

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



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### ERC Awarded Grant to Examine Reflective Thinking in International Baccalaureate Programmes

The Education Research Center at Texas A&M University (ERC at TAMU) is pleased to announce that it has received a grant from the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization to conduct a research study examining the implementation of the IB Learner Profile attribute *Reflective* in IB Diploma Programmes across North America. This is the third grant the ERC has received from the IB Organization in the last four years. One previous study examined effective IB schools in Texas, and for a second study, the ERC conducted a research synthesis and meta-analysis of the effects of collaboration on student outcomes. Jacqueline Stillisano, Hersh Waxman, and Kayla Rollins are co-principal investigators for the current grant, and additional ERC researchers involved include Sandra Metoyer and Kim Wright.

A leader in international education, the IB Organization supports schools globally in their mission to provide students with challenging academic programs that encourage critical thinking from an intercultural perspective. The Diploma Programme has grown steadily since its inception, and the IB diploma is accepted worldwide as a gateway for entrance into the best and most rigorous universities.

"The Learner Profile, which was established in 2006 as a new component of the Diploma Programme, delineates the 10 academic and non-academic qualities that the program strives to instill in its students in order to prepare them for lifelong learning," said Stillisano. "The inclusion of the attribute *Reflective* in the IB Learner Profile attests to the value of student reflection, yet this study will be one of only a few studies to specifically examine the ways in which the attribute is incorporated in IB Diploma schools."

For the *Student Reflection: A Mixed Method Study of "Reflective" in the IB Diploma Programme* project, ERC researchers will (a) conduct a best evidence synthesis of research on teaching and assessing reflective thinking in IB high school settings; (b) develop and administer a survey in schools across North America to examine IB teacher and administrators' interpretation of reflective and the methods used to integrate instruction of reflective; and (c) conduct a multiple-case research study of 6 to 9 IB schools in the United States and Canada, using the success case method of evaluation.

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

### Recent ERC Publications:

Brown, D. B., Alford, B. L., Rollins, K. B., Stillisano, J. R., & Waxman, H. C. (2013). Evaluating the efficacy of Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Preparation academies in Texas. *Professional Development in Education*, 39(5), 656-677.

Weber, N. D., Hodges, T. S., & Waxman, H. C. (2013). The development of an instrument to measure factors that impact preservice teachers' perceived field commitment in teacher preparation programs. *The Texas Forum of Teacher Education*, 3, 87-101.

Kandel-Cisco, B., Brown, D. B., Padrón, Y. N., Stillisano, J. R., Waxman, H. C. (2013). Professional development in science for teachers of English language learners. *International Journal of TESOL and Learning*, 2(2), 107-121.

Waxman, H. C., Boriack, A. W., Lee, Y-H., & MacNeil, A. (2013). Principals' perceptions of the importance of technology in schools. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 4(3), 187-196.

## ERC Presented Second Fall Seminar for 2013-2014

The ERC presented the second event of its 2013-2014 seminar series on November 12, 2013. Dr. Luis Ponjuan, associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development, presented current work elucidating the balancing act many Latino first generation college students must perform between campus engagement and employment obligations. In collaboration with the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color ([www.projectmales.org](http://www.projectmales.org)), Dr. Ponjuan explored the following question in his study: What pre-college involvement behaviors and individual demographic characteristics influence first generation college students' intention for college engagement?



In this study secondary data from the Community Engagement and Research Program (CERP) and a multivariate logistic regression analysis was used to explore relationships among two dependent variables and several independent variables. The two dependent variables were a) intention for institutional engagement and b) whether or not a student was required to work while in college. Results indicated significant differences within the group of incoming first-generation students in key demographic characteristics, prior high school experiences, and other college-related issues. The following policy recommendations focusing on improving first-generation students' intentions to become engaged and helping them balance academic and work demands were suggested: a) identify students at greatest risk for not becoming engaged; b) provide academic support focused on transitioning from high school to higher education (e.g., first year seminars); c) enhance normative behaviors for campus engagement (e.g., near-peer mentoring); and d) engage, educate, and empower students to help them deal with the conflicting demands of campus engagement and employment.

Dr. Ponjuan's policy brief on *Latino Males: Improving College Access and Degree Completion — A New National Imperative* and his ERC Seminar presentation may be accessed on the ERC website at <http://erc.cehd.tamu.edu/>.

## ERC Team Expands

Anna Witt Boriack, a former ERC graduate research assistant, recently joined the ERC as a research associate. Boriack graduated with a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University in 2013. Her dissertation examined teachers' perceptions of effective professional development in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology. Prior to completing her Ph.D. degree, Boriack received a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from Concordia University-Nebraska and a Master of Science degree in Biochemistry from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Before beginning her doctoral studies, Boriack taught high school science in a suburb of Chicago and high school mathematics in a suburb of Dallas. She has experience writing research proposals and has presented her research at national and local conferences such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) and the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA).



## ERC Welcomes Research Affiliate

Dr. Hector H. Rivera has joined the ERC as a research affiliate. Dr. Rivera received his Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 2001. He conducted his postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) at the University of Houston (2001-2002), and worked as a research professor at the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) in the Department of Psychology at University of Houston (2002-2006). Rivera directed the National Teacher Professional Development grant for math and science teachers of ELL newcomer/refugee adolescents at Southern Methodist University and is the founder of the Center for Child and Community Development, as well as director of the ExcELs grant program for school campus improvement.

Rivera is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Education Psychology in bilingual program at Texas A&M University. Rivera is collaborating with the ERC as a co-PI on the ESCAPE research project, as well as participating on the United Way Education Collaborative Initiative in Houston.



## ERC Presentations

Stillisano, J. R., Wright, K. B., Brown, D. B., & Waxman, H. C. (2013, October). *Evaluating a secondary/postsecondary partnership program to increase college readiness*. American Evaluation Association annual conference, Washington, DC.

Stillisano, J. R., Waxman, H. C., Rollins, K. B., Alford, B. L., Brown, D. B., & Wright, K. B. (2013, October). *A meta-evaluation of statewide programs designed to improve college access and readiness*. American Evaluation Association annual conference, Washington, DC.

Franco-Fuenmayor, S. E. (2013, November). *Investigating bilingual/ESL teachers' knowledge, professional development experiences, and perceptions about second language programs in a large suburban school district*. Center for Research, Evaluation & Advancement of Teacher Education (CREATE) 2013 Research Conference on Teacher Education, Austin, TX.

Franco-Fuenmayor, S. E. (2013, November). *Examining dual language and ESL teachers' knowledge, professional development experiences, and perceptions of dual language and ESL programs in Texas school districts*. Center for Research, Evaluation & Advancement of Teacher Education (CREATE) 2013 Research Conference on Teacher Education, Austin, TX.

Metoyer, S. K., & Wright, K. B. (2013, November). *College readiness for success in the sciences*. Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST), Houston, TX.