



Graduate Research Symposium Listing of Abstracts - Spring 2022

Master of Arts in Counseling (COUN)

Erin Sappio, Terrilyn Battle, Brielle DeLano, Marie Hayden, Destiny Foster, and Franki Berliner

Master of Arts in Counseling

Experiences of Engaging in Contemplative-Reflexive Practices During Practicum

Contemplative and reflexive processes enhance mental health practitioners' interactions and relationships. This study used a community based participatory research (CBPR) model to explore the impact contemplative practice had on Master's level counseling students while engaging in their practicum course. Four counseling students and two faculty researchers created process questions to be contemplated through a 10 week period. Results indicated that students gained self-awareness of their calm, relaxed states during contemplative practice, which contrasted to their worried and tense states when engaging in client contact hours. Over time, students were able to be reflexive in direct client contact by drawing upon the self-awareness gained through regular contemplative practice. Unintended benefits of engagement in a CBPR study and future research directions are discussed.

Master of Arts in Criminal Justice (MACJ)

Scott Klenk

Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

Advisor: Dr. Christine Tartaro

Inmates as Employees? An Evaluation of Peer-Involved Suicide Prevention Strategies in Prisons

A variety of strategies and mechanisms have been implemented to identify, target, and prevent suicide in correctional settings. These policies range from isolation in restrictive housing units (RHUs), intake screening, and staff training to conduct periodic risk assessments. In recent decades, in part due to budgetary constrictions and limited professional staff, some prisons have adopted policies that use other inmates to provide support to those on suicide watch. Perhaps the most established of these practices is the Inmate Observer Program (IOP), established by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in the 1980s. The IOP uses trained inmate observers to provide constant supervision to inmates identified to be suicidal. There has been a lack of research evaluating inmate-involved suicide preventions and, of the few studies that have been conducted, all have relied on single state data. To address these limitations, this study will take a national approach by examining the extent to which prisons utilize inmates as part of their suicide prevention strategies. Data was collected from every state department of corrections (DOC) policy and the BOP (n=51). Findings and implications are discussed.

Jenna Martino

Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

Advisor: Dr. Kimberley Schanz

Perceptions of Blame and Punishment: The Impact of Media Watching Habits and Implied Sexual Orientation of Victims and Offenders of Sexual Assault

Research has indicated that what someone watches on television can impact their perceptions of similar, real-life events and situational demographics has an impact on perceptions of the victim and the offender of a sexual assault. This presentation focuses on perceptions of blame and punishment for the victim and offender based on implied sexual orientation (via the manipulation of victim and offender gender) and a person's media watching habits. A vignette-based survey was used in which participants were given a vignette prompt and media watching as well as participants' perceptions of blame and punishment for the victim and offender were measured. Results determined how sexual orientation and media watching impacted perceptions of responsibility and deservingness of punishment for the sexual assault.

Geldy Nunez

Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

Advisor: Dr. Christine Tartaro

Has anything changed? An analysis of recent jail suicide litigation in the federal courts.

Families who lose loved ones to suicide inside jails have the option of suing for violations of the detainee's constitutional rights. The federal courts set a standard of deliberate indifference, meaning that the plaintiffs must show that the jail staff knew of a potential threat of harm and then intentionally failed to act. This subjective standard requires the plaintiffs to provide evidence of the defendants' state of mind at the time of the incident. A recent Supreme Court decision in a use-of-force case signaled that the Court is willing to use a less onerous objective standard in some instances involving harm to pretrial detainees. The question is whether this different standard, as outlined in *Kingsley v. Hendrickson*, is going to be applied to custodial suicide cases in the lower courts? This paper is an analysis of Federal Appeals Court rulings in custodial suicide cases since the *Kingsley* ruling. Our findings indicate that the twelve federal district appeals courts differ in their application of the objective and subjective standards to suicide cases.

Christina Pereira

Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

Advisor: Dr. Nusret Sahin

Procedural justice training for police officers: Results of the pre-post analysis

Procedural Justice is a concept that promotes the idea that individuals care more about the procedures taken when civilians come into contact with police officers than the outcome, such as receiving a ticket. Starting in 2019, faculty at Stockton University, specifically lead researcher Dr. Nusret Sahin, started training local law enforcement agencies in procedural justice that can be utilized within their everyday routines as officers. These trainings include teaching the benefits and concepts of procedural justice, interpersonal communication skills, emotional intelligence, enhancing police trust within the community, and providing scenarios to act out procedural justice. Throughout the summer and fall of 2021, faculty from Stockton University-trained 155 officers from Atlantic City, Township of Hamilton, and Ocean City Police Departments. Christina Pereira, graduate assistant and MACJ student attended the training sessions and assisted the research team in surveying participants. After analyzing the pre-and-post survey data, Dr. Nusret Sahin found that officers' perceptions of the key elements of procedural justice have improved, except for giving a reason/explanation after a traffic stop. In addition, four variables of verbal and passive resistance, and non-assaultive and assaultive physical resistance were found to be significant for the use of force case vignettes.

Master of Arts in Education (MAED)

Jamil Allen

Master of Arts in Education

A Search for Self-Efficacy as a Way of Becoming A More Effective Classroom Manager.

This action research project is centered around my journey as an interventionist (basic skills instructor) trying to navigate through a school year in a new school, in a new position as a relatively new teacher. This action research project chronicles my emotional statuses, with my job performance, whether I felt satisfied versus unsatisfied as I interacted with my grade level colleagues with the goal of becoming a more effective classroom manager. This piece of literature examines classroom management strategies and how teacher consistency in classrooms decreases teacher morale and is necessary when attempting to install stable classroom routines and procedures as a basic skills instructor. Additionally, this study also concentrates on self-efficacy and how that confidence helps boost teacher morale as well as implement effective classroom management practices. Lastly, three major themes emerged as this action research project was conducted. Those three main themes were: 1) teachers' satisfaction or with their job performance has an impact on a new teacher's ability to fully contribute and feel comfortable in within the grade level team, 2) as a new teacher, self-efficacy or confidence in your abilities is critical to implementing effective classroom management strategies, and 3) constant changing of classroom assignments can negatively impact a teacher's morale. The data collected for this action research project came from nineteen research logs or reflective journals that were coded by me that commenced in October of 2021 and culminated in March of 2022.

Kaitlin Alusik

Master of Arts in Education

How Student Choice in Assignment Impacts Engagement

The action research project was designed to answer the research question of how does student choice in assignments impact their level of engagement with the chosen assignment? Students engaged in 10 choice assignments over a twelve-week span. Before completing choice assignments, students reflected on what they thought engagement looked like to them and what keeps them engaged in the biology classroom. There were three different types of choice utilized within this study which were: choice boards, choice assessments, and choice in working style. Over the course of 12 weeks, data was collected in various ways, such as video recordings, Google Form reflections, and research logs. A coding workbook was created to analyze the data from the mentioned data collection methods. The resulting themes indicated: (1) providing students choice in assignment, assessment or working style increases their engagement level, (2) when students are presented choice, they prefer ones where they get to choose how they would like to work, and (3) students prefer choice assessments over choice boards because of the work load.

Tony Burton

Master of Arts in Education

Higher Order Questions Yield Higher Order Responses

The purpose of this research was to determine how higher order thinking questions improve student performance in oral and written responses in English Language Arts. This study was specifically defined by gathering student written responses to questions along with how the students handled oral questions that required an oral response. The rationale for this research is based on state testing and how students need to be able to respond to questions that require more in-depth analysis and thinking. This research uses four different leveled responses: recall, skills and concepts, strategic thinking, and extended thinking, to build the students ability over time. This information will provide invaluable data to see where each child currently stands and progressed. The data was collected by using: video of lessons with responses, student responses on Google Classroom, written assignments, video recordings and small group instruction feedback. There were three major themes that emerged from the study: 1) Applying higher order questions in small groups creates higher level thinking 2) Applying higher order questions yields higher level responses 3) Small focus groups develop higher order thinking.

Victoria Caiazzo

Master of Arts in Education

The purpose of this research was to determine the effects of informal and formal cooperative learning on student engagement and student achievement in a Geophysical Science classroom. For this study, student engagement was defined as students positively interacting with other peers, involved in completing academic work and participating in class discussions. Student achievement was defined as an increase in academic performance for students which was also linked to their level of learning. Cooperative learning was compared to direct instruction. Cooperative learning included lab experiments, projects, and group activities. The data collected and analyzed included: videos of lessons (both formal and informal cooperative learning and direct instruction), research logs from November 2021 to February 2022, student surveys (before implementation of cooperative learning and after), student artifacts of cooperative learning activities from November 2021 to February 2022, a Student Growth Objective (SGO) which students took in the beginning of the school year and a Post SGO which students completed after the research study. As a result of the analysis of the data, there were four themes that emerged: (1) there was increased student engagement during cooperative learning lessons, (2) students were found to have a greater engagement with formal cooperative learning than informal cooperative learning, (3) students' attitude about cooperative learning positively contributes to their learning, (4) there was more individual instruction and higher order thinking questions during student to teacher interactions while cooperative learning was implemented.

Gregg Clayton

Master of Arts in Education

Songs and Lyrics: The Key to Helping Middle School Readers Build Comprehension Skills

In my eighth-grade language arts resource room, benchmark data indicated students were performing below grade level in reading comprehension. The purpose of this study was to teach strategies (inferencing, context clues, and point of view) and skills, using song lyrics to improve 8th graders reading comprehension. There were five students in the class I used for the study. To improve students' comprehension skills, students were provided choices, through song selection, to analyze lyrics they were familiar with. Explicit instruction was provided on inferencing, context clues and point of view, and those skills were applied to the song selections the students made. The following data sources were collected and analyzed: district's reading and comprehension assessments and benchmarking scores to ascertain student reading levels, pre- and post- test, pre- and post- context clue tests, and an inference and point of view assessment, pre- and post, student worksheets and rubrics, video recordings of lyric lessons, and reflective logs. This study presented data and showed how explicit teaching focusing on finding meaning in lyrics to songs that students can connect to, increased their engagement and interaction with texts on their reading levels. The findings from this project indicated that their comprehension skills increased, because of the instructional use of music and lyrics that were familiar to them.

Jaeda Cooper

Master of Arts in Education

The Impact of Using Engagement Strategies During Small Group Literacy Instruction with Below Grade Level First-Grade Students

The purpose of this action research project was to determine if implementing diverse engagement strategies had an impact on off-task behaviors. Specifically, looking at a student population of below grade level first-grade students during small group literacy instruction. Through the implementation of engaging strategies such as using letter card manipulatives, using dry erase pocket sleeves, and gamifying instruction. The data collection and analysis consisted of video recordings, logged evidence revealing off-task student behaviors, and student self-reflection surveys. A coding workbook was used to interpret the data and a spreadsheet was used to track the data collected. Through the analysis process, four major themes emerged: 1) when students are engaged consistently with a known strategy their off-task behaviors decrease, compared to when they are first introduced to the strategy, 2) hands-on engagement strategies are more effective than verbal discourse alone, 3) behavior corrections decrease when students are learning through engaging strategies, and 4) increased engagement time increases the amount of teacher given praise.

Jessica Coyle

Master of Arts in Education

The impact of challenging and assessing students' higher order thinking skills with exit tickets

The purpose of this research was to determine if higher order thinking questions are scaffolded to all students in an inclusive classroom, whether the students would show improvement in their ability to answer higher order thinking exit ticket questions, especially the gifted students. Guided lessons were implemented. Data collected through research logs, videos, exit tickets, group work and formative assessments were collected to study the impact of scaffolding higher order thinking questions throughout a lesson on the responses of the same students on their exit tickets for those lessons. The data was analyzed by using the research logs, videos and exit tickets to determine how scaffolding higher order thinking questions during lessons, which was discussed in the research logs, and viewed in the videos, would reflect in the successful completion of higher order thinking exit ticket questions. The data collected produced the following themes in the research: (1) Scaffolding questions to all students shows their overall improvement in answering higher order thinking exit tickets, (2) Increasing the number of HOT thinking questions throughout a lesson leads to transfer of HOT responses on exit tickets from students over time, and (3) All students showed increases in performance as measured by the exit tickets, however higher level students showed the greatest increase.

Dandre Dennis

Master of Arts in Education

Changing Perspectives of the Ideal Scientist

This research action plan was implemented and designed to determine if an African American male science teacher can shift students' perspectives of who and what a scientist is through the use of culturally responsive teaching and exposure to diverse scientists. The shortage of African American science teachers inspired this action plan. Implementation strategies of the action plan were inquiry based learning and class discussions. The data collection process included pre and post surveys, pre and post drawings, research logs, videos recordings, and student reflections. The coding workbook, along with the data collection, allowed themes that occurred frequently to be easily highlighted during the research action plan. The highlighted themes of this action plan include blatant student exposure to primarily Caucasian scientists in academic textbooks, curriculum, and media, high likelihood of student prior knowledge about scientists from the same racial background, and increased student curiosity of science and scientists as a result of more exposure to more diverse groups of scientist.

Francesca DeVito

Master of Arts in Education

The Correlation between Formative Assessments Informing Instruction and Student Improvement

For this action research project, the focus was to use formative assessment data to inform instruction which would lead to students doing better overall on summative assessments. Throughout the implementation of the action plan the students were engaged in a variety of formative assessments, such as: entry/exit tickets, IXL skill plans, journals, guided reading questions and post-reading questions in a secondary resource level English classroom. Using the formative assessments and providing feedback helped both the teacher inform instruction and the students to improve their skills. To keep track of data there was a folder compiled of multiple examples of the formative assessments and their results and the progress that they showed in each skill; there was also data collected from the summative assessments used to show if mastery of the skill took place. The data was collected by collecting video recordings, keeping research logs, making a spreadsheet which kept track of all the assessment data which was used to see if progress was being made and student artifacts which included feedback from the teacher. As a result of the data analysis, the following themes were discovered: 1) Feedback given or received during lessons/assessments helped improve instruction; 2) Feedback given or received during lessons/assessments helped students improve; 3) Applying what was learned from feedback and data to help students improve on their summative assessment. The results of this research study proved that using formative assessment data to inform instruction does help students do better on summative assessments.

Jennifer DeWeese

Master of Arts in Education

Improving Fourth Grade Students' Persuasive Writing Using Genre-Specific Explicit Instruction

In a fourth grade inclusion classroom, containing ELL students, special education students, and general education students, students struggled to develop and write a comprehensive persuasive writing piece. The goal of this research was to improve students' persuasive writing technique so that they may proficiently write a persuasive piece that includes all of the necessary, genre-specific elements. In this study, interventions were implemented to provide students with genre-specific explicit instruction on persuasive writing. The following data sources were used to analyze the effectiveness of the instruction: reflective logs, video recordings, student artifacts, and pre- and post- persuasive benchmark writing prompts. The results indicated that explicit and genre-specific instruction increased students' understanding of what a persuasive writing piece should include, as well as their ability to write a comprehensive persuasive writing piece. Implementation of these same instructional practices would likely also improve students' writing abilities across other genres.

Andrew Fantasia

Master of Arts in Education

The Effectiveness of Teacher Noticing in Student Completion of Higher Order Thinking Questions

The purpose of this research project was to determine if noticing and responding to student thinking by analyzing student responses and using targeted questions will motivate students to attempt to complete higher order thinking problems. The impetus for this research was based on students specifically not answering multiple step and higher order thinking questions upon returning to school from the 2020-2021 virtual and pandemic-driven school year, where student motivation was at a low. The strategy used to improve student motivation to attempt to complete these sorts of problems was noticing student thinking via written and verbal feedback on targeted, higher order questioning at the start of a given week, then formally assessing whether that feedback motivated students to complete similar higher order thinking questions later in the week using curriculum-driven resources such as Additional Practice Worksheets and IXL Challenge Zone questions. The questions asked on the Additional Practice Worksheets and IXL Challenge Zone questions were chosen to directly correlate with the exit tickets, and were used to determine whether the noticing and resulting feedback from the teacher played a role in students' completion of said questions. The data collected were the student responses and teacher feedback to the exit tickets and IXL assignments, as well as the responses, or lack thereof, on the previously mentioned worksheets and IXL skills over the course of two months. The data was coded specifically in regard to teacher noticing and the responses the teacher utilized when noticing, and how these responses led to an overall increase in student completion of higher order thinking questions, as opposed to the partial and incomplete answers which were present at the start of the project. The themes that emerged from this project were that using exit tickets to introduce higher order thinking problems, then providing students with feedback on them before formally assessing them led to an increase in students answering higher order thinking questions in completion and a decrease in partial answers, and that teacher noticing of student thinking with responses and subsequent feedback directly based on teacher noticing led to an increase in student completion of higher order thinking problems.

Eric Fizur

Master of Arts in Education

The Behavioral Impact of Infusing Social Emotional Learning within an English Language Arts Classroom

This action research project was designed to determine if the embedding of social-emotional learning components within the sixth grade, middle school English-Language Arts curriculum would be more successful than the students learning in a stand-alone, once per week social-emotional learning class. Through the implementation of the curriculum and readings in ELA, the components of Social-Emotional Learning were discussed in relation to the readings, the questions asked both written and orally, as well as during class discussions of the material. During class, the students were able to engage the material through an SEL lens in one period, and in another period the lessons were taught without the SEL components. Both groups of

students received instruction in the stand-alone SEL class. The data collection process was an aggregation of video recordings, research logs, teacher surveys, students assignments, and disciplinary records which resulted in a coded workbook to quantify and interpret the resulting data. The coding workbook served to develop the themes of this action result project. The resulting themes indicated: (1) Students who had social awareness demonstrated more positive behaviors, such as engagement; (2) Self-Awareness prevented repeat mistakes; and (3) Students who engage in empathetic thinking tend to perform better in both their assignments and behavior.

Jessica Funk

Master of Arts in Education

The Impact of the Use of AAC Devices on the Behavior of Non-Verbal Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this research is to determine if the use of AAC devices effects my student's behaviors in my class. I chose to do this research to see how the use of the AAC devices would benefit my students and enhance their learning. I used direct instruction to teach my students specific goal words on their AAC devices each week and encourage independent use of the AAC device. The data collected includes baseline data, data collection sheets, and video evidence and reflection logs. The data from these sources was used to create a coding workbook which showed the effects of the student's use of AAC and their behavior. The resulting themes indicated: 1) Students undesirable behaviors decreased during the duration of this research study, 2) Student's undesirable behaviors occurred less when they independently and correctly used their AAC device more and 3) As students became more fluent and familiar with their devices and required less prompting, undesirable behaviors decreased and desired behaviors increased.

Salvatore Gabriele

Master of Arts in Education

The Correlation Between Cooperative Learning and Engagement of Social Studies Content for Special Education Students

This research project is designed to determine the impact of cooperative learning on engagement of social studies students with special needs. Research has shown that it is often difficult to engage special education students in social studies content. Through the implementation of the cooperative learning strategies think-pair-share, jigsaw, and group research projects, students were provided the opportunity for deeper engagement in social studies content. Data was collected from pre and post surveys, video recordings, research logs, and student interviews. The coding workbook served as the guide to themes that resulted from this research project. There were three resulting themes indicated: (1) cooperative learning significantly increased peer-to-peer interactions, (2) cooperative strategies significantly decreased student off-task behavior, and (3) the jigsaw activity proved to be the most impactful.

Breanna Hathcock

Master of Arts in Education

The Impact of Restorative Circles on Student Relationships and Classroom Environment for Middle School Mathematics Classrooms

Research has emphasized the importance of positive relationships to create a positive learning environment. This action research project was designed based on the premise of increasing purposeful student-to-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and creating a positive learning environment through the implementation of restorative justice practices, specifically restorative circles. Students were provided with engaging restorative circles which were teacher-led as well as peer-led in a middle school mathematics classroom in order to engage deeper in the content, strengthen relationships, and take ownership of their own learning. The data collection process consisted of video recordings, student on-task performance tracking, research logs, student self-reflection surveys, and student assessment scores. The resulting themes indicated: Over time, student to student and student teacher relationships strengthened, 2) providing opportunities for honest sharing fostered a positive learning environment, 3) implementation of restorative circles promoted peer to peer support.

Robin Hess

Master of Arts in Education

The Effect of Self-Monitoring and Self-Regulation Strategies for Students with ADHD and Anxiety

The purpose of this action research project was to determine the amount of time spent on-task for students diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety in the classroom, and to see if self-regulation strategies would increase on-task time. Strategies such as tally charts, behavior monitoring checklists, student surveys, verbal and non-verbal cueing were implemented to see how students with various diagnoses would benefit from the use of self-regulation strategies in the classroom. Data was collected through multiple sources such as: lesson videos, tally charts, student surveys, and self-monitoring reflections. The data was then analyzed to determine a percentage of time spent on-task by students with ADHD and anxiety. A coding workbook was created to determine the specific behaviors that were occurring in the classroom that contributed to off-task behavior. The coding workbook was then used to analyze the data collected through the video recordings, surveys, research logs, tally charts, and checklists. The following themes emerged from the research 1) By implementing self-regulation and behavior monitoring strategies in the classroom, students with ADHD and anxiety are able to increase their amount of time on-task, 2) Verbal cueing had a greater success for on-task student behaviors than nonverbal cueing in both the resource room and in-class support setting, and 3) The use of behavior monitoring techniques in the classroom led to a decrease in self distraction in the classroom for students with ADHD and anxiety.

Matthew Hoffman

Master of Arts in Education

Effects of Document-based Learning on Comprehension Skills of Special Education Students in a Secondary Resource History Classroom

This action research project analyzed the effects of document-based learning on comprehension skills of special education students in a secondary resource history classroom. Strategy skills were taught to assist students by highlighting their progress in targeted areas related to 1) Paragraph/ Essay writing – construction, restating, supporting facts, modeling, 2) Understanding the theme question, identifying components, highlighting exercise, 3) Source Document Analysis techniques, outlining and bulleting exercise, supporting/validating facts from source various materials, 4) Essay construction, review of paragraph writing, linking and sequencing, use of transitional phrases. Data sources included writing artifacts such as multiple document-based question assessments (DBQs) and an essay on cultural blending. The various written artifacts were primarily DBQs of varying length, with source documents including charts, graphs, photographs, propaganda posters, speeches, oral histories and other narratives. All DBQs ended with an essay response to an overall themed prompt. Comprehension for the essay portion was measured by restating the prompt in the form of a statement, providing context and citing evidence or reasoning using the source documentation and/or prior knowledge. Teacher research reflection logs, classroom video recordings, and a concluding student survey were supplemental data sources. Data analysis and observation produced the resulting themes 1) Teacher modeling and conceptualization of source documents bolstered strategic thinking, 2) Comprehension increased through repetition of strategies and student engagement, and 3) Access to historical terms eased recall in creating connections to demonstrate comprehension through strategic and extended thinking.

Shannon Huff

Master of Arts in Education

Impact of Daily SEL Instruction on Student Self-Regulation

The purpose of this research project is to determine the impact of daily social-emotional learning lessons on students' ability to self regulate throughout the school day. The rationale for this research results from the need to address the 2 year disruption, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to elementary students navigating a school and classroom environment. Through the implementation of SEL lessons based on the Zones of Regulation, behavior management systems, and self-regulation coping strategies, students were provided an opportunity to develop their ability to self-regulate in a classroom setting. The data-collection process included student surveys, lesson recordings, daily student SEL check-in data, student reflections, weekly teacher reflections, and classroom behavior system data, all of which was collected from October 2021 through March 2022. After thorough analysis of this data, 3 themes have emerged: 1) An increase in self-awareness and self-regulatory behaviors leads to an increase in active engagement, , 2) daily SEL instruction leads to an increased emotional awareness in students, and 3) independent use of coping strategies taught during SEL instruction leads to emotional regulation.

Sonia Jones

Master of Arts in Education

To Behave or Not to Behave, That Is the Question? Behavior and Academics

The purpose of this research project was designed to answer the question of “why is classroom management crucial for academic success in the classroom?”. Through the implementation of three different strategies, I will be able to gain insight to develop an inquiry-based research project. I will use these strategies to help develop my research; a Happy Face Chart (for self-monitoring behavior), a Sensory Tool (to help maintain focus), and the Good Behavior Game (their classmate will help them stay focused). The rationale for this project is to show how behavior can affect student success academically. The data collected and analyzed will consist of the videos, the three strategies name above, research logs, coding workbooks, and student work samples. This information will be collected and analyzed for 11/29/2021-3/21/2022. As a result of the analysis of the data will help comprise themes and show results to posed research question. Three themes emerged as a result of this research; 1) students self-monitoring their behaviors decreases the problematic issues, 2) students were not receptive to using a sensory tool, and 3) the result of my presence also decreased behavior problems in alternate classes.

Jillian Krieger

Master of Arts in Education

Strategic Approaches to Increase Participation in Students with Special Needs

The implementation of sensory input, physical activity, and musical experiences before group lessons have the potential to increase student participation overall. These strategies will be used twice a week, before we read a book as a class. Baseline data is collected within the first three weeks of the research project, where there are no extra activities implemented before the group lessons. This is to obtain a foundational understanding of how the students participate. “Sensory input” data is collected for the next three weeks, which evaluates how the students participated after being exposed to visual-auditory videos, kinetic sand, bubbles, body socks, play dough, amongst other sensory items. “Musical input” data will be collected for the next three weeks, evaluating how the students participated after being exposed to musical songs, related to the story about to be read. “Physical activity” data will be collected for the last three weeks, which evaluates how the students participated after being exposed to physical activities, such as stretching and body movement. During our story lessons, students were provided with opportunities to be attentive, to engage without protest, turn the page, receptively identify items/characters, and expressively identify items/characters. The data sources are a compilation of research logs, videos, and task analysis data sheets that were filled out by the paraprofessionals working with the students during story time. The themes in this research project are: 1) Providing students with physical activity before an academic lesson increases student participation and engagement more effectively than a sensory or musical input strategy, 2) Variables that are unable to be controlled (absences, staffing shortages, therapy sessions) may have an impact on how students participate that are unrelated to the type of approach that is implemented, 3) All inputs led to increased student participation compared to lessons without any kind of input.

Joshua McCarty

Master of Arts in Education

Title: Impact of Cooperative Learning Strategies on Student Engagement in a Middle School Literacy Classroom

This action research project was designed to examine the effect of the implementation of two cooperative learning strategies, one formal and one informal, on student engagement. The formal strategy was the jigsaw method in which larger groups broke into smaller groups to form subject experts that reported back to the larger group. The informal method was think-pair-share (TPS) where students worked independently and then reviewed their work with a partner to share ideas. The data collection process was a compiling of written research logs, video recordings in the classroom, and student surveys. The videos and research logs were coded, and the survey results aggregated to identify themes within the action research. The resulting themes included: 1) overall student engagement increased through participation in cooperative learning, 2) in comparing the formal and informal cooperative learning strategies, formal cooperative learning results in the greatest increases in engagement, 3) peer to peer assistance increased as a result of implementation of cooperative learning structures.

Gabrielle McCleery

Master of Arts in Education

Title: Metacognitive Strategies Middle School Classroom

The purpose of this study was to determine how explicitly taught and structurally implemented strategies, specifically metacognitive knowledge (awareness) and regulation (planning, monitoring, evaluating) strategies, would affect engagement and metacognitive skills of students in a sixth-grade mathematics classroom. The study commenced when students participated in collaborative learning activities that challenged them to consider topics such as brain processing, metacognition, and growth vs. fixed mindset. In three proceeding phases, three specific metacognitive strategies were introduced to students. Teachers explicitly taught the metacognitive strategy while intentionally engaging students in discussion as to why the strategy was relevant in developing self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-reflection skills. Students were provided opportunities to use these strategies in the classroom, thus supporting student participation in activities that directly correlate to the development of individualized growth in metacognitive awareness and metacognitive regulation. Data collection consisted of an accumulation of direct instruction video recordings, on-task independent/collaborative practice video recordings, teacher observation journals, student self-regulation checklists and self-reflection exit-ticket responses, as well as student-teacher conference notes from December 2021 through March 2022. Data was then coded in order to identify emerging themes and quantify data for further analysis. Three major themes emerged: 1) Use of explicitly taught metacognitive strategies increased engagement during direct instruction and student working sessions 2) Use of explicitly taught metacognitive strategies improved students' metacognitive regulation (planning, monitoring, and evaluating) skills, particularly in students with disabilities 3) Use of explicitly taught metacognitive strategies improved the quality of students' verbal and written responses.

Kelly McGlynn

Master of Arts in Education

Will Teaching Decoding and Spelling Help to Improve First Graders' Reading Skills?

In a first-grade classroom students attempted to recover academically due to the pandemic. Many children lacked certain reading skills that are normally introduced in kindergarten. The purpose of this research was to use explicit decoding skills and spelling patterns in order to improve students' fluency and beginning reading skills. Twenty students participated in this study. The following data sources were collected and analyzed: Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarking reading assessments, pre- and post- Foundations Wilson Language Basics reading assessments, video recordings of reading lessons and reflective logs. It required explicit and focused instruction and repetition. Students received this support during whole group lessons, independent reading and guided reading groups. This project was ongoing and the outcome of it implied that explicit instruction focusing on decoding skills and spelling patterns helped to enhance a students' fluency and beginning reading skills. Overall, students' beginning reading skills improved due to the instruction provided to them.

Danielle Melillo

Master of Arts in Education

A Look into Incorporating Student Discussion in a High School Math Class

This action research project was designed based on the premise of increasing student engagement through the implementation of student discussion. Through the use of strategies such as clock buddies, discourse discussion prompts, discussion-based activities, share-out activities, and student reflections; students were provided the opportunity to utilize their peer's thoughts in order to better understand the material. The data collection process was a combination of a pre- and post-survey, video recordings, teacher journals, and student samples. These collections have contributed to creating a coding workbook that allows an analysis of the results. From the results, emerging themes are found. The themes in this action research project are: 1) an overall increase in student engagement as a result of the strategies, 2) implementation of all strategies led to reduction of teacher assistance when working in small groups, and 3) student's use of questioning and math talk became more functional.

Christopher Nale

Master of Arts in Education

The Impact of Manipulative Use to Instruct Elementary Mathematics

This research project was designed to increase student engagement and achievement through the use of manipulatives in mathematics. It was also created to explore how the use of manipulatives in mathematics would impact the second grade Envisions mathematics curriculum. In November 2021, a three-month manipulative intensive instruction style was implemented in a second-grade class of 11 students. The data collection process consisted of video recordings, research logs, student questionnaires, Likert scales, a pretest and posttest, online quick checks, and topic

assessments which were transcribed into a coding working to interpret the data. Upon completing the data analysis, three major themes emerged: 1) The participants were engaged in lessons during the three-month period of intense manipulative centered instruction, (2) The participants understood how to use manipulatives and showed interest in using them to learn math concepts taught in topics six through eight of the Envisions Second Grade Mathematics Curriculum, and (3) Student achievement increased in topics six through eight of the Envisions Second Grade Mathematics Curriculum. Their increase in achievement correlated with using manipulatives when compared to not using them.

Valerie Polsinelli

Master of Arts in Education

Growth Mindset Strategies in Art Education

The purpose of this research was to implement growth mindset strategies in my art room. I focused on how to potentially change students with a fixed mindset to learn to have a growth mindset. The first part of the study was the implementation of a growth mindset survey which consisted of three questions.

Throughout the weeks of the project, we would discuss growth mindset strategies and I would provide examples of how making mistakes in an art room setting could lead to growth and development. Students would also discuss specific mistakes they made while working on their designs and how they were able to use growth mindset strategies to correct their mistakes. Students were able to make connections and persevere during difficult times. I would also use examples in my teaching about how I also made mistakes when creating art projects and how it was an opportunity for me to improve upon my teaching.

Specifically, involving the growth mindset project and the research study, students were engaged and willing to take risks with their art. The final artwork would be a big part of the data collection as well as the surveys, videos of the lessons, and my research logs collected from December 2021 through March 2022. As a result of the analysis of the data, three major themes emerged: 1) Students were willing to take risks with their designs which indicated that many students have a growth mindset. 2) Some students may still have a fixed mindset which I will find out once the second survey is implemented and 3) students overall are more receptive to an environment where they can explore and create where mistakes are normalized as part of the learning process. The results of this study are incomplete as more information needs to be analyzed in the next two weeks.

Mackenzie Porch

Master of Arts in Education

Schema-based and Explicit Instruction: To Improve High-School Students' Math Word Problem Skills

In High School mathematics classrooms, students were struggling to complete math word problems. Math word problems help students to develop the necessary problem-solving skills they need to solve real world problems, in their everyday life. The purpose of this study was to

determine if the combination of explicit instruction and schema-based strategy can help students become better problem solvers within the context of the math curriculum. The following data sources were collected and analyzed: District standardized math tests, pre- and post- math word problem assessments, video recordings of math lessons, reflective logs, weekly formative math assessments, and student feedback questionnaire. The results of my study found that the explicit instruction of schema-based strategy improved students' abilities to solve math word problems. I also found that through schema-based instruction, students were able to develop transfer skills that helped them to independently solve new types of math word problems.

Erica Rafferty

Master of Arts in Education

The Effects of Technology on Student Engagement in the High School Geometry Resource Classroom

Technological advances can have both positive and negative effects on education. Remote learning further exaggerated students' difficulty to pay attention in a school setting. Thus, the focus of this study was to incorporate a variety of technologies into the classroom to attempt to improve student engagement, and in turn, geometry skills. This study involved seven students in a geometry resource room setting. The participants were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen years old. I integrated multiple types of technologies to teach several geometry concepts. The variety of technology included: videos, games using technology such as Kahoot and Jeopardy, and a geometry program called Geogebra. Students used the Geogebra geometry program to complete pre-made activities as well as construct their own geometry figures using the technological tools. During the research study, the lessons shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered with less teacher questions and more student questions. The data indicated that after integrating technologies in the classroom, students' engagement was inconsistent: at times they were on-task and others they were off-task. Overall, students were able to grow in the areas of geometry (*such as triangle congruence theorems, properties of midsegments, triangle inequality theorems, Pythagorean theorem, and trigonometric ratios*). Further long-term studies should be done to determine the effects of using technology in the geometry resource classroom.

Erica Reis

Master of Arts in Education

The Effects of Higher Level Questioning in a College Prep Chemistry Classroom

The purpose of this research was to investigate higher level questioning and the effects it has on students in a Chemistry classroom. More specifically, this research focused on examining how asking higher level questions affects students assessment scores, engagement, and student led discussions. The rationale for this research is based on observations of my students' progress over the past years in CP Chemistry and how previous students lacked the ability to critically think and answer higher level questions. Through the implementation of modeling higher level questioning, modeling metacognition, and class discussions students were given the opportunity to become more familiar with higher level questions and how to work through such questions when presented them on assessments. The data collected throughout this research process were

the frequency and levels of questions students asked, the frequency of levels of questions teachers asked, videos of lessons, research logs, and pre and post surveys of questioning. The data was coded using seventeen different codes. There were four themes that were observed from the results they were: The frequency of higher level questioning led to increase assessment scores, as the frequency of higher level questioning increased the frequency of scaffolding strategies implemented also increased, an increase of higher level questions asked led to an increase in student led discussions, and modeling was increased as higher level questions were also increased.

Jenna Root

Master of Arts in Education

Close Reading Strategy: To Improve Reading Comprehension Skills of Fifth and Sixth Graders

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of teaching close reading strategy on fifth/sixth graders' comprehension skills in a resource room. Ten fifth and sixth grade students with IEPs from two separate homerooms were involved in this study. Both pre- and post- reading comprehension tests were given to the students and the test included two different passages, reading comprehension questions, and a short response to determine the effectiveness of teaching close reading strategy. The instruction in close reading was completed in a whole group setting, small group setting, and independent setting. Students were working on their understanding of how to read more closely to break down the information from the text in order to answer a variety of part A and part B reading comprehension questions. In addition, numerous reflective logs and multiple videos of the instruction were collected in order to see the growth and development of the students' reading comprehension skills. The results indicated that students improved their analysis and reading comprehension skills.

Alexa Schmitz

Master of Arts in Education

Student Answer Types Based on the Implementation of Various Questioning Strategies

The goal of this action research project was to determine the effects that various questioning techniques have on student responses in a 7th grade English Language Arts classroom. This was done through the implementation of different questioning strategies, such as practicing longer wait times, asking recall questions, and asking higher order thinking questions in regards to Bloom's Taxonomy. Data was collected by means of video recordings of class periods, student surveys, and teacher reflection logs. The resulting themes showed that (1) Asking recall questions leads to single word responses, or short responses, from students, 2) Asking higher order thinking questions leads to extended responses from students and increased knowledge retention, and 3) Implementing longer wait times does not lead to changes in student responses.

Erika Schoeneberg

Master of Arts in Education

Student Transfer of Explicitly Taught Tier Three Scientific Vocabulary Terms

Modern science education and the current Next Generation Science Standards demand that students have an understanding of scientific content that is attainable only in conjunction with complimentary instruction of scientific language. Science is a unique content area that naturally consists of tier-three vocabulary terms necessary for understanding the nature of science. This study was designed to increase purposeful use of scientific vocabulary in student writing and conversations through explicit instruction of tier three scientific vocabulary terms. The research question guiding the study was: What effect does explicit instruction of tier three scientific vocabulary terms have on student use of the terms in their conversations and writing? The study focused on student transfer of vocabulary terms to their writing, as measured by student writing samples and research logs. The study equally focused on student transfer of vocabulary terms to student conversations, as measured by video recordings of class and research logs. The student writing samples, videos, and research logs were coded using a consistent coding workbook. This coding workbook served as the basis for the resulting themes extracted from this study. Writing samples, videos and research logs were collected throughout a twelve week period and across various lesson formats. The resulting themes indicated that explicit instruction of tier three science vocabulary terms led to (1) increased use of the terms by students in their conversations (2) increased use of the terms by students in their writing, and (3) increased use of the terms by students across all lesson formats.

Erin Schrieks

Master of Arts in Education

Use Sentence Combining Techniques to Shift from Simple to Compound Sentences

In this research study, I explicitly taught students how to combine sentences in order to improve their sentence quality. Students received thirty minutes of writing instruction, three times a week. Students were assessed with a pre-test on their knowledge of how to identify the proper way to combine a sentence using a comma and a conjunction. Students were then given intervention of 30 minutes of writing time and direct instruction of sentence combining. During that time there were written samples taken. Through the research study students were able to learn how to write different types of compound sentences using a comma and a variety of conjunctions. The results showed that students were able to improve their quality of writing by writing more in depth and longer sentences, but they did not always use the proper sentence combining structure. Students were missing punctuation such as commas and had grammatical errors. Post writing assessment data indicated that the students understood sentence combining techniques and integrated it their writing after intervention was complete.

Dr. Amy L. Stablini
Master of Arts in Education

Structural Analysis & Derivational Relations to Improve Biology Vocabulary Skills

The goal of this research was to explicitly teach derivational relations (i.e., Greek and Latin roots) and structural analysis of complex science vocabulary words (e.g., prefixes, root, and suffixes) to high school students in a resource replacement biology room. The study included seven special education students ranging in age from 15 to 16 years old who present with difficulty breaking down multisyllabic complex science terms. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were used to collect data which was analyzed to determine effectiveness of specific vocabulary instruction. Data were recorded using a) observation and reflection logs of the lessons, b) video recordings of the lessons, c) pre- and post- metacognitive questionnaire, d) pre- and post- curriculum-based vocabulary assessments, e) interim vocabulary quizzes, f) and student artifacts from science class. The timeline for the intervention was 10 weeks, including pre- and post- questionnaire and assessments. This class meets five days a week, and explicit vocabulary instruction was given three of those days for the first 20 minutes of class. Students were taught two words per day, or approximately six a week for the duration of the study. The analysis of data showed explicit instruction in structural analysis and derivational relations improved students' vocabulary skills. As a result of learning specific vocabulary strategies and breaking down complex biology terms, there was an increase in overall biology course interest, vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to understand course content. There was also a significant decrease in off task behaviors documented over the course of the action research study.

Edwin Truitt
Master of Arts in Education

High School Students' SMART Goal-setting and Self-regulation for the Future

In this inclusive science setting, students struggle with self-regulation strategies such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, following through on goals, motivation, and various life skills. The focus of this action research study was to teach SMART goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies to improve high school students' self-regulation skills. Out of eighteen participants, fifteen are in 12th grade, three are in 11th grade, thirteen are males, five are females, five have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and two have a 504 science class. This study elaborated on effectively teaching students how to self-monitor and achieve their goals utilizing the Self-Regulated Strategy Development instructional model. Data sources that were collected and analyzed included a student importance questionnaire, reflection logs, video recordings of the lessons, pre-and post- self-regulation and goal-setting questionnaires, goal-setting assignment, fisheries management policy assignment, district Environmental Science SGO benchmark assessment, and marking period grades. Findings show that students who were taught self-regulation strategies, such as goal-setting and self-monitoring, experience positive outcomes and are more successful in academics and their personal life. The data revealed that teaching self-regulating strategies such as the SMART goal-setting approach and self-monitoring strategies improved the ability of students to develop and attain goals. Teaching self-regulation strategies provide students opportunities to practice self-determination. This in turn teaches students life skills and promotes independence.

Maura Twiggs

Master of Arts in Education

Explicitly Teaching Analysis of Argumentative Text to Enhance High School Students' Reading and Writing Skills

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of explicit instruction in reading and writing at the text structure level (i.e., argument structure - claim, evidence, rebuttal, conclusion) using non-fiction articles on 9th graders' ability to summarize text and write a critique, in the general education classroom. In short, to teach 9th grade students to use elements of arguments to evaluate and comprehend arguments by producing a summary and critique. The participants were 23 Freshman English Students between the ages of 14 and 16 years old. The measures included in this study are pre- and post- writing assessments, student reflections, analysis of reading comprehension based on the NJ state standards, analysis of writing skills based on the NJ state standards, reflective logs, and video recordings of the lessons. The intervention used in this study is the explicit instruction in text structure using various teaching formats, as well as explicit instruction in summarizing and critiquing an argumentative text, including instruction in the clear connection between reading and writing. Results from this study found that opting to teach connection between reading-writing skills at the text structure level provided reflexive growth in students' overall achievement in related standardized reading and writing skills. The analysis of student summaries and critique indicated an increase in students' comprehension and composing skills. The themes indicated that my instruction specifically targeted the structure of persuasive text and quality of argument.

Alyse Tyndell

Master of Arts in Education

Analyzing and Constructing Persuasive and Argumentative Text

The purpose of this research project was to teach high school students to analyze persuasive and argumentative texts to help them to produce clear and strong arguments. The research project was presented to 10 students in the 10th grade, Resource Center English II classroom. In order to establish a baseline for student understanding of arguments, pre-assessment data were gathered by using multiple-choice questions in the Google form. The teacher analyzed the effectiveness of instruction that consisted of strategic modeling and explanation of rhetorical devices to enhance the students' interpretation and creation of persuasive and argumentative writing. The students illustrated an understanding of rhetorical devices by creating and analyzing persuasive advertisements, analyzing speeches, and developing an argumentative essay. Another point of data, the students received a post-assessment to measure the overall effectiveness of learning rhetorical devices. In addition, the researcher gathered reflective logs and video recordings of the lessons that focused on student engagement and responses, and analyzed and reflected teaching strategies and practices in the classroom. Overall, the results indicated that with specific modeling, explanation, and chunking of materials, the students were able to gain understanding

when appropriately using rhetorical devices, elements of persuasion and argument, and apply them appropriately in writing persuasive and argumentative texts.

Danielle Ujcich

Master of Arts in Education

Schema-Based Instruction: A Better Alternative Than Just Teaching Keywords

Students often struggle with solving word problems in the math classroom. The purpose of this research is to implement schema-based instruction to improve three middle school students' math word problem solving skills in a resource math classroom. Prior to implementation of the math word problem intervention data were collected, including student interest surveys, interest survey pre-test, student perception survey, schema pre-test, teacher reflection logs, and lesson video recordings. This data indicated that the students in the math resource room were in need of more explicit instruction on how to solve word problems. The students received direct instruction on how to use both additive and multiplicative schemas when solving word problems. They were provided schema diagrams and various practice problems. At the conclusion of the instructional time period, the students completed a math word problem post- test.

The results of my research concluded that schema-based instruction positively improved the student performance in solving math word problems by increasing student engagement through explicit instruction.

Sara Wolfgang

Master of Arts in Education

The Effect of Using Visual, Anchor Charts, and Native Language Infusion Strategies with English Language Learners

The purpose of this research is to increase English language arts skills for students who are English language learners through the use of native language infusion, visual aids, and anchor charts. The study was conducted through the implementation of these various evidence-based practices in three crucial parts of the Kindergarten English language arts curriculum including vocabulary comprehension, sight word recognition, and letter/sound identification. Data was collected throughout this process in the form of student interviews, anecdotal records of the classroom environment, student assessments, and student artifacts. I used a coding workbook to derive themes from my research project that focused on several key components of strategy use for students including: 1) Implementing native language infusion increased both student participation and reading attitude improvement 2) Students were able to more independently complete their work when utilizing these strategies at their desks. 3) Students' academic performance improved upon using all three of these strategies.

Tara Wood

Master of Arts in Education

Self-Monitoring and Goal Setting: Incorporating Self-Regulation Strategies in the Fourth Grade ELA Classroom

The focus for this research project was integrating explicit instruction to teach self-monitoring and goal setting strategies to fourth grade students, in the resource classroom. The goal for this study was to increase students' on-task behaviors while making progress towards their academic goals. The intervention of self-regulation skills occurred over a thirteen-week timespan and consisted of the explicit teaching of both goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies. Students participated in a self-regulation pre-assessment to gather baseline and gauge their own understanding of their ability to self-monitor. Students were taught how to utilize a self-monitoring checklist, along with the goal of targeting one off-task behavior at a time, in the resource class setting. Students were taught how to create SMART goals, and with the teacher, identify one to two areas of growth in the ELA. Students monitored one specific behavior and one academic goal for a period of three weeks. Students and teacher conferenced weekly to review goal progress and self-monitoring checklists. Data collection also consisted of weekly reflection logs, recorded lessons, samples of student work and self-monitoring checklists. The data analysis revealed that the students engaged frequently in on-task behaviors as they increased their ability to self-monitor their behaviors. Data also indicated that when students were explicitly taught goal setting strategies, their ability to create and meet goals shifted in a positive direction.

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology (MAIT)

Nicole Ciccone

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Interactive Multimedia Cookbook for College Students

The goal of this project was to motivate students to learn to cook while living on campus. At the beginning of this study, a multiple-choice survey was created to determine the student's interest level in learning to cook. The results of the survey revealed that students preferred to learn to cook through video instruction. The results of the survey helped determine that Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory would be best suited for this project. This theory consists of both words (as spoken text) and pictures (as animation or a series of still frames).

In order to incorporate Multimedia to this instruction, I used Bookcreator to include pictures of the recipe, video lessons of the recipe, as well as written instruction. My cookbook displayed instructional recipe videos as well as written recipes. Students were able to read the recipes through my cookbook and watch a cooking tutorial video that showed them how to make the recipe. The cookbook included five recipes, two breakfast recipes, one lunch recipe and two

dinner recipes. After completing my cookbook, the students were then asked to take two multiple choice surveys on my cookbook instruction.

The cookbook was sent to 12 students in an undergraduate class at Stockton University. After the 12 students finished my instruction, results showed that 10 of the students were motivated to cook more often on campus through multimedia instruction. The data also revealed that 11 students could understand my recipes through multimedia instruction.

Anthony Greder

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Instructional Module of Belbin's Team Roles Theory to Improve Students' Teamwork

Educators have had difficulty in implementing effective teamwork lessons because of role disputes between students, and because of an absence of an effective, heavily researched teamwork model. This research adapted an adult teamwork model, Belbin's Team Roles Theory, to create an interactive teamwork module that showcased the teamwork theory for middle schools. The Belbin's Team Roles Theory is a set of nine archetypes reflective of the personalities in the workplace. The module that I created introduces the nine Belbin roles, and the concept of a balanced team. The instructional content was designed to connect to student needs by being visual and interactive. The tasks were all games that developed student mastery throughout the module and, the final assessment was a clue game that tasked learners with identifying the team role of the worker based on the objects around their office.

The findings for this research were mixed. Two Likert surveys asked educators to assess the teamwork module based on the instruction and organization of the module. The content of the module received high remarks, particularly in questions about the tasks within the module, but educators were split on the relevancy of the Belbin Team Roles Theory within their classrooms. It was noted that most of the data from questions in the function survey received a split of positive data and negative data or answers of no effect. The implications to this research were that Belbin's Team Roles Theory should be adapted to middle school needs by providing less roles that are more relevant to middle school classrooms for future research.

Abigail Laird

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Improving Business Communication in Spanish Through Scenario-Based Learning

In this research project, I examined how the increasing globalization of businesses in the 21st century has brought about the need for second-language acquisition (SLA) amongst business professionals. According to a survey I recently conducted, current university business students reported feeling inadequately prepared for the multilingual aspect of their future careers. Put simply, many business students lack the multilingual business communication skills and corresponding confidence needed to navigate the ever-changing business world.

Research shows that SLA offers pedagogical, psychological, and social benefits to learners. Business students can greatly benefit from the skills afforded by learning a second language.

when designing a course tailored to these specific needs, it is important to consider the breadth and depth of material to cover. This research study considered the Spanish language specifically and used Scenario-Based Learning (SBL) to facilitate SLA and measure participants' performance throughout a self-paced Blackboard course module. The activities presented as SBL simulated real-life scenarios -such as sending emails to clients or leaving a voicemail for a colleague- to facilitate communication and interaction in a realistic multilingual business setting.

Participants' performance in the SBL course module in conjunction with the feedback they provided informed the findings of this study. Overall, business students benefitted from this research project and generally indicated their support of the project as a future potential course offering, thus making my overall goal to increase students' capabilities of communicating in another language in a professional business setting a success.

Mary Jane Murphy-Brown

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Teaching Strategies to Include DEI in Online Course Design

The purpose of this study was to investigate course design strategies to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in an asynchronous online general studies course. The goal was to see if how the course was taught could promote diversity of thought, fair treatment, and inclusion of all individuals in a learning community.

A supportive learning community is essential for student success. Institutions should have clear goals for DEI. While some instructors include content about DEI topics to support the goals, some courses do not easily permit this. This study attempted to evaluate course design, rather than content to support DEI goals.

There were three design strategies implemented in the study course: a liquid syllabus, or a web-based syllabus. It also included a Genius Hour project, or a student-centered capstone project. Finally, it included a variety of technology tools used to promote collaboration and connection. The decision to use these strategies was supported by three learning theories: Self Determination Theory (SDT), Universal Design of Learning (UDL), and the Community of Inquiry Model (CIM).

The impact of the strategies was measured by comparisons of a pre-course and student evaluation survey, a review of student journal entries, and a professional evaluation of the course design.

Although a t-Test comparison of experiences did not show significant differences in students' impressions before and during this course, other aspects of the data evaluation showed positive student experiences. The professional evaluations also showed strong scores for DEI. Therefore, this research study supports further research of course design strategies as a way of supporting DEI.

Nikki Nolan

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Game Development Project for Early Finisher Students

Classroom management becomes difficult in unstructured time between assignments when some students finish earlier than others. This often leads to early finishers becoming distracting to test takers or engaging in off-task behavior. This study implemented game-based learning during unstructured time to engage students in meaningful and active learning opportunities. Using previously learned math concepts, students were instructed to create their own board games to deepen their understanding of concepts and increase their critical thinking skills. The activities were structured to meet students' unique and individual needs in hopes to engage, motivate, and effectively instruct students in their education. The impact of this activity on engagement and motivation also prevents early finishers from disrupting their peers or participating in other negative behaviors.

The students were given a period of 4 months to complete the assignment, with surveys being distributed before and after that period. Additionally, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 4 students. Results of the surveys and interviews showed no significant increase in motivation, engagement or understanding. However, some surveys and interview responses showed the game-based learning project increased understanding and interest, as well as help strengthen their skills. Additionally, less students viewed early finisher assignments as free time after the project, decreasing the potential of engaging in disruptive behaviors. Results may reflect the difficulty of board game creation as most students were unable to complete the assignment and some students expressed difficulty in the physical creation of the game.

Jason Rajcok

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Improving Race Craft and Situational Awareness on iRacing through Scenario-Based Learning and Situational Judgment Tests

Racing on iRacing can end in the thrill of victory, the joy of hard racing, or the despair of defeat. Over time, I have noticed that often drivers experience defeat caused by a mistake they made or getting involved in the mistakes of others. From the needs analysis, I found that the root cause of wrecks is poor race craft and a lack of situational awareness. To help drivers experience better racing, they need to learn those two skills. I created an online instructional multimedia intervention to help drivers improve those skills without having to learn them through trial and error on the racetrack.

The intervention included several video-based scenarios. The video played and paused before a key moment. The learner was asked a series of questions designed to help them think through what would happen next and why. They chose an outcome and then watched the rest of the video. Finally, they had an opportunity to reflect on their original prediction based on the actual outcome. There were several lessons after a few scenarios that taught the learners a key component of race craft or situational awareness.

The post-survey results showed that learning occurred for most of the learners. Most said that they would apply what they learned from the scenarios and lessons to future races.

Kerry Rossi

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Reflection to Enhance Learning in a Secondary Science Classroom

In this study, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) was applied to determine if using reflection at the end of a lesson would enhance learning. Learning theories and previous studies have shown the importance of reflection for learning to take place. Reflection instruction was implemented at the end of class time, in the form of modeling and prompts using a technology tool, to investigate if reflecting on learning would enhance content retention.

This action research study was conducted in high school advanced chemistry classes, in which the teacher, available resources, and content taught was the same throughout the study. The experimental group was made up of 20 female students and 25 male students. The results of the study showed that students formed a better understanding of what reflection was and were able to apply it to enhance their understanding of content.

Students were able to make connections to previous learning and identify the important pieces of the lessons taught. A downfall of the study was that some students did not take the reflection time seriously. Future studies could include using a better motivator to make the reflection more meaningful for students and determining which type of reflection prompt is the most beneficial for content retention.

Anthony Thawley

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Project-Based Learning Activities for Early Finisher Students

In a middle school science classroom, often, there is an issue with classroom management during unstructured time. This can be attributed to students working at varying paces and speeds. Due to the varying paces, a gap of time occurs in the classroom where some students finish an assignment early while other students are still working. Part of a teacher's responsibility is to provide students who finish assignments early with meaningful and effective learning opportunities, often referred to as early-finisher activities or early-finishers.

This research study was conducted in order to evaluate the effects of meaningful early-finisher activities in a middle school science classroom. Introducing a project-based learning activity to motivate and engage students during this unstructured time was studied as a solution to this problem. The project-based activity involved the students in creating a multitude of representations for a fictional superhero of their own creation based on the periodic table of elements. Products could include book jackets, posters, newspaper articles, short stories, websites, and more. The study included 47 students ranging in age from 10-13 years old, enrolled in a school located in Southern New Jersey. The evaluation tools used to measure the motivation, engagement, and understanding in students were surveys, rubrics, and observations.

Overall, utilizing project-based learning did not increase motivation or engagement from students, although it did increase comprehension of the content. As 55.3% of students did not complete the early-finisher activity, and disruptive behaviors continued at similar levels regardless of what activity was being completed.

Lauren Zisa

Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

Teaching Public Speaking through Gamification and Problem Based Learning Methodologies

In the United States, there is no public speaking class required for high school students. Public speaking is an important skill in many careers, classroom activities, and is the most popular form of communication of information. Public speaking skills are crucial for students to succeed in school and beyond. Most people are afraid of public speaking and avoid the topic if possible. Due to this fear individual learners need to be motivated to try public speaking and build on their skills. DECA high school students are responsible for competing in-person events, typically through role play events.

The purpose of this project is to enhance students' public speaking skills so that they feel comfortable presenting in a public environment, specifically for their competition projects. This research project focused on the use of gamification and problem-based learning (PBL) methods to teach the five main concepts of public speaking: voice control, body language, delivery, anxiety control, and audience relations. Gamification is the addition of game design elements intertwined into learning content. The main function of PBL is that learning should not be passive but active, learning is integrated into social context, and is a constructive process for the learner. This project included a series of public speaking workshops designed for high school DECA students. The main goal of this project and workshop series was to help DECA students feel better prepared for public speaking events and set them up for success.

Master of Social Work (MSW)

Logan Molitor, Christina Seel, Danielle Fischer

Master of Social Work

Advisor: Dr. Jack Lewis

Child Physical Abuse Effects on Low-Income Adults

In the following presentation, the focus issue being discussed follows the lack of interventions and policy implemented to combat the problems that adults who have experienced child maltreatment in low-income families, specifically child physical abuse, face. Adulthood functioning, as examined by Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, relies heavily on the successful completion of previous life stages. With this in mind, a child who is experiencing maltreatment will have a difficult time completing stages in childhood adversely affecting their adulthood stages. It also discussed the understanding of both the cultural and ethical considerations that are involved within child maltreatment and the policies combating them.

Relevant policy provided the need and gap in ongoing treatment for children who experience abuse. Trauma Focused CBT is explored within the issue and how it can be an effective form of intervention for adults who have experienced this maltreatment. Advocacy efforts are discussed to encourage more research to be conducted and more effective policy to be put into place.

Calli Votta

Master of Social Work

Advisor: Loretta Mooney, PhD, LSW

Training Students on the Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training ‘QPR’ (Question, Persuade, Refer)

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, the typical age range for college students. 25% of college students report seriously considering suicide and 64% felt overwhelming anxiety and pressure. Students report wanting more mental health resources to cope with the pressures of college. The mission of QPR is to save lives, reduce suicidal behaviors and train students to be suicide gatekeepers. QPR stands for question, persuade, and refer. The training helps students to recognize a crisis and refer peers to supportive services. The purpose of this poster presentation is to examine the effectiveness of QPR on college students using a pre-posttest design. Students were offered the training through Stockton University’s Active Minds Chapter. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired samples t-test. The findings support previous research on QPR which found participants increased their knowledge of suicide warning signs and risk factors as well as felt more comfortable and confident in persuading someone to get help. Recommendations include further QPR trainings as well as additional funding for suicide prevention efforts on college campuses.

Margarita Gonzalez, Jeanette Quinn, Evelyn Tejada, and Shaniece Hyman

Master of Social Work

Advisor: Dr. Guia Calicdan-Apostle

Homelessness Among LGBTQ+ Youth

Homelessness is an epidemic that plagues communities worldwide, but a demographic that is often overlooked is adolescents in the LGBTQ+ community. In the United States, there is approximately 80,000 LGBTQ+ youth at risk of homelessness, with reports showing a steady increase in these figures since 2016. Historically, the nation has had a poor response to the needs of the adolescent LGBTQ+ community and their homeless subpopulation. Examining challenges related to this population is especially relevant because research has shown that LGBTQ+ youth are more likely than heterosexual youth to experience adverse and traumatizing experiences, as well as end up homeless (NAEH, 2016). Research has also supported reports of disproportionately higher rates of trauma and adversity in LGBTQ+ youth because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Since the early conceptualization of social work, the practice has intertwined itself with activism and policy reform. This includes fighting for services and resources for the LGBTQ+ and homeless youth population. This proposal aims to

address the largely unrecognized issues related to LGBTQ+ homelessness in youth and adolescents by offering the establishment of a homeless shelter constructed around issues and challenges influencing homeless LGBTQ+ youth and their diverse needs. The proposal is a 21-bed facility set to accommodate LGBTQ+ youth from ages 11 to 21, offering various programs meant to address the varying needs of LGBTQ+ youth. Recommended programs and educational components would include exploitation prevention programs, transitional living and ADL skill-building, inclusive sex education, employment assistance, street outreach program, and generalized mental and physical health services. These services and curriculums are to be delivered by qualified and licensed staff and are meant to be covered over a client's 24-month stay or until long-term housing is acquired. By implementing these services in New Jersey, this project could expand and serve as a framework for other states to begin similar implementation of services.