Publications

Teacher Evaluation Reform Implementation and Labor Relations

Ben Pogodzinski
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Regina Umpstead
Jennifer Witt
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI

The Michigan legislature recently enacted a teacher evaluation law which requires school districts to incorporate student achievement data into evaluation systems and mandated that evaluations be used to make high-stakes personnel decisions. Though administrators have considerable discretion to design and implement their evaluation systems, the legislature also passed legislation which barred teacher evaluations from the scope of collective bargaining, thus restricting any formal role teacher unions would have in shaping teacher evaluation at the local level. Using survey data gathered from local district superintendents and human resources directors (n = 73), this study identifies variations in the features of the evaluation systems adopted by Michigan school districts, and reports on the administrators' evaluation of the new systems. Further, we quantify the extent to which teacher unions were involved in the development of teacher evaluation reform at the local level, and identify the association between key aspects of teacher evaluation protocols and measures of the labor relations climate. This case study provides insights regarding the capacity and willingness of administrators to reform teacher evaluation, the involvement of teachers and teacher unions in developing those reforms, and the association of these reforms with the local labor relations climate.

Journal of Educational Policy, 30(4), 540-561.

Addressing Inequity in Education through Transformative Leadership

Carolyn M. Shields
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Human genetic research is revealing that race is a social, rather than a scientific construct. Thus, social constructs that have evolved from observable characteristics of individuals and groups have framed much of the ongoing debates related to integration and segregation of public schools, race-based admissions or scholarship policies, and the academic achievement gap. In this chapter, transformative leadership is proposed as a way of addressing inequality and inequity in schools. Following a brief discussion of how transformative leadership both differs from other concepts and theories and how it upholds academic excellence, inclusion, equity, and social justice, the role of *transformative leadership* is elaborated, using examples from the practice of two school leaders, to demonstrate how each of its eight tenets can help to promote "racial" equity in today's schools.

In The Race Controversy in American Education, Drakeford. (2015). New York: Praeger.

Mining Data from Weibo to WeChat: A Comparative Case Study of MOOC Communities on Social Media in China

Ke Zhang
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

This article starts with an overview on China's MOOC phenomenon and social media, and then reports a comparative, multiple case study on three selected MOOC communities that have emerged on social media in China.

These representative MOOC communities included: (a) MOOC Academy, the largest MOOC community in China, (b) Zhejiang University of Technology MOOC Group, the first officially registered student MOOC organization in China's universities, and (c) a fully online community devoted for high school (or younger) students in MOOCs. Data were collected through a variety of Chinese social media (e.g., Sina Weibo, QQ Qun, and WeChat), social networking sites (e.g., Baidu Tieba, GuoKr, Sina blog, etc.), news press, and Web-based community portals. Text mining and content analyses were conducted to study the varied MOOC communities and how they functioned on social media to promote MOOCs as well as to support MOOC learners and the broader community. Implications for research and practice of MOOC communities are discussed.

International Jl. on E-Learning, 14(3) Special Issue, 305-329.

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Testimoniando en Nepantla: Using *Testimonio* as a Pedagogical Tool for Exploring Embodied Literacies and Bilingualism

Christina Passos DeNicolo
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Mónica Gonzalez
School of Education
University of Colorado-Boulder
Boulder, CO

This research study examines the use of *testimonio*, a narrative of marginalization, in a third grade language arts classroom. Through a Chicana/Latina feminist framework, which prioritizes theorizing from the body, the authors explore the process of sharing and witnessing *testimonio* as an embodied literacy practice. Data sources for this qualitative case study consist of written work, oral recordings, and interviews at the end of the data collection period. Through data analysis, students' embodied knowledge was evident in their reading and writing of *testimonio*. The findings indicate that emergent bilingual Latina/o students found themselves within a contradictory yet transformative space as they made sense of the politics of bilingualism alongside their bilingual identities. In creating a space for students to reflect and contemplate their lives between worlds, they were able to discuss painful experiences and reframe them towards transformative ends. As such, *testimoniando*, the process of sharing the narratives, became a pedagogical tool to identify *nepantla*, the in-between space, where students negotiated the productive tensions of their language learning processes.

Journal of Language and Literacy Education, 11(1), 109-126.

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Stress and Resilience for Parents of Children With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Review of Key Factors and Recommendations for Practitioners

Justin W. Peer
Behavioral Sciences Department
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Dearborn, MI

Stephen B. Hillman
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Parents of children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities experience more stress in comparison to parents of normally developing children. Chronic stress could negatively influence parents' health while also impacting their ability to meet their child's needs. Despite this, there is a subset of parents who remain resilient in the face of significant stress in their lives. Knowledge of the factors that promote parental resilience could positively impact the services these families receive. The authors conducted a systematic review of research article databases and found support for coping style, optimism, and social support as resilience factors for parents of children with

intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Awareness of variables that promote resilience for parents of children with intellectual and/or development disabilities is likely to inform clinical practice through offering new avenues for clinical focus in all phases of family-centered care.

Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 11(2), 92-98.

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Design Ideas, Reflection, and Professional Identity: How Graduate Students Explore the Idea Generation Process

Alisa Hutchinson
&
Monica W. Tracey
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Within design thinking, designers are responsible for generating, testing, and refining design ideas as a means to refine the design problem and arrive at an effective solution. Thus, understanding one's individual idea generation experiences and processes can be seen as a component of professional identity for designers, which involves the integration of knowledge, action, and being in support of the professional self. Using written journal responses from graduate students in an introductory course in instructional design, this study explored how students used reflection to reconstruct experiences relating to the emergence of design ideas. Findings indicate that students were able to use reflection in support of professional identity development concerning design ideas, although attention to emotional aspects was lacking and many struggled to move from descriptive writing to meaning-making. Implications for professional identity development for designers and for future research are discussed.

Instructional Science, 43, 527-544.

CSI: An Engaging Online Classroom Introduction Activity

Geralyn Stephens
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

All course activities should be aimed at moving students towards the learning outcomes, including class introductions. This article provides detailed instructions for implementing an online Class Session Introductions (CSI) activity that immediately engages students with their peers, the content and the instructor. The activity may be useful to instructors when creating sub-groups or peer teams and differentiating learning activities in future course activities and assignments. Additionally, the article focuses on how the CSI activity might be used to assess students' prior content knowledge, align students' expectations with course outcomes and identify students' learning styles and dominate intelligence; all of which can be used to enhance the e-learning experience for students. Examples and illustrations are also included.

Journal of Effective Teaching, 15(20, 69-77).

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Goal Oriented and Risk Taking Behavior: The Roles of Multiple Systems for Caucasian and Arab-American Adolescents

Joshua J. Tynan,
Cheryl L. Somers,
Jamie H. Gleason,
Barry S. Markman
&
Jina Yoon
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

With Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological theory and other multifactor models (e.g. Pianta, 1999; Prinstein, Boergers, & Spirito, 2001) underlying this study

design, the purpose was to examine, simultaneously, key variables in multiple life contexts (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem levels) for their individual and combined roles in predicting adolescent risk-taking and goal-oriented behaviors. Predictor variables were parenting behaviors (parenting style, monitoring, and involvement), the risk-taking and goal-oriented behavior of peers, and religiosity (attendance, involvement, and importance). General media consumption was also explored. The participants in this study were 272 9th to 12th grade Caucasian and Arab-American high school students (124 males and 148 females) from a suburban public school district in the midwestern united States (Mean age. 15.64). Results revealed several themes, including that peers appeared to have the primary role in explaining variance in risk behaviors, while parents have the primary role in explaining goal-oriented behavior. Religiosity contributed minimally. There were several noteworthy differences between the two cultural groups regarding which factors explained the most variance in criterion variables. Results are explored in more detail and implications for prevention and intervention are discussed.

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Relationship Between Graphical Device Comprehension and Overall Text Comprehension for Third-Grade Children

Kathryn L. Roberts
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Rebecca R. Norman & Jaime Cocco
Division of Education
Mount Saint Mary College
Newburgh, NY

This study examined relationships between reading comprehension, known predictors of reading comprehension (i.e., cognitive flexibility, fluency, reading motivation and attitude, vocabulary), and graphical device comprehension. One hundred fifty-six third graders completed assessments of known predictor variables and an assessment tapping comprehension of graphical devices commonly found in age-appropriate informational texts: captioned pictures, insets, surface diagrams, cross-sectional diagrams, flow charts, timelines, and tables. Graphical device comprehension was strongly correlated with reading comprehension, rs =0.49, p (one-tailed) < 0.01. Regression analyses, including known and new variables, revealed that graphical device comprehension accounted for 12.81% of the resulting standardized model predicting general reading comprehension.

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Yoga and Cognition: A Meta-Analysis of Chronic and Acute Effects

Neha Gothe
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Edward McAuley
Dept. of Kinesiology and Community Health
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL
Urbana-Champaign, IL

The purpose of this research was to review and synthesize the existing literature on the effects of yoga on cognitive function. Through electronic data bases, we identified acute studies and randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of yoga that reported cognitive outcomes. Inclusion criteria included use of an objective measure of cognition and sufficient data to estimate an effect size. Effect sizes were determined and meta analysis using Comprehensive Meta-Analysis software was conducted. A random-effects model was used to calculate the overall weighted effect sizes, expressed as Hedge g.

Fifteen RCTs and seven acute exposure studies examined the effects of yoga on cognition. A moderate effect of yoga on cognition was observed for RCTs (g=0.33, standard

error=0.08, 95% confidence interval = [0.18,0.48], p<0.003). The strongest effect was for attention and processing speed (g=0.29, p<0.001), followed by Executive functioning (g=0.27, p=0.001), and memory (g=0.18, p=0.051). Acute studies showed a stronger overall effect of yoga on cognition (g=0.56, standard error=0.11, 95% confidence interval = [0.33,0.78], p<0.001). Here the effect was strongest for memory (g=0.78, p<0.001), followed by attention and processing speed (g=0.49, p<0.001) and executive functioning (g=0.39, p<0.003).

Yoga practice seems to be associated with moderate improvements in cognitive function. Although the studies are limited by sample size, heterogeneous population characteristics, varied doses of yoga interventions, and a myriad of cognitive tests, these findings warrant rigorous, systematic RCTs and well-designed counterbalanced acute studies to comprehensively explore yoga as a means to improve or sustain cognitive abilities across the life span.

Psychosomatic Medicine, 77(7), 784-797.

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An Exploration of Student Experiences with Learner-Centered Instructional Strategies

Jill E. Stefaniak
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA

Monica W. Tracey
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

In this exploratory study, we examined how undergraduate students experience learning in a learner-centered teaching environment and their perceptions of motivation towards learning material in an introductory public speaking communications course. Six faculty members participated in a semester-long study where their teaching strategies were observed. Three faculty members participated in a cognitive apprenticeship where they were taught how to implement learner-centered instructional strategies into their coursework. Participants were 109 students who were enrolled in an introductory public speaking course. Data was collected by means of classroom observations, interviews, and the administration of a survey. Our findings indicated that students who were engaged in learner-centered activities within the communications course demonstrate higher levels of motivation towards the course and are more actively engaged in their learning.

Contemporary Educational Technology, 6(2), 95-112.

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Family Members' Perceptions of How They Benefit When Relatives Living with Serious Mental Illness Participate in Clubhouse Community Programs

Francesca Pernice-Duca
Heather Renee Hess
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

David E. Biegel
Chia-Ling Chung and Ching-Wen Chang
Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences
Behavioral Sciences Department
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, OH

Family members provide a significant source of social support to relatives living with a serious mental health disorder, such as schizophrenia. Few public mental health programs offer families a supportive environment where their relatives can develop independence, life skills, and satisfying relationships that are not dependent on the family's involvement. The Clubhouse is one such model. Although family members are not directly involved, they may experience indirect effects from their relative's participation. Family members with relatives involved in Clubhouse (n= 35) completed an in-depth semi-structured interview. Transcripts were analyzed to identify underlying themes. Five primary themes emerged ranging

from less burden to greater positive family interaction. Specifically, family members attributed Clubhouses as providing a supportive external community for their loved ones, but also ameliorating negative aspects of family care and improving family interactions. Practical implications for family professionals are discussed.

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The Relationship Between Teacher Burnout and Student Motivation

Bo Shen,
Nate McCaughtry,
Jeffery Martin,
Noel Kulik
&
Mariane Fahlman
College of Education
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Alex Garn
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA

Teacher burnout is regarded as a serious problem in school settings. To date, studies on teachers' stress and burnout have largely centered on teachers' own characteristics, socialization, and behaviors, but few have explored the connection between teachers' burnout and students' motivation via their own perceptions of teachers' behavior and emotional well-being. This study adopted Maslach et al.'s (2001) job burnout construct and self-determination theory to investigate the relationships between teachers' burnout and students' autonomous motivation over one-semester physical education classes. A total of 1,302 high school students and their 33 physical education teachers in 20 high schools from two demographically similar school districts in a major metropolitan area of the Midwestern US comprised the sample. Students and their physical education teachers completed questionnaires assessing relevant psychological constructs. Student data was collected at the beginning and end of the semester and hierarchal linear modeling was employed. This analysis revealed that teachers' emotional exhaustion was negatively related to students' perceived teacher autonomy support (TAS); in turn, there was a negative relationship between teachers' feelings of depersonalization and students' autonomous motivation development even when controlling for inadequate TAS. The dimensions of teachers' burnout might play different roles in the transmission from teachers to students. Teachers' status of burnout is an important environmental factor associated with students' quality of motivation.

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Research Newsletter

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
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Motherhood in the Context of Normative Discourse: Birth Stories of Mothers of Children with Down Syndrome

College of Education

Research Office Staff

Susan L. Gabel
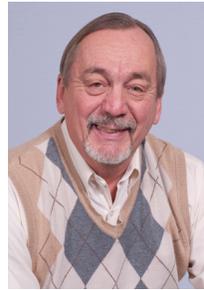**College of Education**
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI

Kathleen Kotel
National Louis University
Chicago, IL

Using birth stories as our object of inquiry, this article examines the ways in which normative discourses about gender, disability and Down syndrome construct the birth stories of three mothers of children with Down syndrome. Their stories are composed of the mothers' recollections of the first hours after birth as a time when their infants are separated from them and their postpartum needs are ignored. Together, their stories illustrate socio-cultural tropes that position Down syndrome as a dangerous form of the "other" and mothers who give birth to children with Down syndrome as implicated in transgressing cultural norms.

Thomas Edwards, Ph.D., Interim Associate Dean for Research

Julie Osburn, M.Ed., Director, Academic

Joyce Martin, Senior Grant and Contract Administrator

421 Education Building, Detroit, Michigan 48202

coe.wayne.edu

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