Department of Learning and Teaching
School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Capstone Research Symposium

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018 - MOTHER ROSALIE HILL HALL, UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
SESSION A | 10:30 am - 11:25 am

Breakout A2  MRH-Room 133
Implementing the Ashoka Changemaker Framework in an Adult Community-Based ESL Classroom
- Presenter: Carli Danaher

In what ways are TESOL teachers prepared (or not prepared) for intercultural communication in ESL class?
- Presenter: Nanhao Guan

International Students: Their Perception On Their Practicum Experience And Elaboration Of Informal Teaching Opportunities
- Presenter: Paz Valdivia Huerta

Breakout A4  MRH-Room 137
Learning and Teaching in the Multiage Primary Classroom
- Presenter: Breanna Black

Investigating the Effects of Differentiated Instruction in a Kindergarten Classroom
- Presenter: Abigail Bushnell

Scaffolding and Direct Instruction in a Kindergarten Classroom
- Presenter: Lauren Weatherall

Breakout A7  MRH-Room 145
Arts Integration As a Means Of Increasing Engagement in Students Who Experience Exceptionalities
- Presenter: Meegan Cuzick

Creating a Positive Classroom Environment
- Presenter: Rachel Porter

Breathe
- Presenter: Lisa Yegin

SESSION B | 11:30 am - 12:25 pm

Breakout B1  MRH-Room 127
The Lived Experiences of Disabled English Language Learners Who Attend Community Colleges in San Diego California
- Presenter: Tania Azevedo

Using Contextualized Activities to Deepen Understanding of Grammar Form, Meaning, and Use in an ESOL Community College Classroom
- Presenter: Dailyn Brown

Through a Service-Learning Lens: ESOL Faculty Perspectives on Implementing Service-Learning in the ESOL Community College Context
- Presenter: Jennifer Burbank

Breakout B2  MRH-Room 133
Which strategies for self-regulation (planning, monitoring, controlling, evaluating) are most effective for children with ADHD?
- Presenter: David Carson

How the Cultural Factors Impact the Engagement Level in an English as a Second Language Classroom?
- Presenter: Qian Wang

Is Cognitive Teaching Theory more impactful than Traditional Teaching Theory towards EFL Chinese students’ outcomes?
- Presenter: Yu Zhou

Breakout B3  MRH-Room 135
Math Vocabulary Application to Aid Students When Solving Math Word Problems and Story Writing
- Presenter: Rana Riachi

Integrating Literacy and Mathematics Through Engaging Students in Discourse and Journaling
- Presenter: Sophia Suzuki-Jones

Breakout B4  MRH-Room 137
Kinesthetic Learning in a Kindergarten Classroom
- Presenter: Cambria Greene

Brain Breaks in a Kindergarten Classroom
- Presenter: Katherine Mueller

Exploring the Effect of Multi-Sensory Learning Activities in Kindergarten
- Presenter: Lauren Thomas
Department of Learning and Teaching

Breakout B5  MRH-Room 139
Investigating the Application of Scientific Concepts to Real World Examples in the Classroom
  • Presenter: Mairead Bretney

Creativity in Writing
  • Presenter: Eun-Sang Cho

Cultivating Number Sense in Seventh Grade Mathematics
  • Presenter: Anya Littlefield

Breakout B6  MRH-Room 141
Conducting Meaningful Online Searches to Build Biology Content Knowledge
  • Presenter: Emily Cullen

Differentiated Instruction: Testing Flexible Grouping Strategies in the 7th Grade Science Classroom
  • Presenter: Cara White

Transferring Knowledge in the Biological Sciences: Using Scientific Concepts Across and Beyond Science
  • Presenter: Jessica Zahnd

Breakout B7  MRH-Room 145
The Positive Effects of a Math Focused Response to Intervention Program
  • Presenter: Gibian Jacobo

Explicitly Teaching Mindfulness Strategies to Sixth Grade Students with Learning Disabilities and Measuring the Effects on Literacy, Attention, and Attitude
  • Presenter: Patricia Johnson

Curbing Off-Task Behaviors in the Resource Room Using Positive Intervention Strategies
  • Presenter: Kimberly Yu

SESSION C | 12:30 pm – 1:25 pm

Breakout C1  MRH-Room 127
The perceptions of Saudi students, teachers and administrators on non-native English teachers in Saudi universities
  • Presenter: Rawan Alghamdi

Exploring Teachers’ Use of Alternative Teaching Methods in Saudi Arabian University Context
  • Presenter: Shahd Quotah

In what ways do Native English-Speaking teachers support Chinese students’ English speaking and reading ability in China?
  • Presenter: Runzi Wang

Breakout C2  MRH-Room 133
Examining the Communicative Competence of Adult L2 Learners in a Community College
  • Presenter: Mohammed Alsarhan

Exploring Methods of Supporting International Chinese Students on Improving Their Spoken English in the USA
  • Presenter: Siqi Bao

The Role of Instructional Pronunciation Training on Late-ESL Learners’ Accent Modification
  • Presenter: Tsai-Chen Tsai

Breakout C3  MRH-Room 135
Using Close Reading Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension in an Upper Elementary Classroom
  • Presenter: Sara Holbert

Visible Thinking Routines in a 4th Grade Classroom
  • Presenter: Sarah Kim

Purposeful Pairing for Think Pair Share in a Multiage Classroom
  • Presenter: Elise Polk

Breakout C4  MRH-Room 137
Metacognition in a 2nd Grade Classroom
  • Presenter: Shannon Clark

Cognitively Guided Techniques Implemented During Math Instruction
  • Presenter: Maritza Cordova

Exploring How Music Affects Learning in Transitional Kindergarten
  • Presenter: Sydney Horning

Breakout C5  MRH-Room 139
Academic Writing in the 8th Grade Classroom
  • Presenter: Shanika McCarty

Investigating Best Practices to Support Reading in 9th Grade English
  • Presenter: Jessica Painter

Investigating Supporting Students in Accessing Complex Texts in 12th Grade English Language Arts
  • Presenter: Amanda Wentworth

Breakout C6  MRH-Room 141
Explain Your Reasoning: Justifying Answers in a Sixth Grade
  • Presenter: Monika Davis
Developing Critical Thinking Through Student Inquiry  
- Presenter: Lyndsay Sutterley

Implementing Thoughtful Reasoning and Communication in the Math Classroom  
- Presenter: Justina Trusevich

Breakout C7  MRH-Room 145  
Active Learning in a Resource Classroom: Researching the Effects of Implementing Movement and Gamification within a Special Education Setting  
- Presenter: Alyssa Jerabek

It’s Not Just All About Robotic Cats: Innovative Mediations to Engage Struggling Readers  
- Presenter: Lisa Mitchell

Integrating Brain Games with Students with Disabilities Help Improves Early Literacy Skills  
- Presenter: Lauren Nales

1:30 pm – 2:25 pm  
LUNCH – MRH 127

SESSION D | 2:35 pm - 3:30 pm

Breakout D1  MRH-Room 127  
An Exploration of the Working Experiences of Non-Native English Speaking Writing Center Tutors  
- Presenter: Jessica Cheng

Exploring the Challenges and Approaches for Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) in Oral English Instruction in the U.S.  
- Presenter: Yu Feng

Negotiating Multi-linguistic Identities  
- Presenter: Katrina LeMense

Breakout D2  MRH-Room 133  
Playfulness and Student Perceptions in the ESL Classroom  
- Presenter: Elissa Gutterman

Exploring the Relationship between Class Size and Students’ Spoken English Proficiency  
- Presenter: Xiangshan He

Breakout D3  MRH-Room 135  
The Power of Making Learning Visual: Graphic Organizers in the Elementary Classroom  
- Presenter: Michele Beam

Cooperative Learning as a Strategy to Enhance Academic Achievement  
- Presenter: Shanna Chakkalakel

The Flipped Classroom: Creating Academically Achieving and Collaborative Students  
- Presenter: Matthew Spalding

Breakout D4  MRH-Room 137  
Multiple Learning Strategies in Mathematics and Literacy  
- Presenter: Madeline Curry

Explicit Strategies and Early Literacy Skills  
- Presenter: Samantha Holland

Breakout D5  MRH-Room 139  
Differentiated Instruction and Learning Strategies for 11th Grade US History  
- Presenter: Alexia Enriquez

Teaching Relevant Content in an 11th Grade United States History Classroom  
- Presenter: Benjamin Lindley

Using Mentor Texts to Increase Literacy in High School Journalism  
- Presenter: Carissa Peck

Breakout D6  MRH-Room 141  
A Study in Developing Student Research Skills: A Focus on Evidence Based Writing  
- Presenter: Sean McCarroll

Increasing Work Completion Through High Academic Expectations  
- Presenter: Fernanda Rodriguez

Investigating Writing Development Strategies in a 12th Grade ELA Classroom  
- Presenter: Caitlin Solomon

Breakout D7  MRH-Room 145  
Explicit Instruction in an Inclusive, Project-Based Setting  
- Presenter: Leizl Manalo

Reading Comprehension: The Expected and Unexpected Behaviors  
- Presenter: Carly Muir

The Possible Outcomes of a High School Homework Intervention Program for Ninth Graders with an Individualized Education Plan  
- Presenter: Mairead Stea
Abstracts

Alghamdi, Rawan S.  
Session | C1  
MRH 127  
**The perceptions of Saudi students, teachers and administrators on non-native English teachers in Saudi universities**

- Previous studies show that administrators working in colleges around the world are more likely to hire native English teachers than nonnative English teachers. These studies were conducted in inner circle countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and outer circle countries, such as India. However, few studies examined expanding countries, where English is taught as a foreign language. The aim of this case study is to provide an understanding of Saudi students’, teachers’, and administrators’ perceptions of native and nonnative English teachers in Saudi colleges. Data was collected from three groups through purposeful sampling at two all-female colleges in Saudi Arabia. The participants included 64 Saudi students, 7 teachers, 3 native and 4 nonnative English teachers, and 3 administrators. Having employed a mixed methods approach, the findings of this case study reveal that the students’ preference for native and nonnative English teachers vary based on their English proficiency levels. This study revealed that rather than blanketed preferences for native or non-native teachers, students’ preferences were based on certain courses or proficiency levels that students were placed in. Likewise, this study revealed that administrators’ preferences for native English teachers were specific to intensive courses.

Alsarhan, Mohammed  
Session | C2  
MRH 133  
**Examining the Communicative Competence of Adult L2 Learners in a Community College**

- Since its introduction in the early 1970's by Dell Hymes, the notion of communicative competence has been subjected to intensive academic inquiry leading to reformulation and expansion of the concept particularly as it relates to second language learning. Communicative competence is notably considered as the synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In an attempt to empirically account for this phenomenon in second language learners, this (case) study describes and analyzes essays of advanced level L2 learners with the aim ascertaining the extent at which they may have developed what could be described as a broad repertoire of knowledge needed to communicate appropriately in a given context. The research participants, from whom the data was obtained, are 18 students enrolled in ESOL 45 course in a community college in San Diego. The (qualitative) data is an essay, a responsive writing, on a given topic that is socially and educationally relevant to the learners. Analysis shows that the participants’ writings exemplify varied performance. The learners demonstrate awareness of the various elements of grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence particularly in the manner in which arguments are presented. However, various degrees of errors (both global and local) that point to communicative incompetence are noticed in almost all the writings. Due to the noticed prevalence of local errors that appeal to grammatical incompetence in all the essays, it is suggested that sustained attention should be given to all areas of competence regardless of the language level of the learners.

Azevedo, Tania F.  
Session | B1  
MRH 127  
**The Lived Experiences of Disabled English Language Learners Who Attend Community Colleges in San Diego California**

- This project explored the lived experiences of English language learners with disabilities that attend community colleges in San Diego California. I interviewed one participant with a physical disability and another with a learning disability. In this phenomenological study based on the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, I sought to provide a clearer picture of what factors have contributed to their schooling successes and setbacks. I wanted to understand to what extent their current academic context is serving them, as it should. The findings showed that the two participants have faced many challenges as ELLs with disabilities. On the other hand, their experiences were also very positive and full of triumphs. They were both very pleased with their academic accommodations as ELLs with disabilities at the community college level. Their experiences in this sector have helped them understand their special needs better. In turn, leading them to become very successful students and do well in non-academic contexts. The implications from these findings are that four-year intuitions can learn greatly from the local community college sector, on how to serve disabled ELLs in more effective ways.

Bao, Siqi  
Session | C2  
MRH 133  
**Exploring Methods of Supporting International Chinese Students on Improving Their Spoken English in the USA**

- This study focuses on the linguistic problems faced by the international Chinese students and the role of English instructors to improve their verbal communication. The research will explore teaching methodology that may be effective in helping students improve their English and adjust to their English learning environment. The data for this study were collected by interviewing and giving surveys to ESL community college teachers and students. The researcher provides recommendations for faculty of and for international Chinese students on practices and strategies that will support the development of their speaking skills. Hence, by using different methods and approaches, Chinese students can overcome multiple barriers caused by linguistic issues.

Beam, Michele M.  
Session | D3  
MRH 135  
**The Power of Making Learning Visual: Graphic Organizers in the Elementary Classroom**

- Different types of graphic organizers were implemented in a fifth-grade classroom of 25 students in math, writing, and social studies to make their thinking visual. In math, students used a modified four-corners-and-a-diamond organizer (Zollman, 2009; 2012) to solve multi step word problems. Graphic organizers to support recall, collection of evidence, and organization were used to assist students in writing about informational text. Venn diagrams and flow maps were used to support students’ understanding of relationships between concepts in social studies. Summative assessments showed that 70% of students demonstrated increased comprehension and engagement as a result of using graphic organizers. This experience reinforced the belief that students learn best when they can make abstract concepts visual so they are concrete and comprehensible.
Black, Breanna J.  
**Session | MRH 137**  
\*Learning and Teaching in the Multiage Primary Classroom*  
- I examined several components of multiage classrooms that are unique to its’ structure such as child-centered planning, flexible grouping, and collaborative peer learning, and the effects these may have on students’ learning outcomes (Aina, 2016). I implemented various instructional strategies and differentiated assessments within two unique lessons in a kindergarten and first-grade multiage classroom of 46 students in the content areas of mathematics and literacy. Data analysis from student interviews, observational field notes, and formal assessments were included in the research. This research process has taught me how there are many elements that must be accounted for in multiage classrooms in order for meaningful and effective learning to take place. I was able to see how truly important it is to take the time to know each student in a large classroom, so that the relationships built are transformed into a community of learners with inclusion and differentiation at its foundation.

Bretney, Mairead  
\*Session | MRH 139*  
\*Investigating the Application of Scientific Concepts to Real World Examples in the Classroom*  
- In this research, I explored creating environments where the students study science content through a lens of application to the real-world. This led me to investigate the development of students’ critical thinking as it relates to connecting content knowledge with real-world examples and experiences. I found that if students are consistently engaged in critical thinking while applying science concepts to real-world projects, they develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Brown, Dailyn R.  
**Session | MRH 127**  
\*Using Contextualized Activities to Deepen Understanding of Grammar Form, Meaning, and Use in an ESOL Community College Classroom*  
- The purpose of this action research was to assess how implementation of contextualized grammar activities can be utilized in an advanced ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom to increase students understanding of the meaning and use of grammar forms. This research was conducted at a community college in an advanced ESOL reading and writing class. These activities were presented through the use of authentic materials such as songs, novels, and film clips. Data collection included using worksheets created from or to be used in conjunction with the authentic materials in the classroom and at home, as well as feedback forms, grammar assessment, and discussion with my mentor and in an academic community forum. Preliminary findings indicate increases in students’ understanding of meaning and use of grammar forms; however, the impact of the use of authentic materials specifically on student understanding and use of grammar forms remains unclear.

Burbank, Jennifer R.  
\*Session | MRH 127*  
\*Through a Service-Learning Lens: ESOL Faculty Perspectives on Implementing Service-Learning in the ESOL Community College Context*  
- The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of eight ESOL educators with experience implementing service-learning in community college ESOL courses. I sought to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of service-learning in this context, such as the benefits, challenges, and motivations experienced by ESOL faculty who have utilized service-learning. Findings that surfaced in the data was a shared view among participants that service-learning experiences fostered senses of authenticity, engagement, critical consciousness, and belonging for adult ESOL students. Participants reported the prominent challenges with service-learning projects were related to time, logistics, scaffolding, and connections. The unexpected finding that emerged from the study was the relationship between the level of service-learning support participants received and the participants’ level of satisfaction with their projects and likelihood to continue with service-learning in the future. Taken together, these findings suggest that despite the challenges, it is feasible for interested ESOL educators to implement service-learning projects in their courses and for adult ESOL students to benefit from the enhanced learning experiences. However, it is essential for ESOL faculty to receive support in their service-learning efforts in order for them to continue to broaden and deepen their engagement with service-learning over time and for it to flourish in the community college ESOL setting.

Bushnell, Abigail L.  
\*Session | MRH 137*  
\*Investigating the Effects of Differentiated Instruction in a Kindergarten Classroom*  
- I implemented differentiated learning strategies in a Kindergarten classroom of 24 students. My first focus strategy was content and process differentiation for various learning styles through a math lesson. A summative assessment following the lesson showed 50% of the class meeting set learning expectations. The second strategy implemented was flexible ability grouping through a series of lessons on blending and segmenting CVC words. The formative assessment taken by students at the beginning of this lesson series showed 45% of students meeting set learning goals, compared to 75% of students at or exceeding learning goals at the conclusion of the unit. Through this research process, I learned the importance and benefit of implementing differentiated instruction strategies when planning lessons in order to reach all students regardless of their current ability level or special needs.

Carson, David A.  
\*Session | MRH 133*  
\*Which strategies for self-regulation (planning, monitoring, controlling, evaluating) are most effective for children with ADHD?*  
- This case study explored four components of self-regulation (plan, monitor, control, reflect) and which self-regulatory learning strategies are effective for children with ADHD. Participants are children (ages 10 -14) who have previously been diagnosed with ADHD. They were recruited by flyer at their pediatric office and through professional connections held by the primary researcher at local schools. Each student completed a self-regulation questionnaire and participated in a 30-minute interview in order to determine how students are self-directed in managing their learning. Caregivers answered questions through a demographic survey that provided background information and, if possible, information about interventions, support personnel, and both past and current ADHD-related concerns. The participants’ experiences utilizing self-regulation strategies were examined individually and compared in order to identify patterns and differences in goal setting, on task performance and overall academic achievement.
**Cooperative Learning as a Strategy to Enhance Academic Achievement**

- I implemented cooperative learning strategies in a fifth-grade classroom. In math, students worked in prearranged small groups to solve a word problem using a graphic organizer and more than 70% of students were able to successfully meet learning goals of showing work for decimal addition and subtraction as well as using estimation to check the answer. For literacy, students worked in small groups to create a paragraph structure and over 60% of students were able to successfully meet learning goals of creating a paragraph including a topic sentence, three supporting details and a closing sentence. I learned the importance of incorporating cooperative learning strategies with students, because it emphasizes valued skills such as collaboration and communication. I also learned that I am an effective learner when I collaborate ideas with colleagues, which is why I strive to provide the space where students can do the same with each other.

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**An Exploration of the Working Experiences of Non-Native English Speaking Writing Center Tutors**

- As more international students are provided opportunities to tutor in community colleges, it has become increasingly important to understand the experiences of this unique population of tutors, so that they can be supported in effective ways. As there is very little research on non-native English speaking (NNES) writing center tutors, this study utilizes qualitative methods by interviewing experienced NNES writing center tutors to understand their experiences and needs to discover strategies they can use to overcome some of these challenges and to develop a positive self-perception of themselves as tutors. The findings suggest that NNES writing center tutors encounter unique challenges in their work as tutors and providing specialized supports to them as an institution can be of vital importance to their success.

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**Creativity in Writing**

- This action research study took place in a 7th-8th-grade combination English Language Arts class in San Diego County. An active interest in the effectiveness of backwards design, as well as the benefits of creativity with regards to cognition and learning, led me to ask, "How can educators provide 7th-8th-grade students with the writing skills necessary to generate creativity?" Two cycles of research, designed backwards, were applied to encourage 7th-8th-grade students to value writing poetry and screenplays as a means of developing and achieving understanding by cultivating desired results, measurable objectives, and performance tasks that emphasized creativity. I found that students were intrinsically motivated to engage with creative material when learning in a supportive and encouraging academic environment where failure is seen as a pathway to inspiration and authentic learning experiences.

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**Metacognition in a 2nd Grade Classroom**

- I implemented metacognitive strategies in a second-grade classroom of 22 students to examine the effectiveness of self-developed strategies in math and literacy. Students engaged in Cognitive Guided Instruction (Carpenter, Empson, Fennema, Franke, & Levi, 2015) and series of literacy lessons developed to challenge students to think about their thinking. The CGI summative assessment, student developed strategies to answer a story problem, showed 86% of students were able to accurately develop one or more strategies to solve the problem. The literacy summative assessments performed by students showed an average of 72% of students being capable of utilizing metacognitive strategies in reading. I learned that students at a young age are capable of utilizing background knowledge to support their learning but may not be cognitively aware of their developing strategies. Personally, I learned that I must be prepared for differentiation, the unexpected, and student engagement is essential to a lesson.

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**Cognitively Guided Techniques Implemented During Math Instruction**

- I implemented Cognitively Guided Instruction techniques (Carpenter, Fennema, Frank, Levi, & Empson, 2015) into my first-grade classroom of 20 students to teach solving for an unknown partner in a given word problem. Students identified both the total and given number of their word problem before using a math strategy most familiar to them to solve for the unknown partner. In a classroom of diverse learners, I found it most valuable that flexibility with implementation, differentiation of instruction and understanding students mathematical thinking play an essential role in supporting and developing the individual educational needs of all my students. This realization has continued to influence my instructional practices, leading to more effective teaching strategies.

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**Conducting Meaningful Online Searches to Build Biology Content Knowledge**

- The Next Generation Science Standards encourage the use of authentic practices to teach science, including finding, interpreting, and applying information online in ways that guide students’ own learning. In a high school biology class, a scaffolded research activity meant to support efficient use of search terms to answer content-specific questions yielded mastery of online inquiry strategies, but did not help students meet the content-specific learning goal, because students were not able to connect search results to prior biology knowledge. A second lesson designed to help students create a lab experiment showed that more opportunities to connect prior content knowledge to new information they retrieved from online led to more students reaching learning goal. These results suggest that when designing lessons in which the Internet is a pivotal tool, teachers should ensure students are accessing previous knowledge when asked to construct new meaning, while also supporting online inquiry strategies.

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**Multiple Learning Strategies in Mathematics and Literacy**

- I implemented number talks and literacy strategies in my first and second grade combination classroom of 23 students to teach how multiple learning strategies enhance student learning. Students used multiple learning strategies in mathematics and literacy to improve number sense and reading fluency. A summative assessment was used to determine if using multiple learning strategies in mathematics and literacy helped improve students understanding of the content and the results identified that most students were capable of meeting the content specific learning goal. I learned the importance of meeting my students’ individual learning needs by providing them with multiple learning strategies to help assist them learn the content to the best of their ability.
**Cuzick, Meegan N.**  
Session | A7  
MRH 145  

**Arts Integration As a Means Of Increasing Engagement in Students Who Experience Exceptionalities**

- While art is often seen as a supplemental activity or extraneous subject in mainstream curricula, this research was an attempt to illuminate some of the benefits integrating creative processes can have on maximizing student interest in any content area. The participants in this study were five students ranging in age from five to seven all of whom experienced exceptionalities. Over the course of several weeks the young learners took part in 51 activities that incorporated art and prompts for innovative problem solving to varying proportions. Data was collected through various types of observations that recorded the degree to which art/creative thinking was implemented in the lessons. The assessments also measured the extent to which the children were engaged in the activities by analyzing their participation and behaviors at the time of the lessons were delivered and subsequent tasks were assigned. Each student in the focus group exhibited marked improvements in on task behavior when the integration of art was present in the lessons observed. Additionally undesirable behaviors were recorded less during activities that incorporated opportunities for art and/or creative problem solving. Although, the presence of many variables in the focus group's classroom made drawing an irrefutable relationship between arts integration and levels of student engagement possible, the data collected during two phases of research certainly indicated a strong connection. Recommendations for further research would include conducting the study over a longer period of time with a more consistent support staff and including a control group for comparison.

**Danaher, Carli A.**  
Session | A2  
MRH 133  

**Implementing the Ashoka Changemaker Framework in an Adult Community-Based ESL Classroom**

- This self-study action research reflects the experience of a TESOL graduate student, who was inspired to implement the Ashoka Changemaker framework into an adult community-based ESL classroom. The researcher wanted to implement this framework “lessons that incorporate the development of empathy, problem-solving, leadership and team work in order to take action for change” into this project from the start. However, the participants had specific language needs that had to be addressed first, such as daily English knowledge to get a healthcare provider and to communicate with their coworkers and in their communities. As a result, the researcher took a participatory approach to a curriculum and co-created the content with and based upon the students’ needs. This study explores, through reflective narration of field notes and teacher journals, the cyclic teaching processes that the researcher endured in order to finally implement the Ashoka Changemaker framework into an adult community-based ESL setting. One preliminary finding of this study is that by refocusing the learning objectives of the curriculum, the shift was an act of Changemaking in itself.

**Davis, Monika E.**  
Session | C6  
MRH 141  

**Explain Your Reasoning: Justifying Answers in a Sixth Grade**

- In this action research project, I investigated the effects of introducing more opportunities for sixth-grade Advanced Math students to make thinking visible in the form of written and verbal activities. I looked at how students' written explanations of answers improved on word problems after the introduction of explicit instruction, scaffolding and increased opportunities to practice writing. I also looked at how students verbalized their thinking in collaborative activities, and how their verbal explanations improved with group-worthy and open-ended activities. I found that these advanced math students easily improved their explanation of answers with these interventions. I also found that students enjoyed and were more engaged in lessons in which they were asked to participate and share prior knowledge. I also found that implementing a variety of activities helped to engage different subsets of the student population. Overall, I found that making thinking visible helped to assess, engage, and improve student thinking and learning.

**Enriquez, Alexia N.**  
Session | D5  
MRH 139  

**Differentiated Instruction and Learning Strategies for 11th Grade US History**

- This action research study took place in an eleventh grade US History classroom in a South-East San Diego county public school. Initial observations displayed a need for instructional strategies that addressed a wide range of learning needs and abilities. This study aimed to uncover, “What forms of differentiated instruction and learning strategies best applied to the English Language Learners and Gifted and Talented Education students in this class, and how would I both consistently adjust the appropriate level of challenge to stay within a student’s growing zone of proximal development and determine an assignment met the students’ specific learning?” Two phases of research were conducted: one centered on a scaffolded article handout, while the other utilized interactive notebook entries. The results suggest the use of flexibly paced processes, consistent informal assessments, and proactively implemented enrichment activities best support learner variance and apply appropriate challenge.

**Feng, Yu**  
Session | D1  
MRH 127  

**Exploring the Challenges and Approaches for Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) in Oral English Instruction in the U.S.**

- When it comes to oral English instruction, native English instructors are regarded as more proficient as non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). However, literature shows that the majority of English instructors is NNESTs. Therefore, this case study aims to explore the challenges and experiences by NNESTs in oral English instruction. It utilizes qualitative methods by interviewing NNESTs who are working in the US to explore what challenges they are facing, and what vital experiences they have in terms of oral English teaching. The main purpose of this case study is to provide efficient suggestions and experiences to NNES candidates to reference when they have similar oral English teaching challenges.

**Greene, Cambria L.**  
Session | B4  
MRH 137  

**Kinesthetic Learning in a Kindergarten Classroom**

- This paper examines the benefits of implementing kinesthetic learning and purposeful movement into a kindergarten classroom, in a two-part cycle. The literature identifies the following three outcomes of implementing kinesthetic learning: increasing academic achievement, increasing engagement and participation, and benefiting students with attention-based learning disabilities (Moyer, 2015). The first cycle administered a movement-based activity in which students used full-body movement and dance to count to ten. The second cycle focused on a five-lesson unit about sorting and categorizing, varying in small hand movements to entire movement-based lessons. The results were consistent with the literature, as the data showed an increase in student academic achievement, student engagement/participation, and positively affected students with attention-based learning disabilities. The results furthered my desire to implement kinesthetic learning into my classroom, and the process of conducting this study affected my understanding of planning, instruction, and the importance of knowing the students well.
Guan, Nanhao  
Session | A2  
MRH 133

In what ways are TESOL teachers prepared (or not prepared) for intercultural communication in ESL class?
- For this case study, fifty questionnaires from ESL students were collected and three different ESL classes were observed with the purpose of evaluating whether or not ESL teachers are prepared for the intercultural communication that happens within ESL classes, and how to be a prepared teacher in ESL classes. There have been numerous studies focused on ESL classroom arrangement and ESL teacher preparation, however, few studies connect these two topics with intercultural communication. This research attempts to bridge the gap between these two constructs and how intercultural communication plays a vital role.

Gutterman, Elissa C.  
Session | D2  
MRH 133

Playfulness and Student Perceptions in the ESL Classroom
- This case study investigated playfulness in relation to student perceptions in the ESL classroom, and namely the factors which influence whether a student enters a state of playfulness during playful classroom activities. Some such factors include culture, cognitive challenge, competitiveness, among other personal afeffective factors. The study looks at five students from a non-credit community college intermediate ESL course from various cultural backgrounds.

He, Xiangshan  
Session | D2  
MRH 133

Exploring the Relationship between Class Size and Students' Spoken English Proficiency
- The purpose of this study is to explore how class size affects students' spoken English proficiency. The bodies of literature on the class size and student achievement and spoken language proficiency in classroom settings do not overlap. My research is important because it brings these forms of scholarship together. I collected data through interviews with educators and questionnaires and surveys with students. Preliminary findings suggest that there are more disadvantages in the large-sized classes than in the small-sized classes, and both teachers and students prefer small to medium-sized classes (under 30 students). This study also addresses the challenges and strategies teachers face and use to take advantage of different class sizes.

Holbert, Sara C.  
Session | C3  
MRH 135

Using Close Reading Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension in an Upper Elementary Classroom
- I implemented close reading (Fisher & Frey, 2012) in my fifth grade classroom of 24 students. The students used close reading strategies to comprehend mathematics word problems and to identify the main idea and key details in nonfiction texts. The summative assessment in mathematics showed that 79% of students were able to explain and set up a solution for word problems. On the summative assessment in nonfiction reading, 79.2% of students accurately identified main ideas and key details in a text. Through the action research process, I learned the importance of modeling, alternative assessments, providing detailed feedback, and continuing to grow as a teacher through research of best practices.

Holland, Samantha A.  
Session | D4  
MRH 137

Explicit Strategies and Early Literacy Skills
- This study was done to determine whether or not direct explicit strategies and interventions in early literacy skills had a positive impact on students’ development of these skills. A group of four students participated in the study from either kindergarten or first grade. These students ranged from having disabilities, behavior challenges, being English language learners, and/or low socio-economic status. These students assessed and scored well below the grade-level expectation for English Language Arts. The action research focused on the relationship between explicit, engaging, hands-on strategies and K/1 students with special needs' early literacy skills. Students were taught an array of strategies to further develop their sight word recognition and retention, their phonics skills, and both their phonological and phonemic awareness skills as well. Data was collected through personal journaling, observations, and discussions with students and colleagues. Additionally, students were given both pre-tests and post-tests on the skills being taught. The study suggests that using direct, explicit, engaging strategies and interventions helps further develop students' early literacy skills.

Horning, Sydney F.  
Session | C4  
MRH 137

Exploring How Music Affects Learning in Transitional Kindergarten
- Music in the classroom positively effects students learning and can benefit students in many ways (Duax, 2013). I was able to implement this instructional strategy in the Transitional Kindergarten class I was working in. I implemented how music affects learning with literacy and mathematics. This research was completed in a Transitional Kindergarten classroom of twenty-two students. For the mathematics activities, students used teddy bear counters and played a game that allowed them to make groups of 1, 2, and 3. Students also learned a song played by a ukulele to further their learning. For literacy, students learned about setting and characters through the book The Gingerbread Girl. I learned that by teaching students through a variety of ways, students are more engaged in the content. Not every child learns in the same way, so different approaches to teaching aides in student success.

Jacobo, Gibian G.  
Session | B7  
MRH 145

The Positive Effects of a Math Focused Response to Intervention Program
- My action research entails the implementation and results of a math focused response to intervention program (RtI) to a group of at-risk and/or special education fourth grade students that were determined to require tier three intervention supports after a school-wide needs assessment was administered. The benefit of this RtI program was its school-wide implementation during designated times throughout the day, henceforth, creating blocks of time where all new learning ceased in the classroom, and all students, no matter their tier designation, report to their RtI team leader for hyper individualized instruction. The curriculum I designed for my RtI group balances, individual, and whole group lessons with elements of learning through movement, and gamification which in turn, utilizes fun, and sometimes competitive, outdoor and indoor activities. Additionally, the implementation of a repetitive and consistent progress monitoring mechanic tracked my students' growth from week to week and informed the decisions I made to amend, customize, scaffold, and differentiate my daily 45 minute lessons to match their needs. After the implementations of two phases throughout my research I determined that implementation of a response to intervention program, as long as the program itself is implemented diligently, effectively, purposefully, and most importantly, equitably for students of all abilities, will show student growth within the intervention content.
Jerabek, Alyssa  
Session | C7  
MRH 145

*Active Learning in a Resource Classroom: Researching the Effects of Implementing Movement and Gamification within a Special Education Setting*

- This study focuses on the effects of implementing movement and gamification within a special education setting. It explores what happens to students' reading abilities when a teacher tailors instruction to address student interests while incorporating movement and games within the lessons. It also analyzes its effect on student motivation and engagement within the classroom. A total of eight students ranging from first-grade to fourth-grade participated in one of the two phases of research. In each phase of research, lessons that incorporated movement, games, and student-centered instruction were implemented and the effect on the students' skills and motivation, as well as their overall engagement and participation was assessed. The students' skills and motivation were assessed at the beginning and end of each phase through formal curriculum-based assessments and a student self-reflection Likert scale. The students' engagement and participation were measured throughout the implementation process through informal observations recorded after each lesson.

Johnson, Patricia J.  
Session | B7  
MRH 145

*Explicitly Teaching Mindfulness Strategies to Sixth Grade Students with Learning Disabilities and Measuring the Effects on Literacy, Attention, and Attitude*

- Mindfulness in the classroom is a new concept that in current research, has yielded positive results to the overall school environment. This study investigates the relationship between students with learning disabilities engaging in mindfulness exercises, and their attention to task, attitude towards school, and reading, and overall literacy skills.

Kim, Sarah M.  
Session | C3  
MRH 135

*Visible Thinking Routines in a 4th Grade Classroom*

- This action research implemented Visible Thinking Routines (Ritchhart, et al., 2011) in a diverse, inclusive 4th grade classroom of 30 students to teach math and literacy. In Cycle 1, students solved word problems with metric system conversions through an error analysis routine and an inquiry-based routine. A summative assessment of a multi-step word problem showed that 70% of students met or exceeded expectations. From this process I learned how Visible Thinking Routines foster collaboration between students through an inquiry based approach to learning. I also learned how these routines support a wide range of learners in a classroom by scaffolding and providing access to material.

Kirk, Josephine R.  
Session | B3  
MRH 135

*Academic Language Comprehension Through Metacognitive Strategies for 3rd and 4th grade Math and Literacy Instruction*

- In math and literacy lessons for my third and fourth grade class of 23 students, I employed the direct academic language instruction emphasized in the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) and the increased speaking and listening opportunities for students emphasized in the FIVES (Facts, Inference, Vocabulary, Experience, Summary) Strategy (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Shea & Roberts, 2016). Students were informally assessed based on observational data, student self-assessment, learning activities, and formally through worksheets. Formal assessments showed that 76% of students were able to meet the learning outcome of accurately defining mathematics-specific academic language and 88% of students were able to meet the learning outcome of accurately defining literacy-specific academic language. I learned that academic language and speaking opportunities need to be incorporated consistently. I also learned that I need to dedicate more time to explaining formal assessments to students so that my expectations are clear and the assessment data is valid.

LeMense, Katrina M.  
Session | D1  
MRH 127

*Negotiating Multi-linguistic Identities*

- The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which English language learners negotiate their multi-linguistic identities. Data was collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews of five international EL's living in Southern California. Though participants in this study shared some common features of negotiating their identities by discussing gains and losses, it became clear that the overall concepts of identity, linguistic identity, and multi-linguistic identity are very complex terms and negotiating ones' identity may not be measureable or observable since all learners are different and have their own unique experiences.

Lindley, Benjamin R.  
Session | D5  
MRH 139

*Teaching Relevant Content in an 11th Grade United States History Classroom*

- This is a research project that took place in an urban environment in San Diego. After interacting with and assessing my Advanced Placement United States History class, I identified a need to make historical content relevant to students' lives. Ladson-Billings (2014) supports making a shift in the classroom environment towards culturally relevant teaching due to the data supporting this style of teaching. Two cycles of Action Research were implemented and the findings were that engagement increased as well as understanding of historical content when relevance was consistently stressed. This was demonstrated in self-assessment questionnaires, informal, and formal assessments. Making content relevant can increase engagement of students.

Littlefield, Anya M.  
Session | B5  
MRH 139

*Cultivating Number Sense in Seventh Grade Mathematics*

- This action research study took place in a 7th grade mathematics classroom in a public school in East San Diego County. Through observations, it was noted that a lack of deep understanding and positive mathematical identity existed in the classroom. Thus, the guiding question to be researched was: How does cognitively guided instruction and a constructivist approach to instruction in a seventh-grade mathematics classroom contribute to the cultivation of number sense and problem solving skills? It was found that allowing students to construct the learning for themselves, through meaningful activities and conversation, led to a deeper understanding of the content and a more positive experience with mathematics.
Manalo, Leizl R.  
Session | D7  
MRH 145

**Explicit Instruction in an Inclusive, Project-Based Setting**

- This study was implemented to examine the effects of explicit instruction with ninth grade students with diverse needs in an inclusive, project-based setting. Three, ninth grade students with Individualized Education Plans took part in this study after assessments revealed a need for a slower pace of instruction and low self-esteem in classrooms. This study was used to examine how step by step procedures will help math calculation comprehension and if the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model impacted students’ self-confidence as learners. The study consists of four parts: observation, support, implementation of GRR model, and data collection. Data was collected through weekly grades, mood and confidence level, and test scores. The study suggests explicit instruction through the GRR model helps math calculation comprehension and positively impacted study participants’ self-confidence as learners.

McCarroll, Sean  
Session | D6  
MRH 141

**A Study in Developing Student Research Skills: A Focus on Evidence Based Writing**

- This research study examined the need for developing student writing and research skills through a historical lens and evidence based practice with the goal to increase both critical thinking and collaborative skills. Building these skills in the classroom may ultimately help students to transition more successfully into life after high school.

McCarty, Shanika M.  
Session | C5  
MRH 139

**Academic Writing in the 8th Grade Classroom**

- This action research project explored classroom practices to improve 8th grade students’ analytic writing abilities. Critical reading and writing are essential skills to move students away from surface level answers to analysis. In order to be critical readers and writers, students must interact with the text by utilizing their prior knowledge and self-monitoring their processing of a text. In this study, I utilized close reading strategies, dialogic practices, writing opportunities, and reflections to support students’ writing skills. These practices were found to have a positive affect on analytic writing.

Mitchell, Lisa A.  
Session | C7  
MRH 145

**It's Not Just All About Robotic Cats: Innovative Mediations to Engage Struggling Readers**

- Developing strong reading skills and embracing one’s identity as an effective reader are indicators of a learner’s success across disciplines. The intention of my research design was to explore the motivations that contribute to reading advancement. My Action Plan focused on struggling readers and supports that would help my learners gain confidence, while producing a positive change in their reading fluency. Based on the literature I examined, my students would not be able to access 21st century curriculum if they were not proficient readers. The four participants in my study were fourth-grade males, ranging in age from 9 to 10 years-old. Each of the boys had an Individual Education Program (IEP) with goals addressing reading fluency. Regardless of their challenges, the students appeared to be very bright. They visualized themselves as college-bound changemakers in the fields of Science and Technology. I needed to nurture my four apprentices on their journey by developing mediations that would engage them in becoming successful readers. My initial design focused on the use of animal-facilitated reading supports but evolved beyond that singular entity. As I moved forward with my investigative process, I realized that I needed to develop a comprehensive system of scaffolds that would help my learners achieve their dreams. It wasn’t just all about robotic cats.

Mueller, Katherine M.  
Session | B4  
MRH 137

**Brain Breaks in a Kindergarten Classroom**

- I implemented a movement break also known as a brain break prior to beginning a lesson in mathematics and literacy. Research indicated that incorporating brain breaks can increase students’ achievement levels, on-task behavior and attention (Castell et al., 2007; Howie et al., 2014; Bjorklund, 1997). The study was conducted in a kindergarten classroom in a Title I public school in Southern California. Data sources included informal assessments, formal assessments and self-assessments. Results showed that when a brain break is performed prior to beginning a lesson it can increase students’ achievement levels in mathematics and literacy. In this study, I learned the importance of allowing students the opportunity to move their bodies throughout the school day and the benefits that it can cause. By conducting this study, I have learned a new behavior management skill that can be used to help create a positive and enriching learning environment.

Muir, Carly  
Session | D7  
MRH 145

**Reading Comprehension: The Expected and Unexpected Behaviors**

- The purpose of this study was to look at reading development and comprehension in fourth-grade students who have autism and specific learning disabilities. I was studying to see if the behavior, positive or negative, of the students affected the way the students read and could re-tell details from a passage they read. The study was implemented over the course of three weeks for phase one and three weeks for phase two. Phase one specifically looked at student’s behavior and re-telling abilities over four assessments. Phase two looked specifically at two to three assessments to see if the students had improved at all in reading comprehension and how the students behaved during whole class reading versus one-on-one reading in a separate classroom. It concluded with working with one student with autism and one who had a specific learning disability and focused on how negative behavior really does affect one’s ability to recall information from a text.

Nales, Lauren E.  
Session | C7  
MRH 145

**Integrating Brain Games with Students with Disabilities Help Improves Early Literacy Skills**

- This study was done to examine the effects of integrating brain games in the classroom and how they can help with early literacy skills and quality learning time. A group of four students with learning and intellectual disabilities, one in first grade and the other three in kindergarten took part in the study. The students were assessed and scored far below their grade level in early literacy skills: letter sounds, letter names, high frequency words and quality learning time. The action research focused on examining the relationship between action-based learning and the sight-word retention of kindergarten and first grade students with special needs as well as how action-based learning affects students’ quality learning time. Students were taught different brain games and movement while learning sight words. Data was collected by observations, pre and post sight word assessments and discussions with each student. The study suggests that integrating brain games and other movement in the classroom increases students’ quality learning time and sight word retention.
Increasing Work Completion Through High Academic Expectations

Rodriguez, Fernanda Z.  
Session | D6  
MRH 141

Investigating Best Practices to Support Reading in 9th Grade English

- My action research investigates the implementation of close reading and analysis instruction for fiction and nonfiction texts. During Cycle 1, I implemented double entry journals to support the development of students’ close reading skills. During Cycle 2, students utilized the SOAPStone method to guide and support their analysis of a nonfiction article. My research findings indicated that effective scaffolding for the SOAPStone activity was critical to students’ improved analysis.

Using Mentor Texts to Increase Literacy in High School Journalism

- This action research project took place at a Private Catholic school in Southern California to determine if students who had become accustomed to formulaic writing could learn a new style of writing without a formula. Students analyzed and emulated articles. This study concluded that while students originally adamantly declared their desire for a formula, they could in fact learn a new style without one.

Purposeful Pairing for Think Pair Share in a Multiage Classroom

- This action research explored collaborative methods of purposeful pairing and think, pair, share (Lyman, 1981) in a multiage classroom of 26 third and fourth-grade elementary students. These strategies were implemented to encourage interpersonal skills of listening and communication, as well as peer support to learn about place value in a math activity and research skills in a literacy lesson. A formative assessment of observations during the math lesson discussions demonstrated that 92% of students shared their ideas with a partner. These results were slightly lower in the literacy lesson at 81%. An analysis of the summative assessments demonstrated high academic achievement results, as a high number of students met or exceeded the learning objectives. I learned that collaborative strategies can encourage interpersonal skills; however purposeful pairing increases the opportunity for students to contribute to the discussion. Furthermore, collaborative strategies can encourage peer support to further academic achievement.

Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

- Creating a positive classroom environment appears to have a major impact on student learning outcomes and social-emotional regulation. A positive environment doesn’t just describe the physical surroundings that exist in a classroom. Based on my own life experiences and my exploration of foundational child development theories, when a teacher comes from the heart and brings an ethic of care to their classroom, the students feel welcomed and supported. This encourages them to respond positively to their teachers, classroom aides, and fellow students. The carry-over effect is that when students feel cared for and secure in their classroom environments, they express these feelings to their families. This develops a cycle of encouragement that allows learning to take place at a highly productive level. Evidence-based research supports the focus of my Action Research (AR) design and research question/sub-questions.

Exploring Teachers’ Use of Alternative Teaching Methods in Saudi Arabian University Context

- This study attempted to shed light on Saudi EFL teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the currently applied teaching methods in English classes in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this study was to investigate the advantages/disadvantages of the currently applied methods and discuss the difficulties and challenges that face teachers and students in shifting/changing to alternative methods of instruction in response to national reports ranking Saudi students very low on English language proficiency standardized exams. Furthermore, this study explored ways in which to support both Saudi students and teachers to overcome the challenges and move towards new teaching strategies to respond to this need. The present paper analyzes those approaches that would be beneficial for English teachers and learners.

Math Vocabulary Application to Aid Students When Solving Math Word Problems and Story Writing

- I applied the schema approach (Klinken, 2012) in my 4/5 combination class of 31 students to improve comprehension when solving math word problems. My math instruction aimed to relate vocabulary words with student knowledge and experiences to encourage an increased use of math language during discussion and writing. Formative and summative assessments revealed progress in student vocabulary use and math application in word problems after vocabulary focused lessons that included funds of knowledge of students. I learned the significant role literacy plays when students solve word problems. I used to always have students raise their hand to ask me what the word problem meant. This occurred less frequently after each schema and literacy focused lessons. I also learned that I can make a more powerful impact on student learning when I take time to learn about my student needs to increase the effectiveness of my instruction in content areas.

Increasing Work Completion Through High Academic Expectations

- This study investigates the effects of implementing college preparatory coursework to a 12th grade English classroom which previously lacked academic rigor. A small cohort of foster youth students essentially lost an academic year due to teacher turnover, the lack of consistency in the classroom damaged the academic culture and their past experiences put them at a greater academic disadvantage. Literature argues that having an adult mentor who holds high expectations can increase a student's resilience. My action research focuses on providing social-emotional and academic support to increase academic commitment and work completion.
Trusevich, Justina R.  
Session | C6    
MRH 141

Exploring the Effect of Multi-Sensory Learning Activities in Kindergarten

- This research dives into a classroom of twelfth grade English Language Arts students at a suburban high school, in order to determine how to best support them as writers. These students were in the middle of completing college applications and seemed uninterested in the application of writing skills outside of the classroom walls. My goal was to find strategies that best supported the development of strong writing abilities, and soon took the form of finding relevant connections between the students and the material. Soon, the research began to look into finding ways to shift students’ perspectives about writing from meaningless busy work to meaningful application. Data was collected in the form of teacher observation, student self-assessments, and completed student work. Students left the classroom at the end of the semester not only with new tools to strengthen their writing, but the ability to see their work in a new context and find meaning in what they write.

Thomas, Lauren M.  
Session | B4    
MRH 137

Exploring the Effect of Multi-Sensory Learning Activities in Kindergarten

- I implemented a multi-sensory approach (Obaid, 2013) to learning in both literacy and mathematics utilizing technology and hands-on learning activities. This research was completed in a Kindergarten classroom of 24 students to build on sight-word and numerical recognition. These activities motivated students to engage in the learning content as indicated through formal assessment. Assessments showed a strong content understanding and students were able to process information more effectively as a result of these multi-sensory activities. I learned that I am a more effective teacher when I can implement activities that are engaging, built on prior knowledge, and which are clearly instructed for students to create a meaningful learning experience.

Stea, Mairead G.  
Session | D7    
MRH 145

The Flipped Classroom: Creating Academically Achieving and Collaborative Students

- I implemented the flipped classroom teaching method (Kong, 2014) in my middle school classrooms of 91 students. Students came to class with front-loaded knowledge via videos, and furthered their knowledge cooperatively in the topic of fraction word problems, and then the reading strategy of analyzing an author’s use of thought-provoking questions to reveal the story’s plot. On the summative assessments of completing a word problem, and a written journal response, 70 percent of students showed deeper understanding of the content material. Via informal assessments, students also displayed increased collaborative skills and overall willingness to collaborate with peers to complete the course. I discovered the versatility of the flipped classroom to foster rich opportunities for academic achievement and to facilitate student-led group goal achievement. I learned the importance of creating a classroom environment that encourages students to be the active catalyst in their own learning, and the value of togetherness.

Sutterley, Lyndsay A.  
Session | C6    
MRH 141

Developing Critical Thinking Through Student Inquiry

- Critical thinking is at the heart of student inquiry and provides students with the necessary mental tools to be productive in an evolving technological society. Middle school students are at a crucial cognitive developmental stage, transitioning from concrete learning to abstract thought processes. This study examined the effects of background knowledge development, hands-on instruction, and inquiry-based learning on the advancement of critical thinking in a science classroom.

Suzuki-Jones, Sophia M.  
Session | B3    
MRH 135

Integrating Literacy and Mathematics Through Engaging Students in Discourse and Journaling

- In my fourth and fifth grade classroom of 30 students, I integrated literacy and mathematics by implementing the BRAVE framework (Rudnitsky, Barclay, & Binger, 2017) and journaling in math notebooks to support students in their comprehension of math concepts. The BRAVE framework created guidelines and expectations for student discourse, and the journaling in math notebooks prepared and assisted students in engaging in discourse. In the final summative assessments for the fourth and fifth grade students, over 75% of the students met or exceeded the learning objectives of the instructional unit. I learned that providing students with clear guidance and support in discourse activities helped students deepen their comprehension of math concepts.

Spalding, Matthew M.  
Session | D3    
MRH 135

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Solomon, Caitlin S.  
Session | D6    
MRH 141

Investigating Writing Development Strategies in a 12th Grade ELA Classroom

- The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between implementing an optional academic support intervention for ninth grade students with Individualized Education Plans and evaluating how it affects their academic growth and motivation. This study also focused on any growth in ninth grade students’ academic scores, rate of homework completion, students motivation to complete assignments by the due date, and how student attitudes affect their rate of homework completion. Through observation and data collection it was evident that 25% of students on my caseload demonstrated a gap between their attendance and homework completion. By the end of this study 65% of students saw an improvement in the average of their classes and 76% of students had average to above average rates of homework completion. I also considered students’ understanding of the importance of homework, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and students’ feelings on homework in general.

Suzuki-Jones, Sophia M.  
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Thomas, Lauren M.  
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MRH 137

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Trusevich, Justina R.  
Session | C6    
MRH 141

Implementing Thoughtful Reasoning and Communication in the Math Classroom

- Communication and literacy have become vitally important in our modern world. In this age, communicating through various technological platforms is a reality for many. These skills are some of those necessary to be a well-rounded citizen of the world. This action research project was conducted to implement communication and literacy skills in a high school mathematics classroom for present and future success. Various scaffolding strategies such as use of sentence starters, fill-in-the-blank notes, and purposeful grouping were done to support students in improving skills. During the first part of this research, strategies were not as effective as originally thought. For the second part of this research project, strategies were reevaluated and adjusted to better serve students. Student communication and writing skills improved with these adjustments. These results suggest that given the right supports, students can confidently and effectively explain their reasoning verbally and in writing.
Tsai, Tsai-Chen  Session | C2  MRH 133  
**The Role of Instructional Pronunciation Training on Late-ESL Learners’ Accent Modification**

- While attaining native-like pronunciation attracts attention of some ESL learners and instructors, there is a need to improve our understanding of the relationship between accent and pronunciation teaching. A review of the literature has indicated that intensive training in phonetics and pronunciation can improve the success rate in the acquisition of a neutral accent. The purpose of this case study is to better understand how to modify a non-native accent compared to Standard American English, identifying the most effective strategies for modifying accent, and to further support more ESL instructors with possible pedagogical implications in terms of working with late ESL learners. Findings suggest that a blend of instructional pronunciation strategies that incorporate diverse techniques were utilized to shape the framework of the accent modification training. The strategies were observed and categorized into seven main types in this study.

Valdivia Huerta, Paz B.  Session | A2  MRH 133  
**International Students: Their Perception On Their Practicum Experience And Elaboration Of Informal Teaching Opportunities**

- This research presents the perspective international students have on their teaching practicum opportunities while being abroad. This population of students often face difficulties practicing teaching because of their visa limitations. International students in the United States are only allowed to work on their college campus, which makes it extra challenging for them to gain significant teaching experience throughout their two year long program. This case study explored the implications and perceptions of international students in relation to their practicum placements. Additionally, this study aims to present the benefits of developing informal on-campus teaching opportunities for practice for TESOL international students. The data was collected through interviews with different international student participants. The preliminary findings of this case study provide evidence of the challenging nature of the experience international students have while studying in the US, and also, their need to acquire more teaching practice in an on-campus context.

Wang, Runzi  Session | C1  MRH 127  
**In what ways do Native English-Speaking teachers support Chinese students’ English speaking and reading ability in China?**

- The purpose of the study is to understand the strengths and challenges of Native English-Speaking Teachers teaching English in China. Thus, this project explored the experiences of Native English-Speaking teachers who have received their education in the west often utilizing a learner-centered educational context, working primarily in a context valuing the teacher-directed approach. The finds compared Native English-Speaking teachers with Non-native English-Speaking teachers in China and showed how Native English-Speaking teachers support Chinese students.

Wang, Qian  Session | B2  MRH 133  
**How the Cultural Factors Impact the Engagement Level in an English as a Second Language Classroom?**

- The distinction of engagement level occurred in an English as a second language classroom for different English language learners requires ESL instructors to take a consideration. In this study, I will emphasize the cultural factors associated with the language learning such as the collectivism or individualism, students’ effort endurance and the learning environment, and will explore how the cultural factors impact the engagement level in an English as a second language classroom. I will apply the qualitative case study as my methodology to investigate my research question. To measure cultural factors, I will utilize interview to ESL instructors and questionnaire to both ESL students and students in advanced English class with big different cultural backgrounds. The questionnaire also helps to get further understanding of engagement level. In addition, I will apply classroom observation to collect more data about the engagement level.

Weatherall, Lauren A.  Session | A4  MRH 137  
**Scaffolding and Direct Instruction in a Kindergarten Classroom**

- I studied direct instruction and scaffolding in math and literacy in my kindergarten classroom of 21 students. Through a series of lessons, students learned one-to-one correspondence in math and literacy. Research indicates that direct instruction and scaffolding strategies will improve student’s achievement and engagement in school (Maloch, 2002). Small group and whole class instruction was used to teach the class. In these lessons, many types of scaffolds were used to teach students. The types of scaffold used in this research are whole and small group scaffolds, peer scaffolds, low-level and high-level scaffolds, and reflection through discussion. Two summative assessments were given, one in math and one in literacy. 85% of students met and/or exceeded the objectives in math while 90% of students met and/or exceeded the objectives in literacy. Through this study, I learned the importance of using direct instruction and scaffolding when teaching.

Wentworth, Amanda K.  Session | C5  MRH 139  
**Investigating Supporting Students in Accessing Complex Texts in 12th Grade English Language Arts**

- As a part of my Master’s in Education program at the University of San Diego, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, I conducted Action Research in my student teaching placement. This action research project took place in an urban high school in Southern California with a large population of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and from a Latin background learning English as a second language. From observations in my classroom, I investigated how to implement strategies to enable my students to better access complex texts. I implemented two cycles of Action Research where students read both non-fiction book and informational articles. My findings were that students benefit from the use of scaffolds and gradual release of responsibility, and that students also benefit from collaborative assignments. I also grew tremendously as a teacher and a teacher researcher during this process.

White, Cara J.  Session | B6  MRH 141  
**Differentiated Instruction: Testing Flexible Grouping Strategies in the 7th Grade Science Classroom**

- In this educational project, flexible grouping strategies were implemented during lab activities with intention of increasing student lab work completion and to improve overall achievement on student assessments. During lab activities groups were formed based on student readiness, student interest, and student learner profile. Additionally, differentiated instructional strategies already in place in the 7th grade focus classroom was examined in efforts to determine the impacts on student class work completion. Although, student lab work and achievements on assessments did not show overall marked improvement as a result of flexible grouping, student grouping by interest and learner profile proved to be more effective for student collaboration and communication during lab activities.
Breathe

- Some elementary students who receive Special Education services experience math anxiety. This leads to task avoidance and/or negative behaviors. The cause of math anxiety is attributed to a lack of self-regulation skills. Interventions include direct explicit instruction in stress reducing strategies (such as breathing), teaching students to use whole-brain responses (e.g. logic coupled with emotion), using Understanding by Design methodology, teaching project-based learning math curriculum, and applying differentiated instruction. The effectiveness of these strategies in a 4th grade Special Education Resource room is presented.

Yu, Kimberly M.

Curbing Off-Task Behaviors in the Resource Room Using Positive Intervention Strategies

- This action research project was conducted at Park Elementary School in southern California with 7 second grade students who had Individualized Education Plans and were receiving Specialized Academic Instruction in a traditional resource room setting. Because off-task behaviors were impeding students’ learning, the teacher implemented four evidence-based positive intervention strategies including direct support, self-monitoring, group monitoring, and group contingencies to support more on-task behaviors, accurate work completion, and collaboration between students. The results were inconsistent but exposure to direct support, self-monitoring, group monitoring, and group contingencies seemed to help support more on-task behaviors in the resource room. Data revealed that there was little correlation between on-task behaviors and more work completion, but there was some correlation between on-task behaviors and accurate work completion.

Zahnd, Jessica

Transferring Knowledge in the Biological Sciences: Using Scientific Concepts Across and Beyond Science

- This action research paper studies the transfer and application of biological knowledge from one unit to units across and beyond science. It utilizes previous literature on content transfer to develop pedagogical strategies and apply them to an active classroom setting. The design of the study is in two cycles. The first being vocabulary-heavy activities that seek to emphasize the overlap between two ontological units, with an extension activity of applying these concepts to the broader phenomenon of world poverty. The second cycle aims to develop the findings of the first, whereby students used concepts of a scientific phenomenon to create and develop a unique project reflecting content knowledge from their prior history. Findings showed the value in student autonomy, the need for flexible lesson plans and student-centered learning. They further showed the vitality of presenting multiple scientific concepts in a larger phenomenon as a tool to effectively transfer content knowledge.

Zhou, Yu

Is Cognitive Teaching Theory more impactful than Traditional Teaching Theory towards EFL Chinese students’ outcomes?

- The purpose of this study is to explore whether Cognitive Teaching Theory is more impactful than Traditional Teaching Theory towards EFL Chinese students’ outcomes. For this study, I will compare and explain both the Cognitive Teaching Theory and Traditional Teaching Theory. Also, I will analyze previous and current EFL Chinese students’ learning. During the scope of the project, I will collect several forms of data to help me understand student learning. This data will include classroom observation in my teacher journal, interview of students’ concepts about these two different teaching theories, and questionnaires about students’ culture background, general information and their attitude to these two theories. I will use participant observation, interview and questionnaires methodology to collect data. Data collection will take place within the normal scope of classroom activities. In conclusion, this study confirmed that Cognitive Teaching Theory supports EFL Chinese students’ outcomes and development their study ability. Also, Findings indicate that rather than Traditional Teaching Theory class, Chinese students are more acceptable to Cognitive Teaching Theory class. The application of these findings in the real life classroom will promote Chinese students’ learning.
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