



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY

# ERC Update

## Education Research as a Catalyst for Improving Policy and Practice

### ERC STAFF

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### Program Area Leaders

**Yolanda Padrón:**

Educator Preparation

**Dennie Smith:**

Curriculum & Instruction

**Lori Taylor:**

School Finance, Resources, & Facilities

### Principal Investigators and Other Researchers

**Dottie Carmichael**

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### Education Research Center Awarded \$250,000 Grant Extension

The State of Texas Education Research Center (ERC) at Texas A&M University is pleased to announce that it was recently awarded an additional \$250,000 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for the purpose of continuing and expanding its work on the *Texas A&M University Educator Preparation Collaborative for Enhancing College and Career Readiness in Texas Schools* (TAMU Collaborative). Four members of the Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture are co-principal investigators on the project: Hersh Waxman, professor and director of the ERC; Jackie Stillisano, director of the Online Executive Ed.D. Program and co-director of the ERC; Larry Kelly, clinical professor and director of the Secondary Graduate Certification Program; and Dennie Smith, professor.

Originally funded for \$500,000, the TAMU Collaborative project was designed and implemented in fall 2009 to address the apparent disconnect in Texas between high school and college and/or career readiness. The project has four primary goals: (a) to enhance Texas A&M University's model for educator preparation, including the integration of the Texas College and Career Standards (CCRS) into the curriculum; (b) to establish a collaborative network that provides a robust linkage between K-12 and post-secondary levels; (c) to develop an online self-assessment tool to be administered to all preservice teachers involved in the collaborative; and (d) to develop a video case study that illustrates and communicates the potential of the TAMU Collaborative model. In the two years since the project's inception, the TAMU Collaborative team has made significant progress toward achievement of all four goals.

"The integration of the College and Career Readiness Standards into future teacher preparation programs necessitates the establishment of a network of partners to provide a strong linkage between K-12 education and post-secondary levels," said Waxman. "The TAMU Collaborative has and will continue to create a research-based model for the preparation of teacher educators and professional development of classroom teachers."

For additional information, please contact Hersh Waxman at [hwaxman@tamu.edu](mailto:hwaxman@tamu.edu) or Jackie Stillisano at [jstillisano@tamu.edu](mailto:jstillisano@tamu.edu).

### Education Research Center Presents at Texas Middle School Association Conference

Hersh Waxman, Jacqueline Stillisano, Yolanda Padrón, Anna Witt Boriack, Omah Williams, and Russell Evans presented *Effective School and Classroom Practices in Texas Urban Middle Schools* on March 2, 2012, at the Texas Middle School Association annual conference in Galveston, Texas. Based on a grant from the Houston Endowment to support the study of middle level education in the Houston metropolitan area, the presentation discussed findings from studies that focused on effective and efficient urban middle schools in Texas. State academic achievement and school financial data were used to identify schools that surpassed other similar Texas urban middle schools on measures of effectiveness and efficiency. Survey, classroom observation, and interview data revealed several effective school and classroom practices implemented in effective/efficient Texas urban middle schools. The findings were shared and strategies for improving urban middle schools were discussed.



Session participants discuss their experiences in urban Texas middle schools.

### Mark Hoekstra Presents at ERC's Third Seminar

The ERC presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> event of its 2011-2012 seminar series on February 21, 2012. Dr. Mark Hoekstra (associate professor of Economics) presented *Externalities in the Classroom: How Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Affect Everyone's Kids* for a group of approximately 40 faculty, administrators, and students. Hoekstra's presentation, which was based on a study from one Florida County, included information on how domestic violence influences the achievement and behavior of all students in a classroom. The results indicate that in a class of 20 students, the inclusion of one student who has been exposed to domestic violence can lower class math and reading scores by 0.69 percentile points and increase the number of class discipline problems by 17%. Effects on achievement are related to the length of the time period between when the domestic violence occurs and when it is reported to the proper authorities. After the domestic violence is reported, the effect on class academic achievement is negligible. These results indicate that educational policies that change children's exposure to classmates from troubled families will have important distributional consequences.



Mark Hoekstra presents to a large group of students and faculty.

### Upcoming Events

The annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, on April 13-17, 2012. More information can be found on the AERA website (<http://www.aera.net/>).

The final ERC seminar for 2011-2012 will be held on Monday, April 23, at 12:30 p.m. in Harrington Tower 301.

The presenter will be Dr. Kalena Cortez, assistant professor in the Bush School of Government and Public Service. For more information or to make a reservation, please email [stephaniebriley@tamu.edu](mailto:stephaniebriley@tamu.edu).

## ERC Welcomes New Intern

**Brenda Taylor** is a third-year doctoral student in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture (TLAC), working towards a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. Brenda earned her B.S. in Elementary Education from the University of Texas at Austin and her M.Ed. in Special Education from Texas Woman's University. Before beginning her doctoral studies, Brenda had the opportunity to serve the public schools of Texas in several positions, including as a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a dyslexia specialist, an educational diagnostician, and an educational consultant. Her research interests include students with learning disabilities, particularly in the area of reading; response to intervention; assessment; and teacher pre-service education.



## Outstanding Poster Award

Emin Kilinc and Russell Evans were awarded Outstanding Poster of the Conference at the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education 2012 conference in Austin, Texas, for their poster, "Aligning Facebook and Twitter with Social Studies Curriculum." The poster highlighted how social networking tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) are aligned with the social studies curriculum. It also included examples of lessons that teachers can use in the classroom and connections to national and state social studies standards. The poster demonstrated how social media foster global citizenship by encouraging communication through cross-cultural dialogues.

## ERC Intern Presents Dissertation Research

In *Conceptual Learning in Social Studies Classrooms: An Analysis of Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Social Studies Questions With and Without Concept*, Emin Kilinc analyzed data from the Texas Education Agency for all 8th, 10th, and 11th grade students who took the Social Studies TAKS in spring 2006 and spring 2009. The purpose of the study was to determine whether 8th, 10th, and 11th grade students performed better on social studies questions which were classified as concept questions, compared to questions which were classified as nonconcept questions. The study also attempted to identify the relationship between correct answers on concept questions and students' demographics. The results indicated that students had significantly higher achievement on nonconcept questions than on concept questions and scored higher on concept questions in 2009 than in 2006. For gender, male students had a significantly higher mean score for concept questions than did female students. For grade level, 11th grade students had a higher mean score on concept questions than did 10th grade students and 8th grade students. For ethnicity, Asian students and White students scored significantly better on concept questions than did other ethnic groups. The results also indicated that there was a positive high correlation between choosing correct answers for concept questions and choosing correct answers for nonconcept questions. Finally, native English speakers had higher achievement on concept questions than did English language learners.



## ERC Researchers Publish Articles

Hersh Waxman recently co-authored an article with Hector Rivera titled "Resilient and Non-Resilient Hispanic English Language Learners' Attitudes Towards Their Classroom Learning Environment," which was published in the 16th volume of the *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. This journal focuses on real schools achieving real results. In its 13-year history, the journal has assessed some of the most important research in educational reform and traced the impact of this reform on policy.

Yolanda Padrón, along with Hersh Waxman, Yuan-Hsuan Lee, Meng-Fen Lin, and Georgette M. Michko, published "Classroom Observations of Teaching and Learning with Technology in Urban Elementary School Mathematics Classrooms Serving English Language Learners" in the 39th volume of the *International Journal of Instructional Media*. The journal is a multi-cultural refereed journal for professionals interested in cutting edge technologies to improve the learning process. The journal is aimed at keeping teachers and trainers abreast of the most current thinking and research strategies available throughout the world for learners in colleges, universities, public schools, government, business, and industry.

Yolanda Padrón recently received notice that an article she wrote in collaboration with Hersh Waxman and Yuan-Hsuan Lee, entitled "Classroom Learning Environment Differences Between Resilient, Average, and Non-resilient Middle School Students' in Reading," has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of *Education and Urban Society*. This journal communicates new ideas on educational processes, controversies, research, and policy. It places special emphasis on the relationship between educators and society and provides a multidisciplinary forum for communication among educators, educational administrators, school board, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists.

## ERC Snapshots

**Anna Witt Boriack** presented *The Impact of Technology on Teachers' Perceptions of College and Career Readiness* at the Southwest Educational Research Association conference in New Orleans on February 1, 2012.

**Omah Williams** presented *Evaluating the Texas A&M University-aggieTEACH Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program: Describing students' intent to teach beyond scholarship requirements* at the Southwest Educational Research Association conference in New Orleans on February 1, 2012.

**Anna Witt Boriack, Beverly Alford, Danielle Bairrington Brown, Kayla Braziel Rollins, and Hersh Waxman** presented *Rural High School Students' Perceptions of Their Technology Skills and Use in Classrooms* at the Society for Technology and Teacher Education on March 6, 2012, in Austin. They also presented *Rural Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Technology Professional Development* at the same conference. These papers will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

**Danielle Bairrington Brown, Beverly Alford, Kayla Braziel Rollins, Jacqueline Stillisano, and Hersh Waxman** presented *Examining Technology Integration in Mathematics and Science Teacher Preparation Academies* on March 5, 2012, at the Society for Technology and Teacher Education in Austin. This paper will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

**Russell Evans, Emin Kilinc, Anna Witt Boriack, and Hersh Waxman** participated in a roundtable at the Society for Technology and Teacher Education in Austin on March 7, 2012. The title of their roundtable paper was *Students' Perceptions of Technology Use in Middle School*. This paper will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

**Russell Evans** was selected to participate in the Social Studies Teacher Education Faculty Institute at the University of Texas at Arlington in May. This faculty collaborative is part of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's College and Career Readiness Initiative. Russell will be developing lessons and resources incorporating the College and Career Readiness Standards that could be implemented in social studies methods courses at the university-level.