

Education Research as a Catalyst for Improving Policy and Practice



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ERC Presents First Seminar of 2012-2013

The first ERC seminar for 2012-2013, *Success and Challenge of Using iPads in and Undergraduate Course*, was presented by Dr. Dennie Smith (professor in Teaching, Learning and Culture) on October 31, 2012, to over 30 faculty and graduate students. Smith described a research project he completed last semester in which he integrated iPads into a freshman education course that he taught. All students in one of the sections of his course received iPads to use during the course, while the other section of the same course he taught did not receive iPads. Students were surveyed twice (once before iPads were distributed and once at the end of the semester) and three composite variables were derived from the survey questions. These variables were (a) experience with technology, (b) competence in using technology, and (c) likelihood of using technology for education purposes.

The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups for both surveys. Students in both groups, however, had significant increases on all three variables between the pre- and post-surveys. Additional results revealed that the likelihood of using technology for educational purposes was associated with the students' experience with technology.



Dr. Smith answers a question following his presentation.

Grant Extension for Educator Preparation Collaborative

Hersh Waxman, Dennie Smith, Larry Kelly, and Jacqueline Stillisano have received new monies and a contract extension (through August 2014) for their Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) grant focusing on research and development in teacher education. Since August 2009, they and the Education Research Center have received \$850,000 from the THECB for their project, *TAMU Educator Preparation Collaborative for Enhancing College and Career Readiness in Texas Schools* (TAMU Collaborative). The TAMU Collaborative has developed and implemented a research-based model designed to prepare P-16 education professionals to assist students in meeting College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and skilled workforce expectations. This project has also developed and tested a self-assessment tool for all teacher education institutions in Texas to evaluate the quality, effectiveness, and alignment to CCRS of their educator preparation programs.

Brown Receives Departmental Dissertation Award

The ERC is proud to announce that Dr. Danielle B. Brown, assistant research scientist and ERC Coordinator of STEM Education Research, was the recent recipient of the first annual TLAC Dissertation Award. Entitled *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mathematics, Science, & Technology Teacher Preparation (MSTTP) Academies in Texas*, Danielle's study employed a mixed methods approach to examine 14 MSTTP Academies across the state of Texas.

ERC Team Expands

The ERC is happy to welcome Kim Wright to our team as a new research associate. Wright received a Bachelor's of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master's of Science degree in Curriculum & Instruction with an emphasis in mathematics education—both from Texas A&M University. She is a former graduate assistant for the Math TEKS Connections Project in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture. Prior to joining the ERC, Wright was an elementary teacher for 3 years in Northeast ISD in San Antonio, an elementary and middle school teacher for 2 years in Bryan ISD, and a math instructional coach and TAP master teacher for 3 years, also in Bryan ISD. Her research interests include factors affecting the transfer of professional development into teacher practice and the role of school district leadership in increasing student achievement.



Kim Wright, new ERC research associate.

Administrative Changes in the ERC

In order to better focus on teacher preparation and STEM education research, the ERC has recently undergone several administrative changes by promoting three ERC senior research associates. Beverly Alford will act as Assistant Director, serving on the ERC management team. Additionally, Kayla Rollins will serve as Coordinator of Teacher Education Research, and Danielle Brown will function as Coordinator of STEM Education Research. All three will continue to work collaboratively with other ERC researchers on teacher education and STEM education grants, developing research instruments, coordinating research activities with funding agencies and research participants, collecting data, analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and disseminating ERC research results.

Fellowships Received by ERC Doctoral Students

Anna Boriack, TLAC doctoral student and graduate research assistant in the ERC, received a fellowship from the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to attend the 2012 High School Transcript Study (HSTS) Database Training Seminar in Washington, DC. This was a competitive fellowship and only 20 participants from across the US were selected by NCES to participate.

Susana Franco-Fuenmayor, a bilingual education doctoral student and intern with the Education Research Center, recently was awarded a College of Education and Human Development Strategic Fellowship. The one-year, \$20,000 fellowship supports research and its dissemination. The college awards only eight such fellowships annually. Her research will focus on examining dual language and ESL teachers' knowledge and perceptions of dual language and ESL programs, along with their professional development experiences.

Researchers Selected to Serve as National Head Start Grant Reviewers

ERC Assistant Director, Beverly Alford, and ERC Coordinator of Teacher Education Research, Kayla Rollins, have been selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families' Office of Head Start (OHS) to serve as national Head Start grant reviewers. Alford and Rollins recently traveled to the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area for a multi-day orientation. Selected grant reviewers were those professionals who demonstrated expertise and experience in early childhood education and family support services or related fields.

Recent ERC Conference Presentations

- Alford, B. L., Rollins, K. B., Stillisano, J. R., & Waxman, H. C. (2012, October). *Using mixed methods to evaluate a program designed to increase college readiness*. American Evaluation Association annual conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Boriack, A. W., Alford, B., Rollins, K. B., & Waxman, H. C. (2012, November). *Examining the use of social networking in a teacher education program*. Global Learn 2012, On-line.
- Boriack, A. W. (2012, October). *Investigating the effect of grade configuration on student achievement in urban middle school*. Annual Mid-Atlantic Education Research Conference, Philadelphia, PA.
- Boriack, A.W. (2012, July). *Characteristics of effective and efficient urban middle schools in Texas*. The One Voice International Conference and Forum, Philadelphia, PA.
- Brown, D. B., Rollins, K. B., Alford, B. L., Stillisano, J. R., & Waxman, H. (2012, October). *Examining the degree of implementation of STEM professional academies in Texas*. Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) fall conference, Austin, TX.
- Brown, D. B., Waxman, H. C., Boriack, A. W., Taylor, L. L., Stillisano, J. R., & Padrón, Y. N. (2012, November). *School climate and learning environment differences between effective/efficient and ineffective/inefficient Texas urban middle level schools*. Association for Middle Level Education annual conference, Portland, OR.
- Rollins, K. B., Alford, B. L., Brown, D. B., Stillisano, J. R., & Waxman, H. (2012, November). *Best practices in integrating CCRS in teacher education programs: Findings from the evaluation of the college and career readiness initiative faculty collaborative*. Center for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of Teacher Education (CREATE), San Antonio, TX.
- Rollins, K. B., Alford, B. L., Brown, D. B., Stillisano, J. R., & Waxman, H. (2012, October). *Preparing preservice teachers to integrate college and career readiness standards into their instruction*. Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) fall conference, Austin, TX.
- Stillisano, J. R., Alford, B. L., Rollins, K. B., & Waxman, H. C. (2012, October). *Evaluating a statewide project using student achievement data to align secondary and post-secondary educational goals*. American Evaluation Association annual conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Stillisano, J. R., Waxman, H. C., Alford, B. L., & Brown, Danielle B. (2012, October). *Evaluating a model project for college access centers in high-need urban schools*. American Evaluation Association annual conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Recent ERC Publications

- Brown, D. B., Rollins, K. B., Alford, B. L., Waxman, H. C., & Stillisano, J. R. (2012). Integrating college and career readiness standards in a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program. *Texas Association of Teacher Educators' Forum*, 2, 13-28.
- Davis, T. J., Stillisano, J. R. & Waxman, H. C. (2012). A statewide evaluation of districts' readiness for large-scale online testing: Unique perceptions and challenges from diverse school districts' lenses. *Journal of Texas Alliance of Black School Educators*, 4, 33-54.
- Rollins, K. B., Brown, D. B., Alford, B. L., Waxman, H. C., & Stillisano, J. R. (2012). Evaluating statewide professional development for teacher educators on the implementation of college and career readiness standards. *Texas Association of Teacher Educators' Forum*, 2, 88-104.

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