these

themes, we might understand the concept of meaningful work as “those working conditions that are motivating” (De Klerk, Boshoff, & Van Wyk, 2006, p. 322) and those tasks related to a sense of importance, intricacy, and personal identity (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). Simply put, meaningful work has been operationalized as “the way we express the meaning and purpose of our lives through the activities (work) that comprise most of our working hours” (Chalofsky, 2003, p. 73). Thus, identifying work as “meaningful,” both personally and professionally, is a core aspect of becoming and remaining engaged in one’s work.

The Intersection of Privilege, Meaningful Work, and Engagement

Who Controls the Context of Work?

The examination of engagement as privilege is also an examination of power. In her work around power as a discourse for framing organizational incivility, Callahan (2011) suggested several kinds of power within an organizational context. Two of the most salient kinds of power for this issue of engagement as privilege revolve around “the power ‘of’ the organization” and “the power ‘over’ the less powerful” [*italics added*] (p. 13-14). In both instances, the issue of power is used to preserve systematic order in ways that maintain structures and constraints that detract from the possibility of engagement. For example, from the “power ‘of’ lens” increasingly organizations construct the norms of engagement and dictate what engagement should be, and feel like (Shuck & Rose, 2013). The organization states: “*This is what being engaged means at this company. Do these things.*” The power “over” is related to positive outcomes for the performance and gives to those with status, the power to control others with less power. From a manager to an employee, it often sounds like: “*You need to be more engaged.*” Callahan goes on to suggest a third kind of transformational power that is useful to consider in this situation: *the power ‘to’ facilitate change*’ (2011, p. 15). This is the power that reframes the conversation between a manager and an employee from “*You need to be more engaged*” to “*How can we best support the development of engagement within you?*”

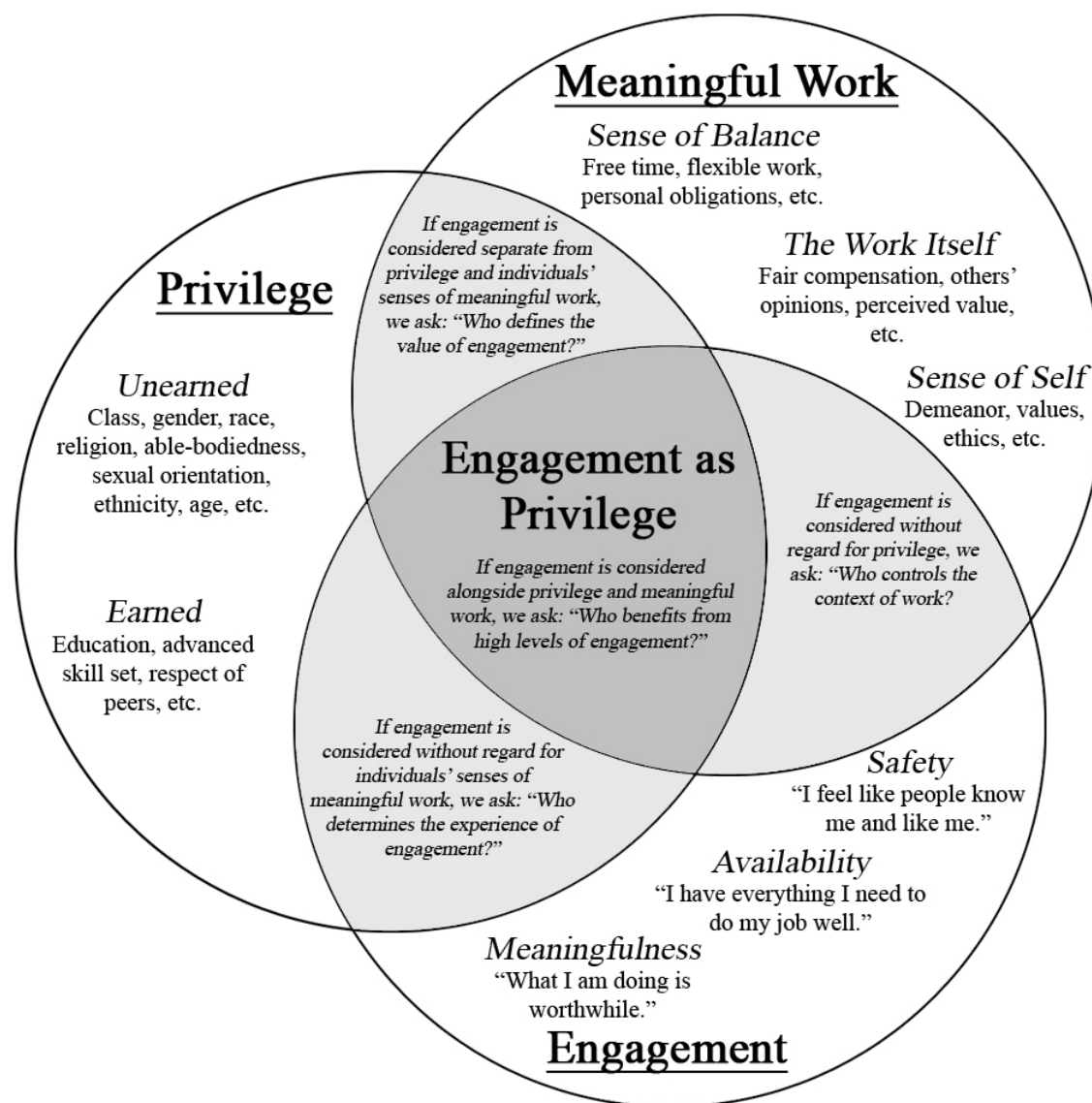
We can assume that employees naturally gravitate toward opportunities that are engaging. If employees naturally seek engaging opportunities, why is it some employees find it so difficult to be engaged? It is possible that a lack of engagement with work could stem from a helplessness grounded within the feelings and experiences of being powerless to control the context of work despite a natural pull toward engaging work. This is characterized by what Kahn (1990) referred to as disengagement, or the withdrawal of personal resources. We know that at times, employees are excluded—not only those with a disability, but others who are different from the norm (however that norm is defined), by race, gender, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or other attributes. Organizations create the structures and conditions of work, determine who will be in positions of influence and power, and allow conditions to flourish. Because these actions ultimately determine the context of work and create the unique environmental conditions of work, we argue that those in power ultimately control the context of work. See Figure 1 for a visual depiction of this intersection.

Who Determines the Experience of Engagement?

In most cases, management and organizations determine the experience of engagement by providing—intentionally or unintentionally—obstacles that employees must overcome, disregard, or persist against in order to become and remain engaged with work or create organizational change initiatives designed to cajole employees into feeling engaged at work. An *organization* can be thought of as a macro-object, a living and breathing entity that exists in the world and whose ebbs and flows have consequences to their surroundings and the workplace conditions they manufacture (Schein, 1999). An organization has the responsibility for creating

and sustaining the conditions of a workplace culture that nurtures the experience of engagement if they desire high levels of engagement among their employees. The organization creates such a culture by establishing an identity and setting standards. Consequently, the answer to who determines the experience of engagement lies at the intersection of how employees ultimately interpret an organization culture made of conditions and structures. Because employees react to conditions and structures and not the other way around, we maintain that organizations ultimately determine the experience of engagement (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Intersection of Privilege, Meaningful Work, and Engagement



Who Defines the Value of Engagement?

Engagement is arguably valuable to both employees and organizations. This value is intrinsic and extrinsic; measured in emotional attachment, increased salary, profits, and productivity, among other things. Employees engage when organizations nurture those conditions of engagement (e.g., perceived meaning, balance of safety, and adequate resources) – there is no other way. The only power an organization truly has in this context is to create those conditions that cultivate engagement, but the organization has little power to manufacture the actual psychological state itself. The organization creates and maintains a culture where engagement can occur, yet the ability to define the value of engagement lies within the individual employee. As represented in Figure 1, because only the employee can control how he/she interprets and perceives structures and conditions, it is the employee who defines the ultimate value of engagement.

Who Benefits from High Levels of Engagement?

There are two sides to explore regarding the question of who benefits from high levels of engagement: (a) organizational benefits and (a) individual employee benefits. Organizationally speaking, the research is clear about the benefits of engagement for the organization. For example, voluminous empirical research has indicated that organizations whose employees report heightened levels of engagement also report lower levels of turnover (Saks, 2006), higher levels of job performance, task performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Rich et al., 2010), and productivity (Christian et al., 2011).

Emerging evidence is equally strong that employees benefit from high levels of engagement, also. For example, empirical research has indicated those employees who report higher levels of engagement also experience lower levels of stress and burnout (Bakker et al., 2008) and higher levels of accomplishment in their work (Shuck, Shuck, & Reio, 2013). In sum, engagement is good for employees in a work context, but the benefits of engagement have been found to extend well beyond the boundaries of work.

Engagement as Privilege

Throughout our discussion, we have continuously framed engagement and privilege as affecting each other through institutions of power, structures, dispositions, outcomes, and antecedents, but it is possible that privilege and engagement are mutually influential. Because engagement is a psychological state within the experienced conditions of a workplace culture, the outcomes of engagement (i.e., higher performance) can be defined as a privilege for the organization. We have defined privilege in this paper as an asset, either earned or unearned, that helps advance or benefit over, and often at the expense of, others (Bailey, 1998). Because an organization nurtures the conditions of engagement, employees engage at higher levels and consequently perform better. The willingness to nurture the conditions of engagement provides a context for the outcomes of engagement to be leveraged as a privilege for an organization.

We maintain, however, that the organization is uniquely positioned to influence systems of privilege that enable the conditions for engagement. If organizations sincerely desire the state of engagement, those who influence organizational structures have an obligation to create the conditions of engagement by confronting manifestations of privilege such as unequal states of power, access, status, credibility, and normality (Rocco & West, 1998). Organizations should consider how to best create such conditions in ways that are inclusive, caring, and sensitive to the experiences of work for all employees, not just the privileged few. This effort must be in direct proportion to levels of engagement they are demanding from their employees.

Conclusion and Implications

Our focus has sought to examine the construct of engagement through a framework of privilege and power. As a result, we have highlighted the inter-dynamics of how workplace conditions, particularly those that influence positions of power and privilege, work to influence the conditions of engagement, which in turn affect the end state of engagement (i.e., workplace performance). Based on our examination of the literature, we identified two specific implications for practice: (a) developing an awareness of engagement as a privilege and (b) utilizing culturally responsive practices.

As mentioned previously, privileges are invisible to those who have them (Bailey, 1998). A critical first step for practice in engaging employees is to acknowledge how engagement is manifested as a privilege within the organization and to name the conditions of meaningful work. Organizations might start by asking leaders to examine their use of power as either, having the power *of*, the power *over*, or the power *to* (Callahan, 2011) and exploring the implications to their reflections. The awareness of engagement as a privilege could guide leaders and managers and those human resource professionals who work with them inevitably to consider non-traditional ways to engage those employees not influenced through traditional intervention strategies. As a second step, cultural responsiveness consists of acknowledging the differences that people bring to a situation, recognizing that their identity influences how they experience their context, and making accommodations based on differences (Nieto, 2004). Organizations then should strive to create cultures that are inclusive and to find ways that engage *all* employees. Organizations alone cannot determine what kind of work should be meaningful to a person, but they can create the conditions for meaning and purpose to flourish (Shuck & Rose, 2013).

It is at the intersection of privilege and meaningful work that we contend engagement itself becomes a potentially privileged state. Although both individuals and organizations benefit from engagement, the organization holds the power to make work engaging. The benefits of an engaged workforce extend well beyond the organization.

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South Florida Education Research Conference Symposia

A “Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline” Initiative: Mentoring Model Pilot Project

Abstract

This informative and interactive teaching symposium posits the Positive Peer Leadership Mentoring Program (PPLM) as an evidence-based wrap-around service for youth and families in Miami-Dade who are involved in the school-to-prison pipeline. Presenters first provide information to initiate the dialogic process of discerning and interpreting the school-to-prison pipeline, impacted by costs of incarceration for Black youth and families and the move toward effective mental health services in the juvenile justice system. Then, participants experience an interactive pedagogical mentoring format set forth in PPLM as the first step toward transforming the school-to-prison pipeline in their own classroom or other educational setting.

Participants

Debra Mayes Pane, Ph.D., Florida International University As Founding President of E-SToPP, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to transforming schools and educational programs for youth involved in suspension, expulsion, and incarceration, Dr. Pane pursues her passion for conducting transformative educational research and developing partnerships within the community, juvenile justice education, and public schools to transform the school-to-prison pipeline.

Chaundra L. Whitehead, Doctoral Candidate, Adult Education and Human Resource Development, Florida International University Chaundra has 15 years of experience in adult education as a volunteer tutor, correctional educator, and literacy coordinator. Her dissertation research examines a conflict resolution training program in two South Florida prisons.

Heather T. Pane, Ph.D., Research Fellow, Duke University Heather is a postdoctoral fellow at Duke University and a licensed psychologist in North Carolina. She has worked in various clinical settings with youth, families, and adults from diverse backgrounds. Dr. Pane’s research emphasizes promotion of evidence-based interventions for psychosocial difficulties, particularly for historically underserved populations.

Miguel Peña, Student, Florida International University Miguel is a Miami native raised in Hialeah, and a graduate of Hialeah Miami Lakes Senior High. He attended the University of Pittsburgh and currently attends Florida International University studying elementary education. He decided to study elementary education because he enjoys learning about learning.

Using Social Media to Build Your Academic Brand

Abstract

This professional development session will review recent research on the use of social media by faculty and academic staff. The bulk of the presentation will focus on social media strategies and techniques that attendees can use to develop and build their academic brand. This session will be useful to various audiences including established faculty, new faculty and graduate students.

Participants

Dr. Jesus Fernandez is Associate Provost for Curriculum and Academic Innovation at DeVry University. Fernandez earned his doctorate at Florida International University and also holds an M.B.A. from Barry University and a B.A. with honors from Northwestern University.

Perspectives on Marginalized Adult Populations in Education

Abstract

The adult student population is more non-traditional than ever, with students from numerous backgrounds entering adult education and post secondary institutions. This symposium represents an effort to explore the concerns and barriers of some of the marginalized populations. Marginalization includes putting or keeping someone in a powerless or lesser position within a society due to any number of factors. Some educational settings have been more accessible and inclusive than others. Sites of adult education vary widely and have differing levels of availability to marginalized populations. This session will discuss various sites of education and the issues faced by marginalized populations.

Participants

Chaundra L. Whitehead is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at Florida International University

Lori Ann Gionti is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at Florida International University.

Carolyn Meeker is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, Florida International University

Gisela Vega is the Associate Director for LGBTQA Initiatives in Multicultural Programs and Services (MPAS) as well as a doctoral student in Higher Education at Florida International University.

The Florida Reach Initiative: Increasing Access and Success for Emerging Adults from Foster Care

Abstract

This dynamic innovative symposium will use extensive audience participation and a modified PechaKucha format – short, highly-focused and energetic presentations – (15 slides, on display for 20 seconds – 5 minutes speaking time) by five advocates of effective programs that lead to post-secondary success for extremely vulnerable students, and extensive audience participation, to create a sense of urgency for action via an experiential learning event. During the course of the symposium, audience members will experience rapid fire information presented by enthusiastic presenters and will have a chance to put fake money on the table in support of the most effective presentations.

Participants

Steve J Rios – Florida Atlantic University

**South Florida Education
Research Conference
Posters**

Author Name	Author's Affiliation	Title of the Study
Roberto Alonso , Ana Resillez , Adriana	FIU	Creating a Partnership with Parents of ELL Students in Order to Promote Increased Parent Participation
Ryan J Blanton	FIU	Peer Support: An Intervention to Facilitate Second Language Acquisition In Students with Asperger Syndrome and Primary Language Deficits
Molly Anne Brannon	FIU	Music Intervention
Sheila Bravo	FIU	Utilizing Real Objects to Increase Reading Comprehension in Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
Barry M Erstein	FIU	Using A Differential Reinforcement Program In A High School Self-contained Classroom of Students With Autism To Increase Student On-task Behavior.
Lori Ann Gionti	FIU	An Exploration of Foster Parents' Continuing Education Requirements, Experiences, and Perceptions
Danielle Goodman	FIU	Teaching Grammar In Context
Alexis Gregory	FIU	Singing about Expected Behaviors for Group Instruction.
Mistique N Hernandez	FIU	Expanding Vocabulary and Improving Comprehension Through the Use of Graphic Organizers

Natasha K. Miller	FIU	Reading Comprehension in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Alicia A. Molina , Mayleen Baluja , and Marielena Gurdian	FIU	Reading and Parental Involvement
Cindy Morris	FIU	Fine Motor Skill Interventions for Teaching Handwriting
Nicole R Neto,	FIU	The Effects of Copy-Cover-Compare Intervention on Students' Spelling Abilities in a 3rd Grade, General Education Classroom Setting
Kim Makeba Hinckson Pendleton,	Keiser	Pedagogical Perceptions of Classroom Performance in the Teacher Evaluative Process: A Mixed Methods Study
Keri P Porter	FIU	Increasing the Amount of Time that Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities are Authentically Engaged During Art Instruction
Vanessa Radice	FIU	Increasing Homework Completion
Meiky Morales Ramirez	FIU	Incorporating an iPad To facilitate letter recognition and enhance academic achievement.
Kristen M. Rodriguez	FIU	Using Music to Improve Reading Fluency with Kindergarten Students
Monica M. Trujillo	FIU	Using Guided Notes to Improve Academic Performance in a Chemistry Inclusion Classroom
Patricia Walters	FIU	The effects of intensive interactive writing instruction and self-monitoring skills on students' ability to write a complete sentence independently

Kerry Ann Wittel	FIU	The Use of Video Self-Modeling as an Intervention to Teach Rules and Procedures to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
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Appendices

The 13th South Florida Education Research Conference 2014 Program

The 14th South Florida Education Research Conference 2015 Call for Papers

The 14th South Florida Education Research Conference 2015 Call for Symposia

The 14th South Florida Education Research Conference 2015 Call for Posters

• Florida International University • Barry University • Miami Dade College •
 Florida Atlantic University • DeVry University • St. Thomas University •
 • Nova Southeastern University • University of Miami • Keiser University •
 Florida Memorial University • Johnson & Wales University • Lynn University



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- Honoring Inquiry
- Promoting Mentoring
- Fostering Scholarship

The purpose of the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference is to enhance the existing culture of research in colleges and universities in South Florida. The conference provides a meaningful vehicle for the preparation, mentorship, and presentation of scholarly work by students, faculty, and alumni.

Partially Funded by the College of Education Title V CLAVE Project: Creating Latino Access to a Valuable Education (US DOE Grant # P031M090054)

FIU

Education

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**Be Worlds
 Ahead**

Acknowledgements

The South Florida Education Research Conference Steering Committee (SFERC) would like to thank the member universities and their faculty and students for supporting the thirteenth annual SFERC. The members of the steering committee include Florida International University, DeVry University, Miami Dade College, Florida Memorial University, Lynn University, Johnson & Wales University, Keiser University, Barry University, Florida Atlantic University, St. Thomas University, University of Miami, and Nova Southeastern University. Additional thanks go to Lynn, NOVA and Barry steering committee members that contributed items for the packets.

Special thanks must go to the College of Education at Florida International University particularly Dean Delia C. Garcia, the Office of the Dean, and the Office of Graduate Studies. We also wish to thank Creating Latino Access to a Valuable Education (CLAVE) for its support of the conference.

Caprila Almeida, Marilyn Vinson, Fabiola Hernandez-Cook, and Maria Tester deserve special thanks for their assistance with registration, volunteers, logistics, recordkeeping and numerous other details that go into a successful conference. Their professionalism and attention to detail are much appreciated and valued.

Sarah M. Nielsen (DeVry) has served as editor of the proceedings for years, and now serves as editor in chief. Her attention to detail, editing skills, and patience have made the proceedings a quality publication. Teresa Lucas and Lori Gionti facilitated the review process. This includes locating faculty to review, prompting reviewers to return reviews, being third reviewers when the student and faculty reviews are opposed, and doing additional reviews when reviewers fail to return their reviews. For the fourth year we have the poster review and selection committee, chaired by Diana Valle-Riestra. Student volunteers provide support by staffing the registration table, putting together packets, and doing other odd jobs. Michael Record (Keiser) has stepped up to help with the keynote, proceedings, reviewing and with the poster award.

Without the continuing support of so many, this conference would not exist, so thank you again for making our thirteenth annual conference so successful!

Tonette S. Rocco, Chair, South Florida Education Research Conference Steering Committee

	8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast	Bayview Ballroom Room 214
	8:30 – 9:30 a.m.	Bayview Ballroom Room 214
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Tonette S. Rocco <i>Chair, Conference Steering Committee</i></p> <p>Delia C. Garcia <i>Dean, FIU College of Education</i></p>		
<p>Morning Keynote:</p> <p>Brian Dassler <i>Deputy Chancellor for Educator Quality, Florida Department of Education</i></p> <p>Brian Dassler is a recognized former teacher and principal. He is a two-time graduate of the University of Florida (B.A. 2001 and a M.Ed. 2002) where he was named an Outstanding Young Alumnus twice and where he is currently a doctoral candidate. In 2006, while teaching at Stranahan High School, Brian was named Teacher of the Year in Broward County, Florida, the nation's sixth largest school system. The youngest person ever to receive the award, Brian taught English for five years and was also a founding teacher of the Urban Teacher Academy Program.</p> <p>Brian was the principal of KIPP Renaissance High School, a part of the nationally recognized KIPP network of public charter schools and chief academic officer for the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), Louisiana's arts conservatory for high school students. At NOCCA, Brian's leadership resulted in the school being named an "A" school and one of the highest performing open enrollment high schools in Louisiana.</p> <p>Brian was the first College Leadership Florida alumnus to be selected for Leadership Florida (XXIII), and he returned to Florida earlier this year to be a champion of and advocate for excellent teaching as Deputy Chancellor of Educator Quality for the Florida Department of Education. Brian's essays on education and school reform, many of them written with his mentor David Colburn, have been published by the <i>Tampa Bay Times</i>, <i>The Gainesville Sun</i>, <i>The Miami Herald</i>, and <i>The Orlando Sentinel</i>, among others.</p>		
<p>9:40 – 10:25 a.m. Symposium 1, Concurrent Sessions 1, 2, & 3 and Poster Session 1</p>		
Symposium 1	A "Transforming the School-to-Prison Pipeline" Initiative: Mentoring Model Pilot Project	Room 117
	<p><i>Chair:</i> Debra M. Pane, Florida International University <i>Discussants:</i> Chaundra L. Whitehead, Florida International University; Heather T. Pane, Duke University; and Miguel Pena, Florida International University</p> <p>This informative and interactive teaching symposium posits the Positive Peer Leadership Mentoring Program (PPLM) as an evidence-based wrap-around service for youth and families in Miami-Dade who are involved in the school-to-prison pipeline. Presenters first provide information to initiate the dialogic process of discerning and interpreting the school-to-prison pipeline, impacted by costs of incarceration for Black youth and families and the move toward effective mental health services in the juvenile justice system. Then, participants experience an interactive pedagogical mentoring format set forth in PPLM as the first step toward transforming the school-to-prison pipeline in their own classroom or other educational setting.</p>	
Session 1	Online Learning Moderator: Gerene K. Starratt	Room 120
<p><i>Doctoral Students: Online, On Time, and On to Graduation</i> Sue Adragna and Kelly Gatewood, Keiser University</p> <p><i>Users' Acceptance of Online Enrollment Processes in a Higher Education Institution</i> Luis F. Rodriguez, Keiser University</p>		

Session 2	Workplace Engagement Moderator: Tonette S. Rocco	Room 115
<i>Engagement as Privilege: Deconstructing the Power and Privilege of Employee Engagement</i> Brad Shuck, University of Louisville; Josh Collins, Florida International University; Raquel Diaz, University of Florida; and Tonette Rocco, Florida International University		
Session 3	Math Education Moderator: Cynthia Januszka	Room 122
<i>The Effectiveness of an Intervention Package on Math Computation</i> Nathaly Ossa and Martha Pelaez, Florida International University		
<i>Analysis of Students' Misconceptions and Error Patterns in Mathematics: The Case of Fractions</i> Zoe A. Morales, Florida International University		
Poster Session 1: Reading and Writing		First Floor Gallery Room 100
<i>Teaching Grammar In Context</i> Danielle Goodman, Florida International University		
<i>Expanding Vocabulary and Improving Comprehension Through the Use of Graphic Organizers</i> Mistique N. Hernandez, Florida International University		
<i>Fine Motor Skill Interventions for Teaching Handwriting</i> Cindy Morris, Florida International University		
<i>The Effects of Intensive Interactive Writing Instruction and Self-monitoring Skills on Students' Ability to Write a Complete Sentence Independently</i> Patricia Walters, Florida International University		

10:35 – 11:20 a.m. Symposium 2, Concurrent Sessions 4 & 5, and Poster Session 2		
Symposium 2	Using Social Media to Build Your Academic Brand	Room 117
<i>Chair:</i> Jesus Fernandez, DeVry University		
This professional development session will review recent research on the use of social media by faculty and academic staff. The bulk of the presentation will focus on social media strategies and techniques that attendees can use to develop and build their academic brand. This session will be useful to various audiences including established faculty, new faculty and graduate students.		
Session 4	Correctional Education Moderator: Annamaria Jerome-Raja	Room 115
<i>Forgotten Women: Incarceration and Health Concerns of Minority Women</i> Chaundra L. Whitehead, Florida International University; Regina McDade, University of Phoenix; and Mary Mites-Campbell, University of Phoenix		
Session 5	Health and Education Moderator: Raquel Diaz	Room 122
<i>Positive Effects of Peer Modeling and Positive Reinforcement on Healthy Food Intake in Elementary School Children</i> Kiera Ingalls and Martha Pelaez, Florida International University		
Poster Session 2: Art and Music		First Floor Gallery Room 100
<i>Music Intervention</i>		

Molly Anne Brannon, Florida International University

Singing about Expected Behaviors for Group Instruction.

Alexis Gregory, Florida International University

Increasing the Amount of Time that Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities are Authentically Engaged During Art Instruction

Keri P. Porter, Florida International University

Using Music to Improve Reading Fluency with Kindergarten Students

Kristen M. Rodriguez, Florida International University

11:30 – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch is served buffet style. Quickly and quietly get your lunch before entering the ballroom, find a seat, and prepare for a delightful keynote address.

Bayview Ballroom

Room 214

**Lunch Panel Discussion:
South Florida Education Research Alliance:
A Community-based Education Research Collaborative to Impact Student Success**

Building partnerships between local education authorities (LEAs) and education researchers in their respective communities is a current priority of national education advocates (e.g., AERA) and federal funders, such as the Institute of Education Sciences. The South Florida Education Research Alliance (SFERA) is a unique partnership of education researchers from private and public universities, an urban school district, and a local children's services organization dedicated to facilitating the academic success of students in South Florida (Ligas et al., 2012). Now in its third year, the partnership claims a number of successes such as SFERA's role in Broward County Public School's (BCPS) Black Male Success Task Initiative (BMSI), designed to support interventions for at-risk students. Panelists will include members of SFERA institutions, which include Broward County Public Schools, Children's Services Council of Broward, Florida Atlantic University, Barry University, Florida International University, and Nova Southeastern University.

Steve J. Rios, Ed.D., is a faculty member at the Florida Atlantic University College of Education, where he teaches research, statistics, and school-community partnerships. He earned his doctorate in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at FIU. He is the co-founder of Florida Reach, a state-wide network of education and child welfare professionals dedicated to helping former foster youth gain access to and succeed in college. He also co-owns Rios Research and Evaluation, a company that helps education organizations reach their goals by turning data into actionable knowledge.

Isadore Newman, Ph.D. is a psychologist, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at The University of Akron, a Visiting Scholar at Florida International University College of Education, and Adjunct Professor in the FIU College of Medicine Department of Human Development and Molecular Genetics. He is author of 17 books, numerous book chapters and monographs, and more than 140 refereed articles, and over 350 paper presentations, addressing mainly research methodological issues.

Russell Clement, Ph.D. is a Research Specialist for Broward County Public Schools with a PhD in experimental psychology from Brown University. He has engaged in public education research and assessment for more than 15 years with BCPS, as an independent consultant, and Senior Director of Research with *K12 Insight*.

Gerene K. Starratt, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in Barry University's Adrian Dominican School of Education, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate research methods and statistics courses. She earned her Ph.D. from FAU in cognitive psychology. Her research interests include research ethics, program evaluation, Professional Learning Communities, Ninth-grade academies, high school reform, and teacher leadership.

Maria Rosa Ligas, Ph.D. is Program Professor in the Doctoral Program in Educational Research and Evaluation at Nova Southeastern University's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. Prior to joining the Fischler School of Education (FSE), Dr. Ligas served for 15 years, as a research specialist and director with the Research Services Department at the School Board of Broward County, Florida. Her areas of expertise include analyses and dissemination of state accountability results; longitudinal research analyses; and program evaluation studies of at-risk, Title I, and ESOL student populations.

1:25 – 2:10 p.m. <i>Symposium 3, Concurrent Sessions 6, 7 & 8 and Poster Session 3</i>		
Symposium 3	Perspectives on Marginalized Adult Populations in Education	Bayview Ballroom Room 214
	<p><i>Chair:</i> Chaundra L. Whitehead, Florida International University <i>Discussants:</i> Lori Ann Gionti, Florida International University; Carolyn Meeker, Florida International University; and Gisela Vega, Florida International University</p> <p>The adult student population is more non-traditional than ever, with students from numerous backgrounds entering adult education and post-secondary institutions. This symposium represents an effort to explore the concerns and barriers of some of the marginalized populations. Marginalization includes putting or keeping someone in a powerless or lesser position within a society due to any number of factors. Some educational settings have been more accessible and inclusive than others. Sites of adult education vary widely and have differing levels of availability to marginalized populations. This session will discuss various sites of education and the issues faced by marginalized populations.</p>	
Session 6	Education and Identity Moderator: Tonette Rocco	Room 120
<p><i>Queer Theory or Queer Choice of Identification?</i> Jennifer Kross, Florida International University</p> <p><i>Bottom Identity: Matters of Learning and Development</i> Craig M. McGill and Joshua C. Collins, Florida International University</p>		
Session 7	Education and Management Moderator: Paige Johnson	Room 115
<p><i>Changing Corporations: The Role of HRDM</i> Fatima Beamonte, Florida International University</p> <p><i>How Transformational Theory Can Be Used to Understand the Personal Experience of Being Bullied in the Workplace</i> Salma Hadeed, Florida International University</p>		
Session 8	Exercise and Persistence Moderator: Linda Bliss	Room 122
<p><i>What Factors Influence Persistence Rates in Active Older Adult Group Exercise Programs?</i> Jennifer Danilowski, Keiser University</p>		
Poster Session 3: Study Skills and Classroom Management		First Floor Gallery Room 100
<p><i>The Effects of Copy-Cover-Compare Intervention on Students' Spelling Abilities in a 3rd Grade, General Education Classroom Setting</i> Nicole R. Neto, Florida International University</p> <p><i>Increasing Homework Completion</i> Vanessa Radice, Florida International University</p> <p><i>Incorporating an iPad to Facilitate Letter Recognition and Enhance Academic Achievement</i> Meiky Morales Ramirez, Florida International University</p> <p><i>Using Guided Notes to Improve Academic Performance in a Chemistry Inclusion Classroom</i> Monica M. Trujillo, Florida International University</p>		

2:20 – 3:05 p.m.
*Concurrent Sessions 9, 10, 11, & 12
and Poster Session 4*

Session 9	Mentoring in Education Moderator: Jacqueline Peña	Bayview Ballroom Room 214
<i>Engaged Scholarship: A Model for Creating an Education Research Lab</i> Gerene K. Starratt, Sashay Goodletty, Ivana Fredotovic, Stephanie Auguste, and Lauren Shure, Barry University		
Session 10	Mentoring in Higher Education Moderator: Steve Rios	Room 120
<i>Supporting Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Higher Education Through Mentoring</i> Amanda Giust and Diana Martinez Valle-Riestra, Florida International University		
Session 11	Second Language Learning Moderator: Kyle Perkins	Room 122
<i>On the Possible Implementation of Non-directive Teaching for English Class in Post-Secondary Public Schools in China</i> Yu Zhang, Florida International University		
Session 12	21st Century Learning Moderator: Debbie Hasson	Room 117
<i>Minding the Digital Gap: Trending Toward Older Online Students</i> Cyntianna C. Ledesma Ortega and Janet Chavez, Florida International University		
<i>The Relationship Between Online and Onsite GED Preparatory Courses</i> Jocelyn Messerschmidt, Florida International University		
Poster Session 4: Students with Autism and Other Disabilities	First Floor Gallery Room 100	
<i>Peer Support: An Intervention to Facilitate Second Language Acquisition In Students with Asperger Syndrome and Primary Language Deficits</i> Ryan J. Blanton		
<i>Utilizing Real Objects to Increase Reading Comprehension in Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities</i> Sheila Bravo, Florida International University		
<i>Using A Differential Reinforcement Program In A High School Self-contained Classroom of Students With Autism To Increase Student On-task Behavior</i> Barry M. Erstein, Florida International University		
<i>Sequencing: Teaching a Specific Skill to Children with Autism</i> Natasha K. Miller, Florida International University		
<i>The Use of Video Self-Modeling as an Intervention to Teach Rules and Procedures to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder</i> Kerry Ann Wittel, Florida International University		
3:15 – 4:00 p.m. Symposium 4, & Concurrent Sessions 13, 14, & 15 and Poster Session 5		
Symposium 4	The Florida Reach Initiative: Increasing Access and Success for Emerging Adults from Foster Care	Bayview Ballroom Room 214
	<i>Chair:</i> Steve Rios, Florida Atlantic University This dynamic innovative symposium will use extensive audience participation and a modified PechaKucha format – short, highly-focused and energetic presentations – (15 slides, on display for 20 seconds – 5 minutes speaking time) by five advocates of effective programs that lead to post-secondary success for extremely vulnerable students, and extensive audience participation, to create a sense of urgency for action via an experiential learning event. During the course of the symposium, audience members will experience rapid fire information presented by enthusiastic presenters and will have a chance to put fake money on the table in support of the most effective presentations.	
Session 13	Teacher Quality Moderator: Delia Garcia	Room 120

<i>TeachNJ: An Evaluation of Two Years of Implementation</i> Kathe Callahan and Leila Sadeghi, Kean University		
Session 14	Assessment in Education Moderator: Carolyn Meeker	Room 115
<i>Non-verbal Aptitude and Academic Achievement at a Diverse Parochial Secondary School—A Correlational Study</i> John Althoff, Florida International University		
Session 15	Global Education Moderator: Joan Wynne	Room 122
<i>Perspective Transformation Theory and the Donald Woods Experience: From Racist to Anti-Apartheid Activist</i> Merlene V. Reid, Florida International University		
Poster Session 5: Parent/ Teacher Involvement	First Floor Gallery Room 100	
<i>Creating a Partnership with Parents of ELL Students in Order to Promote Increased Parent Participation</i> Roberto Alonso , Ana Resillez , Adriana Marquez , and Susan Rivero, Florida International University		
<i>An Exploration of Foster Parents' Continuing Education Requirements, Experiences, and Perceptions</i> Lori Ann Gionti, Florida International University		
<i>Reading and Parental Involvement</i> Alicia A. Molina, Mayleen Baluja , and Marielena Gurdian, Florida International University		
<i>Pedagogical Perceptions of Classroom Performance in the Teacher Evaluative Process: A Mixed Methods Study</i> Kim Makeba Hinckson Pendleton, Keiser University		

4:10 – 4:45 p.m.

Award Presentations and Raffle

Room 117

The Lorraine R. Gay Award for Excellence in Research and ScholarshipThomas G. Reio, Jr., Chair
Award for Best Graduate Student Paper**Barnes & Noble Best Faculty-Student Paper Award**Thomas G. Reio, Jr., Chair
Award for Best Faculty-Student Paper**Lynn University Outstanding Poster Presentation Award**Priscilla A. Boerger, Chair
Award for Best Poster Presentation**Closing**Tonette S. Rocco,
Chair, Conference Steering Committee

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Call for Papers

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

Conference Mission: The purpose of the Annual South Florida Education Research Conference (SFERC) is to enhance the existing research culture in South Florida. The research culture is enhanced when faculty mentor students and colleagues through the writing and submission process, reviewers and editors provide feedback with the intent of helping to develop the authors' writing and research skills, and when faculty share their scholarship with colleagues. The conference provides a meaningful vehicle for the preparation, mentorship, and presentation of scholarly work by students and faculty of member institutions and the community.

Conference Philosophy: Decades of educational research indicate that the practice of educating our nation's citizens cannot be judged from a single vantage point. Individuals come to the educational enterprise with different needs and goals often addressed through educational research that weaves a tapestry among knowledge, theory, practice and possessing the habits of minds for showing curiosity and passion about learning through inquiry. Work is welcome that uses diverse applications of educational research and the behavioral, psychological, and cultural viewpoints that exist at local, national, and international levels. Conference participants are encouraged to consider the richness of the diverse content areas in education across the lifespan in and out of school and across disciplines.

The FIU COE Lorraine R. Gay Award for Outstanding Research: This award is presented to the best paper authored by an individual student or group of students.

The FIU Barnes & Noble Best Faculty-Student Paper Award: This award is presented to the best paper authored by a faculty-student(s) team.

Who Should Submit: Papers are welcomed from practitioners, students, and faculty from any discipline interested in any aspect of education, teaching, or learning across the lifespan and across fields; management and administration of organizations such as schools, community outreach, parks and recreation, not for profit and for profit; and workforce development, globalization, international and urban issues. Papers may be submitted by single or multiple authors. Students are encouraged to submit papers based on theses/dissertations, class papers, or other scholarly work.

Tracks

- Global learning
- Diversity studies
- PreK-12 and teacher education
- Workforce, career and professional development
- Higher education, student affairs and lifelong learning
- Leisure, health and wellness, and community education
- Technology, digital media, and literacy integration

Paper Categories

Reports on Research: Reports on research that are empirical studies and use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches.

Methods and Issues in Research:

Controversial and critical questions vital to research and practice, such as in research methods, ethics, the use of research in practice, practice-generated needs for research, and processes by which researchers determine the

areas in which to conduct research.

Theory, Model Development, and Literature Reviews: Insights on theory, a critique of an existing model or presentation of a new model, or a review of the literature that provides a new perspective on the existing work. Examples include an in-depth exploration of issues related to teaching and learning throughout the lifespan in formal education settings and beyond.

Perspectives in Practice: Questions and concerns regarding practitioners' work in various settings. This may include, but is not limited to, practice in education and training programs in schools, universities, corporate and community organizations, leisure activities for children and adults, or other extra-curricular activities. Examples include papers that address problems and/or solutions in areas of practice such as curriculum design, strategy selection, teaching and learning, or program implementation.

Evaluation Studies or Action Research:

Reports on studies involving needs assessment, priority setting, goal analysis, evaluation or other forms of applied research using evaluation or action research approaches. Examples include reflections on proposal development, grant work, and reports on progress of the grant at meaningful stages.

Call for Papers

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

Conference Timeline

Paper Submission Deadline –

Monday January 5, 2015

Authors Notified of Submission Status –

Monday, February 23, 2015

Revised Papers Sent to the Proceedings

Committee Deadline –

Monday, March 16, 2015

Camera-Ready Papers Deadline –

Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission Instructions

To submit papers go to
digitalcommons.fiu.edu/sferc.

Upload a blind copy of the paper - Name this file attachment with the first two words of the paper title (e.g., *TeacherEfficacy.doc*).

Create an account and provide information about yourself (and your co-authors, if applicable) and the paper. For each paper submission you will be asked to provide the following:

- All author(s) identification/contact information and institutional affiliation (University, Department, and program).
- Track (See Track categories list)
- Paper Category (see Paper Categories list and guidelines)
- Three (3) Key Words that are not in the Title to characterize the focus of the paper
- Authorship category: student(s)-only, student(s)-faculty, or faculty-only paper
- Name and contact information of a faculty mentor/sponsor, if applicable.
- The Warrant Statement.

The elements of the paper are:

- A title in **14 pt. Bold letters**
- An abstract of 25-50 words maximum

- MS Word, font Times New Roman 12 pt.
- Eight (8) single spaced pages, including references.
- One inch margins on all sides.

Note: A maximum of two extra pages may be added after the References and can be used for tables, figures, and/ or pictures.

Papers must conform to APA 6th edition guidelines.

Research with Human Subjects: Please follow the research protocol of your institution.

Review and Selection Process

The Review and Selection Committee will screen papers for adherence to Submission Instructions and APA (6th ed.) guidelines. Papers that do not conform these basic instructions will be returned to author(s) for corrections and possible re-submission within two weeks of receipt. All submissions will undergo a double blind review by faculty and student reviewers, who will review each paper for content, clarity, and organization. Papers may be accepted, accepted with revisions, or rejected. To volunteer to review, contact Dr. Tonette S. Rocco roccot@fiu.edu.

Monday, February 23, 2015

Notification of Submission Status

Authors will receive a letter with notification of submission status and feedback from reviewers. Authors are expected to either make revisions or address the reason the revision was not made in a cover letter within three weeks of receipt.

Monday, March 16, 2015

Submission of the Revised Papers to the Proceedings Committee

Authors must re-submit the revised 8-page single spaced paper along with the cover letter that describes what changes were made to Proceedings Committee. The proceedings editors will edit every paper, making necessary formatting and editing changes. The edited papers will then be returned to the authors. Authors are expected to return camera-ready papers.

Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission of Camera-Ready Papers to the Proceedings Committee

Please assist us in our efforts to produce high quality proceedings by following instructions, addressing editors/reviewers suggestions for improvement, meeting deadlines, and adhering to APA 6th edition guidelines.

Paper Presentations on the Day of the Conference

One to two papers may be presented during the 50-minute sessions organized around common themes. Each session will be in a separate room with up to three concurrent sessions scheduled. The presenter of each paper will be allotted 10 to 15 minutes to present the key points from the paper. Interactive presentations are encouraged. MS PowerPoint, overheads, or handouts are encouraged but not required.

Note: All steering committee members, moderators, and other volunteers, presenters, their family, friends, and other guests are expected to register for the SFERC.

For questions and more information about the conference, please, visit education.fiu.edu/research_conference/ or contact Dr. Tonette S. Rocco roccot@fiu.edu or any member of the Steering Committee.

Call for Poster Proposals

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

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The Lynn University Outstanding Poster

Presentation Award: This award is presented to acknowledge, in the name of Lynn University,

outstanding scholarship on a poster created by a student and presented at the SFERC. This award is judged and awarded on the day of the conference according to the following criteria:

1. **Organization.** The placement of individual elements of the display should help the reader understand the study and its results.
2. **Visual appeal.** The display should be attractive, encouraging readers to consider all the information being conveyed.
3. **Clarity of the problem.** The problem statement should be succinct and easy for readers to understand.
4. **Significance of the research question(s).** The guiding question(s) of the project should be one worth investigating; it should be relevant and further the knowledge base in the field.
5. **Literature review.** In order to maintain credibility with readers, the poster's author should display knowledge of recent scholarly publishing on the topic. The literature review also provides important background information, and situates the study among other investigations that have been done on the topic.
6. **Methodology.** The steps taken to investigate the research question(s) are sound and adhere to generally accepted research-based practices. The methodology should fit the research question(s) and be explained clearly.
7. **Clarity of the reporting of the findings.** The reader should be able

to understand the findings easily. Relevant data should be exhibited and explained.

8. **Interpretation of the results.** The poster's author should provide an explanation of what the findings mean. This interpretation should reveal not only understanding of the research question(s), methodology, and findings, but also insight into what the findings mean for professional practice in the field.
9. **Importance of the project in advancing the field.** Taken as a whole, the poster and the study it represents should represent new evidence that can help practitioners make better decisions in professional practice.
10. **Presenter's ability to verbally communicate about the project.** While the poster should be able to stand alone in communicating about the investigation, its author should be able to speak about it with clarity and enthusiasm, answer questions in a way that displays knowledge of the field, and relate to colleagues in a professional manner.

Who Should Submit: Posters are welcomed from practitioners, students, and faculty from any discipline interested in any aspect of education, teaching, or learning across the lifespan and across fields; management and administration of organizations such as schools, community outreach, parks and recreation, not for profit and for profit; and workforce development, globalization, international and

The South Florida Education Research Conference

hosted by Florida International University in partnership with Barry University, DeVry University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida Memorial University, Johnson and Wales University, Keiser University, Lynn University, Miami Dade College, Nova Southeastern University, St. Thomas University, and University of Miami

Call for Poster Proposals

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

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Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

urban issues. Posters may be submitted by single or multiple authors. Students are encouraged to submit posters based on theses/dissertations, class papers, or other scholarly work.

Why Present a Poster: Poster presentations can be valuable for promoting and developing new concepts in a way that crystallizes thinking in particular areas. This particular format also helps investigators and practitioners keep abreast of developments in fields that may not be intimately related to their own major research and professional interests. Posters offer the opportunity to present data and have substantive discussions with interested colleagues.

Conference Timeline

Poster Submission Deadline –

Monday January 19, 2015

Authors Notified of Submission Status –

Monday, March 16, 2015

Camera-Ready Poster abstracts –

Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission Instructions

To submit poster proposals go to digitalcommons.fiu.edu/sferc.

Create an account and provide information about yourself (and your co-authors, if applicable) and the poster. For each poster proposal submission you will be asked to provide the following:

- All author(s) identification/contact information and institutional affiliation (University, Department, and program).
- Authorship category: student(s)-only, student(s)-faculty, or faculty-only paper
- The Warrant Statement.

Upload a blind copy of the poster proposal - Name this file attachment with the first two

words of the poster title (e.g., *TeacherEfficacy.doc*). The blind copy of the poster proposal has to include the following elements:

- A title in **14 pt. Bold letters**
- An abstract of 50 words maximum
- A supporting summary of 1000 words maximum. The supporting summary should include the following elements [a recommended word limit for each element is provided in brackets]:
 - ✓ Statement of the Problem [200 words] – a description of a large societal problem (educational, technological, political, economic, etc.) and a discussion of an aspect of this bigger problem that remains unknown, unclear, outdated, or unaddressed in any way by researchers or practitioners in your field of research or practice.
 - ✓ Purpose and/or Research Question(s) [50 words] – a one sentence describing how your research intents to address the aspect of the bigger problem that remains unknown, unclear, outdated, or unaddressed in any way by researchers or practitioners in your field of research or practice. You can also provide research questions that you think could help you achieve your intent.
 - ✓ Literature Review [250 words] –an overview of the most relevant literature (e.g., theories, models, concepts, seminal works, recent studies). Provide correct in-text citations of these works.
 - ✓ Research Methodology [200 words]– detailed explanation of your research design (i.e., participants and setting, data

collection, analysis, and management procedures and tools)

- ✓ Findings or Results [200 words] – a summary and a discussion of the most important findings/results. If you have not collected and analyzed the data, discuss what you hope to find and provide a timeline of when you start and finish collecting and analyzing data.
- ✓ Implications for the Field [100 words] – a discussion of how your findings or results could be useful for future research, theory, teaching, policy, and/or practice.

The proposal should

- Be written in MS Word, font Times New Roman 12 pt (except for the title).
- Have one inch margins on all sides.
- Conform to APA 6th edition guidelines.
- Provide references after the supporting summary. References are not included in the 1000 word length requirement for the supporting summary.

Research with Human Subjects: Please follow the research protocol of your institution.

Review and Selection Process

The Poster Review and Selection Committee will screen poster proposal submissions for adherence to the submission instructions and APA (6th ed.) guidelines. Proposals that do not conform these basic instructions will be returned to author(s) for corrections and possible re-submission within two weeks of receipt. All submissions will undergo a double blind review by the Review and Selection Committee, who will review each proposal for content, clarity, and organization. Proposals may be accepted,

Call for Poster Proposals

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

accepted with revisions, or rejected.

expected to register for the SFERC.

Monday, March 16, 2015

Notification of Submission Status

Authors will receive a letter with notification of submission status and feedback from reviewers.

For more information about the conference or questions, please, visit

education.fiu.edu/research_conference/ or contact Dr. Tonette S. Rocco roccot@fiu.edu or any member of the Steering Committee.

Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission of Camera-Ready 100 word Abstract to the Proceedings Committee

Authors are expected to incorporate reviewer feedback and return their revised abstracts to be published in the proceedings. Please assist us in our efforts to produce high quality proceedings by following instructions, addressing editors/reviewers suggestions for improvement, meeting deadlines, and adhering to APA 6th edition guidelines.

Poster Presentations on the Day of the Conference:

Several posters are presented during the 50-minute sessions organized around common themes. The audience circulates among the posters, stopping to discuss papers of particular interest to them. Authors present their research using a visual medium with key excerpts from the research displayed on an approximately 4' high x 8' wide free-standing bulletin board. Poster presentations should incorporate illustrative materials such as tables, graphs, photographs, and large-print text, and materials should be readable from a distance of three feet (primary text font should be 20 points or larger, and headings font at least 30 points). Posters should display data, policy analysis, or theoretical work in a visually appealing poster format to encourage interactive communication.

Note: All steering committee members, moderators, and other volunteers, presenters, their family, friends, and other guests are

Call for Symposia Proposals

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

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Who Should Submit: Symposia proposals are welcomed from practitioners, students, and faculty from any discipline interested in any

aspect of education, teaching, or learning across the lifespan and across fields; management and administration of organizations such as schools, community outreach, parks and recreation, not for profit and for profit; and workforce development, globalization, international and urban issues. Students are encouraged to submit proposals to discuss issues raised in their theses /dissertations, class papers, or other scholarly work.

What is a Symposium: Symposia are a place for dynamic and innovative practice and professional development oriented discussions. Symposia can be valuable for promoting interchange and developing new concepts in a way that crystallizes thinking in particular areas. This particular format also helps investigators and practitioners keep abreast of developments in fields that may not be intimately related to their own major research and professional interests.

Types of Symposia:

- ✓ A discussion of scientific ideas, evidence-based practices
- ✓ A presentation of an initiative in a school or community setting
- ✓ A presentation of a novel activity with students, Pre K-higher education
- ✓ A discussion of a novel approach to professional development

Conference Timeline

Symposium Submission Deadline –
Monday January 19, 2015

Authors Notified of Submission Status –
Monday, March 16, 2015

Camera-Ready Symposium abstracts –
Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission Instructions: To submit a symposium proposal go to digitalcommons.fiu.edu/sferc.

Create an account and provide information about yourself (and your co-panelists, if applicable) and the symposium. For each proposal submission you will be asked to provide the following:

- All author(s) identification/contact information and institutional affiliation (university, department, and program).
- Authorship category: student(s)-only, student(s)-faculty, or faculty-only symposium
- The Warrant Statement.

Upload a blind copy of the symposium proposal:

Name this file attachment with the first two words of the symposium title (e.g., *TeacherEfficacy.doc*). The blind copy of the symposium proposal has to include the following elements:

- A title in **14 pt. Bold letters**
- Abstract (100 words maximum)
- Description of the practice, initiative, approach, or activity (250 words maximum)
- Goal(s) of the symposium (50 words maximum)
- Format/agenda of the symposium (e.g., moderator, presentations, Q&A, power point, activities for the audience) (250 words maximum)

The South Florida Education Research Conference

hosted by Florida International University in partnership with Barry University, DeVry University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida Memorial University, Johnson and Wales University, Keiser University, Lynn University, Miami Dade College, Nova Southeastern University, St. Thomas University, and University of Miami

Call for Symposia Proposals

14th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference

Saturday June 6, 2015

Guiding Principles: Honoring Inquiry, Promoting Mentoring, and Fostering Scholarship

- Bio from each participant (50 words maximum)
- Abstract of each participant's talk or presentation (50 words maximum)

The proposal should

- Be written in MS Word, font Times New Roman 12 pt (except for the title).
- Have one inch margins on all sides.
- Conform to APA 6th edition guidelines.
- Provide references at the end of the proposal. References should be provided for the entire proposal as a whole, not for each session summary individually. References are not included in the 1000 word length requirement for the symposium justification or 500 word summaries for each presentation.

Research with Human Subjects: Please follow the research protocol of your institution.

Review and Selection Process

The Symposia Review and Selection Committee will screen proposal submissions for adherence to the submission instructions and APA (6th ed.) guidelines. Proposals that do not conform these basic instructions will be returned to author(s) for corrections and possible re-submission within two weeks of receipt. All submissions will undergo a review by the Steering Committee, who will review each proposal for content, clarity, and organization. Proposals may be accepted, accepted with revisions, or rejected.

Monday, March 16, 2015

Notification of Submission Status

Authors will receive a letter with notification of submission status and feedback from reviewers. Authors are expected to either make revisions

or address the reason the revision was not made in a cover letter within three weeks of receipt.

Monday, April 6, 2015

Submission of Camera-Ready Symposia 100 word Abstract to the Proceedings Committee

Authors are expected to incorporate reviewer feedback and return their revised abstracts to be published in the proceedings. Please assist us in our efforts to produce high quality proceedings by following instructions, addressing editors/reviewers suggestions for improvement, meeting deadlines, and adhering to APA 6th edition guidelines.

Symposia Presentations on the Day of the Conference:

Each symposium is scheduled for 45 minutes. One possible format for a symposium consists of a 5 minute overview by the chair, 2-3 speakers giving 10-15 minute talks, 5 minutes for discussion between talks, and concluding with 10-15 minutes for summary and discussion. Other formats used in the past have been video presentations, program participants demonstrating learned skills with audience members, and interactive teaching.

Note: All steering committee members, moderators, and other volunteers, presenters, their family, friends, and other guests are expected to register for the SFERC.

For more information about the conference or questions, please, visit education.fiu.edu/research_conference/ or contact Dr. Tonette S. Rocco roccot@fiu.edu or any member of the Steering Committee.