ERC Update

Education Research as a Catalyst for Improving Practice

Waxman Named Co-Director of Texas A&M Center for Mathematics and Science Education (CMSE)

Replacing longtime TLAC professor Dr. Gerald Kulm, who retired in 2012, Waxman was selected for a 5-year term on the basis of his extensive teacher preparation experience and expertise in assessment, according to Dr. Tim Scott, who has served as one of the center’s four co-directors since 2000. “We are extremely excited to have Hersh officially join our center,” said Scott. “We have loved working with him and his team on previous projects and assessments. His continued contributions will be invaluable to CMSE efforts and to forging stronger ties between our two colleges, as well as in enhancing the overall STEM presence across Texas A&M University.”

The ERC and CMSE have worked together on grants and projects for several years and this appointment ensures a more formal relationship between the two centers. The ERC and CMSE are currently collaborating on several grants and projects. Jackie Stillisano, Kim Wright, and Hersh Waxman will present findings from the ERC’s research at the upcoming national conference for the Network of STEM Education Centers/Science and Mathematics Teaching Imperative Conference.

Waxman and Padron Attend Carnegie Foundation Summit on Improvement in Education

ERC Director, Hersh Waxman and Educator Preparation Program Area Leader, Yolanda Padrón recently presented the ERC’s research at 2016 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Summit on Improvement in Education. For the past four years, the ERC has been conducting research and evaluating The United Way of Greater Houston (UWGH) Education Collaborative involving about 30 non-profit agencies in order to improve students’ cognitive, behavioral, and affective outcomes. In addition to analyzing standardized achievement scores, the ERC developed and measured several indicators of academic success, such as socio-emotional measures and students’ engagement in learning.

The ERC has used an improvement science research paradigm to generate critical knowledge about the project’s improvement process. At the Carnegie Summit, Waxman and Padron presented findings from the ERC’s research and suggested ways to improve educational programs to address the needs of students at risk of failure in Texas urban schools. Studying the improvement process in this project has provided some robust evidence over time of what works, for whom, and under what set of conditions.

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May 2016
ERC Graduate Student Researchers Attend AERA-Invited Seminars

ERC graduate research intern Katie Black and ERC graduate researcher Luxi Feng shared current research at the Division H graduate student roundtable at AERA. The roundtable session focused on research in progress and offered graduate students an opportunity to receive feedback from experts.

Black discussed her study examining the effects of a home visit program on parental involvement and student academic and behavioral outcomes in a large public school district in Texas. According to Black, “Participating in the Division H round table allowed me an opportunity to gather invaluable feedback from an expert in the field of program evaluation, as well as from other graduate students.” Feng presented research on the use of systematic observation instruments to evaluate the degree of program implementation in urban schools.

The Division H graduate student roundtable provides a select group of graduate student researchers the opportunity to receive mentorship from Division H members from various stakeholder groups across the field of educational program evaluation and assessment.

Sam Shields, ERC graduate research intern, and Kim Wright, ERC research associate, were selected participants at an AERA Division K Seminar for Advanced Graduate Students on Teaching for Equity, Action, and Change in Higher Education. This pre-conference seminar provided a productive space for advanced graduate students to hone their ability to integrate instructional design and practice with an ability to effectively and creatively teach for social justice.

Shields and Wright had an opportunity to share and analyze syllabi and vignettes related to their work and emerging identities as teacher educators. The support and feedback offered to participants was intended to help them consider the intersections between teaching adult learners, teaching about teaching, pedagogical content knowledge, clarity of instruction, research, and positionality. Shields is a first-year doctoral student in teacher education. Her research interests focus on teacher retention and early career mentoring. Wright is an ERC research associate and first year doctoral student in teacher education. Wright’s research interests focus on the impact of teacher evaluation on teaching practice.

Taylor Presents ERC Seminar Focused on School Funding Inequities

The ERC hosted the third seminar of its 2015-16 series on March 28, 2016. Dr. Lori L. Taylor, Associate Professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service and Director of the Robert A. Mosbacher Institute for Trade, Economics, and Public Policy presented her research on school finance equity.

In her talk titled, Improving School Finance Equity through Cost-Adjusted Poverty Measures: Title I and Beyond, Dr. Taylor shared recent research on the inequity of current school finance systems that rely on inaccurate measures of student poverty.

Bush Capstone Team Presents at Final Seminar in 2015-16 ERC Seminar Series

A team of Masters students from the Bush School of Government and Public Service presented their Capstone research project on school district-level implementation strategies related to Texas House Bill 5 (HB 5). Passed in 2013 by the Texas Legislature, HB 5 resulted in significant changes to Texas’ curriculum and graduation requirements, assessment program, and accountability system. The study included interviews with administrators from schools across the state regarding district implementation of graduation pathways legislated in HB 5.

The Bush School of Government and Public Service at TAMU requires its graduating students to complete a two-semester Capstone project in lieu of a thesis. Bush School Visiting Assistant Professor Jenny Knowles Morrison supervised the five students from this Capstone Team.