CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON EDUCATION

June 5, 2026

Educational Transitions:
From Theory to Strategic
Transformations in Practice
That Promote Student Success

VENUE

East-West University
Student Life Center
829 S Wabash Avenue
17th Floor, Lakeview Room
Chicago, Illinois, 60605

ABOUT CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON EDUCATION

Chicago International Summit on Education 2026 provides a platform for the presentation of new advances and research results in education theory and practice. It brings together academics, researchers, school leaders, and graduate students to share their research findings and best practices. The Summit includes presentations on innovative and emerging trends in educational practices to promote the successful transition of students beyond high school. All submissions are peer-reviewed and evaluated based on originality, technical and/or research depth, accuracy, and relevance to the conference's themes and topics.

Educational Transitions: From Theory to Strategic Transformations in Practice That Promote Student Success is the theme of Chicago Summit 2026 with diverse perspectives on the following topics:

- Theories and Practice of Effective Transitions to Higher Education and Workforce
- Mental Health and Wellness
- Digital Transformation: Integration of Technology / AI
- Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs
- Keeping Up with Curriculum Design: Implementation Trends, Student Assessment Strategies and Measurement Tools
- The role of STE(A)M education in preparing students for the workforce.
- Personalized Learning: Tailoring Education to Each Student's Unique Needs
- Remote and Hybrid Learning

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JUNE 5, 2026

SCHEDULE

WELCOMING REMARKS

DR. RADHI AL-MABUK

Board President,
Ad Astra Research Institute

Dr. Radhi H. Al-Mabuk is an emeritus professor of education in the Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, a position he held over 30 years. His areas of expertise include child and adolescent development, human motivation, moral development, and instructional psychology.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

JESSICA RULE

High School Senior
Legal Prep Charter Academy

Jessica has a strong passion for the performing arts and a career aspiration in Musical Theatre. Jessica is committed to continuous growth and artistic excellence and looks forward to pursuing formal training in Musical Theatre at the collegiate level.

GALIP BEDIRHAN

Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2025
Flight Student, 2026

Galip is currently pursuing pilot flight training and has a strong passion for aviation safety, leadership, and flight operations. Dedicated to continuous professional development, Galip is committed to building a successful career in the aviation industry.

PANEL DISCUSSION 8:40 AM - 9:40 AM

LEADING THE NEXT ERA OF EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: FROM VISION TO MEASURABLE IMPACT

MODERATOR

D. ANTONIO CANTU, PH.D.

Dean, College of Health, Education, and Human Sciences,
University of Arkansas – Fort Smith, AR

Host of the **Future Insight Podcast**

Professor Cantu has over thirty years of experience in professional education from high school through the university level. Professor Cantu is the author of numerous research articles, book chapters, and books on history/social studies education and technology integration.

PANELISTS

CYNTHIA BICA, Ed.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies, Missouri Valley College, MO

Prior Dr. Bice's current role, she was the inaugural Dean of Faculty and Chief Academic Officer at Miami Dade College – West Campus, where she served from January 2018. Before that, she spent over a decade as a Full Professor and Dean of the School of Education, Human Services, and Human Performance at Lindenwood University.

TOM PHILION, Ph.D.

Dean, Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education, Northeastern Illinois University, IL

Dr. Philion has recently led counseling and teacher education accreditation initiatives and the creation of new registered teacher apprenticeship programs. Before his appointment in 2022, he was a dean and education faculty member at Roosevelt University and a faculty member in the Department of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

GLEN BRODOWSKY, Ph.D.

Dean, Heller College of Business, Roosevelt University, IL

Dr. Brodowsky was a professor of marketing at California State University San Marcos from 1996-2024 where he taught courses in Marketing, Marketing Research, Global Marketing, and Consumer Behavior at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

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Future Insight PODCAST

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This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Jennifer Laffier, Madison Westley and Enikő Tóth. The session moderator is Dr. Amanda Aldridge.

Conference Topic:
Mental Health and Wellness

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1 9:45 AM - 10:35 AM

Paper: The Digital Wellness Needs of First-Year Post-Secondary Students: Exploring Educational Implications

Madison Westley
Ontario Tech University

Jennifer Laffier, PhD, RCAT, RP
Ontario Tech University

Biographies:

Madison Westley is a doctoral student in the Doctor of Education program at Ontario Tech University and Manager of the Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab. As an educator, Madison has worked with children, youth, and families in preschool, middle school and high school settings. She also worked as a Student Success Coordinator in higher education, focusing on student leadership, engagement, and first-year programming for new college students. Madison is passionate about child and youth mental health, digital media, trauma-informed care, and community-based approaches to wellbeing.

Dr. Jennifer Laffier is an Assistant Professor in the Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education at Ontario Tech University and a licensed Creative Arts Therapist and Psychotherapist with over 29 years experience in the mental health field. As a licensed practitioner working with children, youth, post-secondary students, adults, and older adults, she specializes in Digital Wellness, Trauma therapy, Play and Arts Based therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Eco-Therapy (nature), and authentic happiness (flourishing).

Abstract: Study Aim: The transition to post-secondary education for first-year students is a critical period shaping success and well-being. This group is vulnerable to mental health concerns, including stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and trauma, with some research reporting that approximately 50% of students are exposed to a traumatic event in their first year (Schroeder et al., 2023). In addition, students navigate complex online spaces that influence their academic, physical, social, and emotional well-being. This study explores how post-secondary institutions can integrate digital wellness (DW) and trauma-informed care (TIC) to support healthy transitions for first-year students.

Methods: An integrative literature review was used to synthesize research on first-year student mental health, technology use, and DW and TIC in higher education. This methodology allowed for a structured analysis across data sources and supported the development of new understandings (Dhollande et al., 2021). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and themes informed recommendations for supporting first-year transitions.

Results: Findings demonstrate that first-year students experience significant stressors during transition to post-secondary, and increased digital engagement can exacerbate challenges, such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, social comparison, and exposure to trauma (e.g., traumatic media, online hate). Although there is limited DW literature focused on first-year students, synthesis across the literature highlights institutional supports as protective factors addressing both trauma-related needs and digital well-being. The first-year transition emerges as an important moderating variable for prevention and intervention strategies to support success, well-being and retention.

Conclusions: Post-secondary institutions can optimize the first-year transition period as a key point for integrating DW and TIC into orientation, curriculum, student services, and policy. Strategies include professional development for faculty and staff, extra-curricular programs, and embedding TIC and DW principles into coursework.

This research is part of a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project.

Conference Topic:
Mental Health and Wellness

Paper: Latent profile analysis of perfectionism measurement tools: identifying groups of narcissistic perfectionists

Enikő Tóth
Assistant Lecturer

Department of Social Psychology, University of Szeged, Hungary

Doctoral Student, Doctoral School of Human Sciences, University of Debrecen, HUNGARY

Biography:
Enikő Tóth is an assistant lecturer in the Department of Social Psychology at the University of Szeged. She is also a doctoral student in the Psychology Doctoral Programme at the Doctoral School of Human Sciences at the University of Debrecen. In her role as a lecturer, she teaches courses to both psychology and education students at the university and also supervises theses. From the 2025–26 academic year onwards, she has also become involved in teaching psychology in English.

Abstract: Aim of the study: Perfectionism plays a central role in student mental well-being and academic adjustment. The present study aimed to identify distinct perfectionism profiles using the three most widely applied instruments: the Hewitt–Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (HFMPS), the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), and the Almost Perfect Scale (APS)—and to examine how these profiles relate to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and academic performance.
Methods: A total of 1,186 university students completed an online survey (897 women, 282 men, 7 identifying as another gender). Latent profile analysis (LPA) was used to derive perfectionism subgroups across the three questionnaires based on measures of AIC, BIC and entropy. The profiles then were compared regarding indicators of well-being and academic success.
Results: The non-perfectionist group was identifiable using all questionnaires. Based on the three questionnaires, most of the participants can be classified into the HFMPS social, FMPS parental, and APS maladaptive profile groups. In addition, we identified four narcissistic perfectionist groups with distinct characteristics. The first group, comprising organized and maladaptive perfectionists, has the lowest levels of life satisfaction and self□esteem. The second narcissistic group reports the highest levels of life satisfaction. They are characterized as non-perfectionists, in that they do not expect perfection from themselves but do expect it from others. This is supported by our finding that this group does not have an exceptional grade point average. Among narcissistic perfectionists, slightly more expect perfectionism only from others, while slightly fewer expect it from themselves as well.
Conclusions: This multidimensional profiling approach reveals diverse perfectionism patterns with meaningful implications for student mental health and educational outcomes. Given that many students experience perfectionism as an external expectation rather than an internal standard, these findings highlight how such pressures may undermine well-being and adjustment during key educational transitions.

Conference Topic:
Remote and
Hybrid Learning

Tinukwa Boulder, Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh, PA

Christina Frasher, Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh, PA

Workshop: A Community Driven Approach to Online Course Development

Biographies

Dr. Tinukwa Boulder is Professor of Practice in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading (TLL) and Director of Innovative Technology and Online Learning in the Office of the Dean, School of Education, at the University of Pittsburgh. She holds a doctorate in Instructional Systems and Workforce Development from Mississippi State University.

With over a decade of experience in higher education, Dr. Boulder's expertise spans critical instructional design, faculty development, project management, technology integration, consultative leadership, and college-level teaching. She draws on the design justice framework to center and support the diverse learners' pedagogical needs. Her current research explores liberatory pedagogy and design justice in online learning.

Dr. Christina Frasher is a visiting faculty member in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Her past work includes experience in behavioral health and foster care and adoption settings, and supporting neurodivergent individuals, marginalized youth, trauma survivors, and veterans. She also has extensive work in educational development, focusing on inclusive instructional design and contemplative and well-being practices in higher education.

Overview:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period, there has been an increased demand for quality online and hybrid program offerings in higher education. There is a need for online learning "infrastructure, resources, and training" (p. 1) to sustain the design and facilitation of quality online programs. Northcote (2019) acknowledges that providing professional development (PD) in online teaching "…can make or break the quality of teachers' experiences when facilitating online courses, and it also has a direct impact on the quality of students' learning" (p. 337). Online professional development (PD) can lessen faculty resistance to online teaching and learning and enable the creation of well-designed online courses that cultivate meaningful and active learning and engagement among learners.

Designing quality online courses often requires instructional design assistance to identify and incorporate appropriate pedagogical strategies and creative uses of technology to facilitate multimodal online learning. However, many existing online learning PDs do not adequately address inclusive and equity-centered course design. Participants are passive recipients of instructional design expertise, isolated from the course development process itself.

Guiding Theoretical Framework

We drew from Sasha Costanza-Chock's design justice framework to implement a community-led instructional design approach to support the development of an online professional development course title: "Fundamentals of Online Teaching and Equity-Centered Course Design." Using a community-led approach enabled us to harness the collective wisdom of faculty and staff to develop a community of practice around equity-centered course design and teaching. During the presentation, we will discuss the theoretical paradigm that guided our work and the practical approaches we used to develop the online PD course.

Aim of the Project

By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to:

Discuss design justice principle to online course development

Discuss benefits and challenges of applying a community-led instructional design approach to create an online program development initiatives

Brainstorm and share your community-led design strategies.

Conference Topic: The role of STE(A)M education in preparing students for the workforce.

Paper: *Media Influences on STEM Pathways and Student Choice*

Michelle Frierson, Ph.D.
Utah State University, UT

Biography: Dr. Michelle Frierson is an Assistant Professor at Utah State University in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership for the Mathematics Education and Leadership program, and Cultural Studies. She draws on Black epistemologies and Critical Race Theory to draw connections between student learning, teacher experiences, and culturally relevant content in STEM disciplines. She brings her expertise as a former classroom educator to her scholarship that engages teachers and students in exploring what it means to be and become a "STEM person". She investigates the intersection of STEM, joy, and identity through participatory and community-based projects.

Abstract:

Aim of the Study
This paper will examine how high school STEM students are navigating a changing technological landscape as they make decisions about pursuing a career in STEM, particularly for entry-level jobs in tech and computer science. I believe this to be a critical moment in STEM programs and careers as students encounter narratives about the security of STEM careers in the job market amid disruption from generative AI (World Economic Forum, 2025). This paper addresses a time-sensitive contradiction: students are urged to pursue STEM for stability even as media highlight layoffs, automation risk, and rising degree costs. Because of this unique moment of uncertainty amid the continued push to recruit students into STEM careers, I believe educators and researchers should be considering a new question: Are we preparing students for a future that no longer exists?

Methods
This proposed paper will examine how broader social, political, and media narratives influence students' perceptions of STEM pathways and perceived job security or insecurity. Currently, we lack evidence on how those media narratives intersect with school structures (tracking, gateway courses) at the moment when students either commit to or exit STEM as a pathway. Specifically, I ask the following research questions: 1) What shifts occur in students' perceptions, participation, and planning when they encounter media that challenge dominant STEM narratives of success? and 2) What types of supports do students seek out to navigate conflicting STEM narratives?

Results
Analysis of media to reveal a landscape of overlapping, contradictory narratives being produced through social media and perpetuated by personal accounts of content creators and the reporting of traditional media on the stability of the STEM job market.

Conclusions
This proposed paper extends that line of inquiry by examining how broader social, political, and media narratives shape agency, identity, and decision-making in ways that influence what students see as possible for themselves within STEM pathways.

Conference Topic:
Theories and Practice of Effective Transitions to Higher Education and Workforce

Darinka Radovic, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Universidad de Las Américas, CHILE

Paper: *Disciplinary Stereotypes at the Transition to Engineering Specialization: Structural Mechanisms of Gender Segregation Across Majors*

Biography: Dr. Darinka Radovic is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Universidad de Las Américas. Her research focuses on gender gaps and identity development in education, spanning both school and university contexts, as well as socioemotional development in educational settings. Driven by a commitment to equity and evidence-based policy, Dr. Radovic combines mixed methods research with applied institutional work, leading initiatives to mainstream gender perspectives across teaching, research, and university governance. She has secured competitive funding from national Chilean agencies (including ANID and CNED) and international sources (Google Award for Inclusion Research for the application of data science methods to assess gender bias and equity in engineering) to study affirmative policies for women in STEM, educational trajectories, and the role of disciplinary cultures in shaping gender inclusion. More recently, she has opened a new line of research on socioemotional learning in early childhood education and teaching practices that support that development in the classroom.

Abstract: Aim of the Study
This study examines how first-year engineering students construct shared beliefs about STEM disciplines and how these shape major choice and gendered patterns of specialization. Positioned at a critical transition—from entry into higher education to the selection of an engineering major—it analyzes how disciplinary stereotypes encompassing perceived goals and required abilities operate as structural mechanisms affecting equitable participation.

Methods: The study was conducted at a large Chilean university with a common first-year engineering program. Survey data were collected from first-year students (n = 491; 54.8% of the cohort), complemented by institutional enrollment records. Students reported their intention to choose among 11 engineering majors and completed a 23-item questionnaire assessing disciplinary beliefs across three stereotype dimensions: ability beliefs, communal goals, and personal achievement goals. Beta regression models analyzed associations between stereotypes and both overall enrollment and women's representation across majors.

Results: Disciplinary stereotypes varied substantially across majors, while gender differences in perceptions were minimal. Stereotypes were unrelated to students' stated intentions at entry, but strongly associated with structural enrollment outcomes. Personal achievement orientation was the dominant predictor of overall enrollment: majors perceived as oriented toward status and recognition attracted more students regardless of gender. Crucially, no stereotype effect differed between male and female students, suggesting disciplinary beliefs shape enrollment similarly across gender. For female representation specifically, communal orientation was the only significant predictor, with more communally-framed majors enrolling a higher proportion of women. Ability beliefs showed a negative but non-significant association.

Conclusions: Disciplinary stereotypes function as structural mechanisms producing inequitable participation during educational transitions—not through differential perception by gender, but through the differentiated profiles of majors themselves. Addressing how disciplines are framed and communicated during early transitions offers a strategic pathway toward greater gender equity in engineering education.

LAKEVIEW VIEW ROOM **10:35 AM - 11:00 AM**

Poster Presentations, Networking & Showcase Lounge

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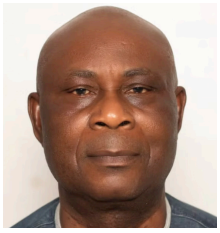
Conference Topic:
Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

POSTER PRESENTATION 10:35 AM - 11:00 AM

Poster Title: Awareness, Perception, and Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools for Enhancing the Teaching and Learning of Vocational-Based Subjects in Nigerian Technical Colleges



Victor Uwaifo, Ph.D.
Professor of Vocational and Technical Education
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, NIGERIA

Biography

Professor Victor Oziengbe Uwaifo is a Professor of Vocational and Technical Education at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria. He has been involved in university teaching and research since 1999 and is the immediate past Head of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education. Professor Uwaifo holds a Ph.D. in Technical Education from Ebonyi State University, Nigeria, and has published extensively in the areas of vocational and technical education, adult education, teacher education, curriculum development, and instructional effectiveness. His scholarly work focuses on strengthening skills development and improving educational outcomes through Technical and Vocational training."

Abstract:

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recent times has brought transformative changes across various sectors, including enhancing the learning of Vocational and Technical based subjects in most schools around the world. This integration of AI in the teaching and learning processes has emerged as a transformative force, offering personalized learning, simulations, and real-time feedback all over. Despite its potential, the adoption of AI tools in enhancing learning of vocational based subjects in Nigeria and most developing countries remains limited. This study examined teachers' awareness, perceptions and utilization of AI for teaching and learning in Nigerian Vocational schools. A descriptive research design was employed with a sample of 165 teachers drawn from Edo state technical colleges. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics. Findings revealed a low level of teachers' awareness regarding AI tools in enhancing vocational subjects with most teachers lacking familiarity with AI applications in their teaching and learning process. However, the perception of AI potential benefits was generally positive, with technical teachers recognizing the value of AI in enhancing student engagement and offering individualized learning experiences. The study amongst others recommended the need for targeted professional development programs to improve teachers' understanding and utilization of AI in the teaching and learning process. It however calls for a broader application of AI's role in Vocational and Technical education programme and provides insights for policy and practice to optimize its use particularly in resource constrained regions in Nigeria and other developing countries.

Conference Topic: Digital Transformation: Integration of Technology / AI

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Workshop Title: Guiding Students to Use AI: effectively, efficiently, ethically, equitably

T.L. Brink, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Crafton Hills College, CA

Biography

T.L. Brink earned his doctorate from University of Chicago. He has served on faculties at several universities, including Stanford (Department of Psychiatry) and Loma Linda (School of Public Health). He has authored or edited books that have been reviewed in the medical and psychological journals of six continents. His articles have received over thirty thousand scholarly citations. Since 1996 he has taught online asynchronously for Crafton Hills College. Morton Ann Gernsbacher, past-president of the APS, called him "truly the pioneer in online education."

Workshop Presentation Description:

Aim of the Workshop: To equip faculty to utilize AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, Perplexity) in such a way that models and mentors effective, efficient, ethical, and equitable use.

Methods: Bring your laptops! This will be an interactive workshop in which we take the participant's idea and carry it through to the construction of a customized chatbot, then field test and improve that chatbot.

Specific steps and examples are given at this site.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/10aKf_Ota-yJrTy2HrmldWQ7yy7XguddeeZi9uOveUmA/edit?tab=t.0

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Yuki Hasebe and Dr. Amber Adgerson. The session moderator is TBA

Conference Topic:
Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

Yuki Hasebe, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Psychology, School of Education at COEHS
Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL

Paper: Moral Boundaries and Youth Autonomy in the Context of Peer Bullying: Implications of Domain Theory for Educators

Biography
Dr. Yuki Hasebe is a professor of Educational Psychology in the School of Education at Western Illinois University with over 43 years of experience in the field of education in both the U.S. and Japan. Born and raised in Japan, she has conducted extensive cross-national studies comparing U.S. and Japanese adolescents.

As a domain theorist, she analyzes life experiences through various social domains and examines aspects of autonomy, conventions, and morality (welfare and anti-gratuitous harm), focusing on parental overcontrol and youth mental health, psychological abuse, and peer bullying, as well as moral universality across religions. Her work has been published in various academic journals, including top-tier publications such as Child Development. Connecting to the 2026 Chicago Summit's theme, her presentation translates social domain theory into strategic pedagogy for moral and school education, providing actionable frameworks to support youth social development and student success.

Abstract:
Framework of Domain Theory: I will introduce domain theory of children/adolescents' sociocognitive development (Turiel & Nucci, 1986, 2023; Hasebe, 2026), which empirically differentiates human conduct into four domains: personal (individual rights and preferences, e.g., choice of friends), prudential (self-affecting behaviors with potential harm, e.g., illegal drug use), conventional (social norms and traditions, e.g., etiquettes), and moral (concerns for others' welfare, fairness, and unprovoked harm, e.g., slandering). Unlike traditional developmental theories, domain theory specifies appropriate versus inappropriate areas of youth autonomy across domains and links these distinctions to divergent developmental outcomes. Domain-based research has identified systematic patterns in adolescents' autonomy judgments. Youth typically claim the greatest autonomy in personal domain, while recognizing parental authority over prudential, conventional, and moral matters.

Participants: Building on this literature, I will present in-progress empirical data (2026) examining domain-specific autonomy and adolescents' roles in peer bullying and moral views. Participants were adolescents (N = 166; 91 males, 74 females) from a public high school in Illinois.

Method: Students completed Parental Authority Index and Bully Experience Survey.

Results: Results indicate that higher frequencies of bullying others were associated with adolescents' beliefs in greater personal discretion. Critically, this association was domainspecific, emerging only in the prudential, conventional, and moral domains, adolescents typically acknowledge as legitimately regulated by parental authority. In contrast, higher frequencies of being bullied were associated with adolescents' perceptions of increased parental control. This pattern was also domain-specific, appearing exclusively in personal domain, where adolescents are usually granted discretion.

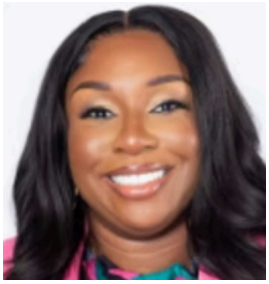
Theoretical Implications: Findings suggest qualitatively distinct forms of deviant autonomy linked to behavioral problems and deviant moral views: excessive autonomy/discretion claims in socially-regulated domains, and restricted autonomy in domain essential for personal agency.

Application to Education: Domain distinctions are critical for contemporary education and particularly for implementation of effective moral education, as they specify how adolescents' autonomous expressions, across different domains, are linked to different moral views and behaviors.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Yuki Hasebe and Dr. Amber Adgerson. The session moderator is TBA

Conference Topic:
The role of STE(A)M education in preparing students for the workforce

Paper: Affirming What They Bring: Harnessing Middle Schoolers' Real-World 21st Century Skills In the STEM Classroom



Amber Adgerson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota, ND

Biography

Dr. Amber Adgerson is an educator, researcher, and former P–12 teacher whose work focuses on expanding equitable access to STEM learning and strengthening students' academic identities. Drawing on extensive classroom experience, her scholarship bridges the realities of K–12 practice with teacher preparation, exploring how instructional design, culturally responsive pedagogy, and asset-based perspectives can reshape STEM learning environments for diverse middle school learners.

Her research centers on how students develop STEM identities, particularly when their everyday experiences and competencies are recognized as valuable forms of knowledge. Dr. Adgerson examines the ways middle school students demonstrate critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving in informal spaces such as homes, neighborhoods, faith communities, and extracurricular activities, and how those experiences can be leveraged to strengthen engagement and confidence in formal STEM classrooms.

Committed to advancing equity in STEM education, she works closely with preservice teachers to help them design learning environments that affirm students' strengths and lived experiences while building rigorous academic skills. Her work also highlights practical strategies educators can use to connect informal learning with classroom instruction, ensuring that students see themselves as capable participants in STEM pathways.

Abstract:

There are a variety of skills and competencies that teachers are expected to model and students are expected to practice in the middle school STEM classroom. However, many of the 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration that are valued in formal STEM settings have already been used and demonstrated by students in authentic out-of-school contexts. These contexts include students' homes, neighborhoods, churches, sports practices, and other informal learning spaces. Yet little is known about how this skill use influences the development of middle schoolers' STEM identities – their beliefs about whether they can succeed and thrive in STEM learning environments and careers. This paper presentation will present the results of an asset-framed qualitative study in which pre-adolescents (n = 9) were interviewed about their understanding and use of 21st-century skills in school and out-of-school contexts. The presentation will highlight patterns of 21st-century skill use, the types of skills reported, their frequency, and themes that reflect participants' informal STEM learning competencies. In addition to sharing examples of students' informal use of these skills, the presentation examines how 21st-century skills are typically recognized in formal STEM spaces and how a lack of connection to students' prior experiences can create a disconnect between their actual abilities and their perceived science self-efficacy and beliefs about their STEM capabilities. The session concludes with implications for school leaders and classroom teachers, outlining what is at stake in terms of academic capital when out-of-school skill use is not acknowledged and connected to formal STEM learning, along with practical strategies and routines that can affirm middle school learners' prior skill use and STEM experiences while helping them apply those same skills to support positive STEM identity development.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Drs. Vincent Connelly, Matthias Grünke and Randa Mahasneh. The session moderator is Dr. Radhi Al-Mabuk.

Paper: Constant Time Delay as an Efficient Pathway to Multiplication Fluency: A Single-Case Replication Study

Vincent Connelly, Ed.D.
Associate Professor of Special Education
The University of New Hampshire, NH

Matthias Grünke, Ph.D.
University of Cologne, GERMANY

Biography
Dr. Matthias Grünke holds the position of full professor in Special Education at the University of Cologne and previously served as a visiting professor at the University of Sunderland for six years. Before his tenure at Cologne, he was a full professor at the University of Oldenburg and served as an interim professor at the University of Leipzig. Dr. Grünke completed his Bachelor's and his Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. Subsequently, he enrolled in an extensive doctoral program in Special Education at the University of Cologne, which led to a PhD awarded 'summa cum laude'. He further obtained a postdoctoral degree in Special Education from the same institution. Dr. Grünke is a certified Montessori educator, behavior therapist, and client-centered counselor. His research primarily focuses on assessing the effectiveness of various teaching methods and learning strategies, particularly those aiding children and teenagers who face academic challenges.

Abstract: Objectives
Fluent retrieval of basic multiplication facts constitutes a central foundation for later mathematical learning and for successful engagement with more complex numerical tasks. Students who fail to automatize multiplication facts are typically forced to rely on counting-based strategies, which are slow, cognitively demanding, and highly error-prone. Such difficulties are particularly pronounced among students with mathematical learning difficulties, whose limited working memory capacity and reduced processing speed constrain efficient fact retrieval (Geary et al., 2012; Swanson & Sachse-Lee, 2001; Winkel & Zipperle, 2023).
The present study examines the effectiveness of Constant Time Delay (CTD) as a structured, error-reducing instructional approach for improving multiplication fluency in lower primary students with persistent learning difficulties. The primary objective is to determine whether CTD leads to immediate and functionally meaningful gains in the accurate and rapid retrieval of multiplication facts within multiplication tables that students had previously failed to master. Skip Counting was used only as an initial supportive strategy to establish numerical structure prior to CTD-based practice. A secondary objective is to explore whether CTD supports sustained engagement and task persistence during mathematics instruction.
Theoretical Framework: The automatization of arithmetic facts is widely regarded as essential for reducing cognitive load and enabling higher-order mathematical processing (Fuchs et al., 2005; Menon, 2016). Students with mathematical learning difficulties often show deficits in working memory and executive functioning, which impede the consolidation and retrieval of multiplication facts (Haberstroh & Schulte-Körne, 2022; Kroesbergen et al., 2022).
CTD is a well-established prompting strategy originating in applied behavior analysis (Touchette, 1971) and adapted for academic instruction in special education (Snell, 1982). CTD introduces a fixed temporal delay between task presentation and the delivery of a prompt, allowing opportunities for independent responding while minimizing error reinforcement. This structure supports errorless learning, strengthens stimulus–response associations, and facilitates the transition to independent fact retrieval (Cybriwsky & Schuster, 1990; Koscinski & Gast, 1993; Williams & Collins, 1994). Previous research has demonstrated CTD to be an efficient and effective method for teaching multiplication facts to students with learning difficulties (Koscinski & Gast, 1993; Williams & Collins, 1994; Wilson & Robinson, 1997). In the present study, Skip Counting served only as an initial scaffold and was systematically faded, whereas CTD remained the central instructional component throughout the intervention.
Methods: A single-case experimental multiple-baseline design across multiplication fact sets was employed in line with established quality standards (Horner et al., 2005; Kratochwill et al., 2023). Participants were two male fourth-grade students attending an inclusive elementary school in Germany. Both exhibited persistent and pronounced difficulties in multiplication fact retrieval despite adequate addition skills. Teacher reports and pre-assessment data indicated long-standing reliance on counting strategies, low confidence in mathematics, and reduced task persistence. One student presented with attentional difficulties, while the other showed marked motivational and engagement-related challenges. The intervention targeted the 6, 7, and 8 multiplication tables, selected based on weakest baseline performance. Baseline phases consisted of repeated timed assessments without instructional support. The intervention phase centered on CTD-based flashcard practice with a fixed response interval. Skip Counting was implemented only briefly at the outset of each multiplication table and faded thereafter. Performance was assessed repeatedly using curriculum-aligned timed worksheets. Data were analyzed through visual inspection of level, trend, and variability across phases.
Results: For both students and all targeted multiplication tables, the introduction of CTD-based instruction was associated with immediate and substantial improvements in multiplication fluency. Clear level changes were observed at the onset of the intervention, with consistently higher numbers of correct responses during intervention phases compared to baseline. Baseline performance was low and stable, whereas intervention phases showed marked gains in accuracy and reduced variability. Both students reached near-ceiling performance levels by the end of the intervention (up to 20 of 21 correct responses). The immediacy of the performance gains suggests a functional relation between CTD and improved multiplication fact retrieval. These findings are consistent with previous single-case research on CTD (Cybriwsky & Schuster, 1990; Williams & Collins, 1994; Bell et al., 2025).
Scientific Significance of the Study: This study contributes to the literature by providing a systematic replication of CTD for teaching multiplication facts under contemporary inclusive school conditions outside the United States. Although CTD has demonstrated effectiveness in earlier research, much of the available evidence is dated and contextually limited (Bell et al., 2025). The innovative contribution of the study lies in the replication and contextual validation of an evidence-based prompting strategy using a rigorous single-case design and clearly specified instructional procedures. The findings indicate that CTD can be implemented efficiently in real-world school settings with students presenting complex learning and motivational profiles. As such, the study strengthens the external validity of prior research and supports CTD as a viable, low-resource instructional approach for improving multiplication fluency in inclusive mathematics instruction.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Drs. Vincent Connelly, Matthias Grünke and Randa Mahasneh. The session moderator is Dr. Radhi Al-Mabuk.

Conference Topic:
The role of STE(A)M education in preparing students for the workforce

Paper: Transition in Action: Making the Invisible Visible Through Teacher Training in Hattie's Ten Mindframes to Enhance Mathematics Achievement and Support Grade-Level Transition

Randa Mahasneh, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Biography

Dr. Randa Mahasneh is a Professor of Educational Psychology whose work focuses on learning and instruction. Her research interests include self-regulated learning, reading for pleasure, service learning, medical education, and women's empowerment. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Simon Fraser University in Canada.

Dr. Mahasneh has held several academic and leadership roles, including Associate Dean for Academic Development and International Outreach, Head of the Department of Educational Psychology, and faculty member at Hashemite University and Qatar University.

She has an extensive record of publications, conference presentations, international collaborations, and experience managing research and capacity-building grants. Throughout her academic career, she has received several awards and prestigious scholarships, including Fulbright, Erasmus+, and Erasmus Mundus awards.

Abstract:

Aim of the Study:

This study examines whether making teachers' implicit beliefs explicit through training in Hattie and Zierer's ten mindframes for visible learning can enhance students' mastery of foundational competencies required for successful grade-level transitions. Specifically, it investigates the impact of such training on third-grade students' mathematics achievement and motivation.

Methods: A quasi-experimental design was employed involving four intact third-grade classes from an elementary school in Jordan. Classes were assigned to experimental (n = 74) and control (n = 77) groups based on prior classroom observations using a validated visible learning checklist. Teachers in the experimental group received professional development through a purpose-designed instructional guide focused on the ten mindframes, and subsequently implemented five weeks of mindframe-aligned instruction on the Addition unit. Control group teachers continued with conventional instruction. Student outcomes were measured using a researcher-developed mathematics achievement test and a Mathematics Learning Motivation Scale. Data were analyzed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Results: Results indicated a statistically significant and large effect of the intervention on students' mathematics achievement in favor of the experimental group ($F = 58.33$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.96$). However, no statistically significant difference was found in students' motivation ($F = 0.051$, $p > .05$), which may be attributed to ceiling effects and the relatively short duration of the intervention.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that making teaching practices visible through targeted professional development in visible learning mindframes can significantly strengthen students' foundational mathematical competencies. This approach supports readiness for subsequent learning and facilitates smoother grade-level transitions, although longer interventions may be needed to influence motivational outcomes.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Jennifer Laffier, Madison Westley, and Dr. Trinka Pape. The session moderator is Dr. Larry J. Walker

Conference Topic:
Mental Health and Wellness

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3 11:55 AM - 12:45 PM

Paper: Digital Wellness Across Developmental Stages: Supporting Students from Middle School to Post-Secondary

Madison Westley
Ontario Tech University

Jennifer Laffier, PhD, RCAT, RP
Ontario Tech University

Biographies:

Madison Westley is a doctoral student in the Doctor of Education program at Ontario Tech University and Manager of the Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab. As an educator, Madison has worked with children, youth, and families in preschool, middle school and high school settings. She also worked as a Student Success Coordinator in higher education, focusing on student leadership, engagement, and first-year programming for new college students. Madison is passionate about child and youth mental health, digital media, trauma-informed care, and community-based approaches to wellbeing.

Dr. Jennifer Laffier is an Assistant Professor in the Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education at Ontario Tech University and a licensed Creative Arts Therapist and Psychotherapist with over 29 years experience in the mental health field. As a licensed practitioner working with children, youth, post-secondary students, adults, and older adults, she specializes in Digital Wellness, Trauma therapy, Play and Arts Based therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Eco-Therapy (nature), and authentic happiness (flourishing).

Abstract:

Study Aims: Youth ages 8-12 spend about 5.5 hours per day on screens, teens 13-17 average daily screen time is 8.5 hours, and young adults 18-29 often spend 8-12 hours daily (AAP, 2026; Duarte, 2026). As technology becomes increasingly embedded in daily life, young people are expected to navigate digital environments with limited support. Digital wellness (DW) promotes healthy relationships with technology, and DW needs and skills evolve across developmental stages. This study examines how DW needs, risks, and skills change across middle school, high school, and post-secondary education, and how these shifts can inform supports for educators, families, and youth.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted to examine literature on DW in middle school, high school, and post-secondary education settings, and the developmental needs of these age groups. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) to identify patterns in needs, technology use, risks, and required skills. The Psychological Digital Wellness (P-DW) model (Laffier, 2022) guided the creation of a conceptual framework outlining the evolution of DW across these developmental stages.

Results: Findings highlight that DW changes across stages in relation to developmental needs, technology use and skill development. In middle school, students require support in digital safety and self-regulation. In high school, teens' identity development and online peer engagement require skills in critical thinking and emotional intelligence. Post-secondary students navigate more independent academic and digital spaces, requiring self-awareness and impulse control. Across all stages, emphasizing mindful use is critical to foster healthy relationships with technology.

Conclusions: This study proposes an emerging conceptual framework for DW to help educators, families, and policymakers. Integrating DW through curriculum, community education, policy, and co-curricular programs, especially from an early age, can equip students with the skills needed to engage with technology in safe and healthy ways across the lifespan.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Jennifer Laffier, Madison Westley, and Dr. Trinka Pape. The session moderator is Dr. Larry J. Walker

Conference Topic:
Remote and Hybrid Learning

Paper: College Student Online Learning Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Trinka Pape, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Registrar's Office, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL

Biography:
Dr. Trinka Pape is a Coordinator of Articulation and Evaluation, educator, and leader with a desire to help students succeed and reach their goals. She has more than a decade of experience in Higher Education, as an instructor, mentor, and coordinator. She has a passion for providing support to students of all ages and levels of education, from undergraduate to graduate level, as well as training adult learners in various formats. She has been an instructor of Psychology and Sociology within the Illinois prison system and conducted training sessions as a mentor in graduate medical education. Her current research interests include student success and perseverance, as well as best practices for higher education administrators. She is the Professional Activities Officer for IACRAO, the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, providing mentorship to the district chairs of IACRAO. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration with a concentration in Higher Education from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Abstract:
Aim of the Study: The isolation experienced by college students during the COVID-19 pandemic led to numerous issues and increased stress. The purpose of this study was to examine the coping mechanisms that college students utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic and explore the impact of the pandemic on how these students coped and their overall lived experiences. One aspect of the lived experience that was explored included remote learning.

Methods: Participants were juniors and seniors graduating between May 2023 and May 2024 from a university in the southern Midwest. The researcher employed a mixed methodology approach, consisting of a quantitative survey, followed by qualitative interviews with students who completed the survey.

Results: Based on the results of the Brief Resilient Coping Scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004), most participants were medium or high resilient copers. I calculated the frequencies from the survey and interview data, and the most common coping strategies were using social media, playing video games, and exercising. 46.7% of the students in this study experienced difficulty completing assignments and tests. Students experienced excessive stress from demanding professors. Three of the eight students interviewed experienced internet connectivity issues. Nearly half of the participants reported difficulties in completing assignments and tests.

Conclusions: Students in this study experienced difficulties and challenges with online learning, but overall, online course completion was not overly burdensome and did not prevent them from completing their course requirements. Students believed professors should receive more training in delivering online courses as well as be more accessible, empathetic, less demanding, and respond to emails more promptly. Lastly, college students look forward to the in-person experience. Participants strongly suggested implementing social programs and support in a safe, accessible format.

Conference Topic: Digital Transformation: Integration of Technology / AI

Workshop: Be a Disruptor in the Higher Ed AI Disruption: From Awareness to Application Through Learning Frameworks and Theories

Feygens Saint-Joy Jr.
Monroe University, NY

Biography:
Feygens Saint-Joy Jr. is a futurist, global marketing consultant, and AI strategist operating at the intersection of marketing, data, and emotional intelligence. He is the Founder and Chief AI & Emotional Intelligence Strategist at Joytelligence, where he advances human-centered innovation by integrating artificial intelligence with emotional intelligence to drive meaningful impact. He is also the Principal Consultant of Brand Joy, LLC, leading global marketing strategy initiatives, and serves as a Marketing Analytics Leader at Community Joy, LLC, where he applies data-driven insights to community-focused solutions.

Workshop Presentation Description:

Aim of the Study

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming higher education by reshaping how knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and applied. While universities increasingly encourage AI integration, many faculty members have received little formal preparation in pedagogy or AI-enabled instructional design. This study aims to examine how faculty capability expansion through structured learning frameworks can improve the quality of AI-integrated pedagogy. The research introduces a conceptual transformation model that positions faculty capability development as the central mechanism for moving educators from AI awareness to effective classroom application.

Methods

This study adopts a conceptual research design grounded in four theoretical perspectives: Contingency Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory. Drawing on these frameworks, the study develops a direct-effects model in which faculty capability expansion serves as the independent variable and quality of AI-integrated pedagogy serves as the dependent variable. Capability expansion is defined as faculty development in pedagogical frameworks, AI literacy, co-intelligence practices, and emotional intelligence competencies applied to course design and content delivery. The conceptual framework is supported through synthesis of existing literature on higher education pedagogy, faculty development, and AI-enabled learning environments.

Results

The proposed model suggests that faculty capability expansion plays a critical role in improving the quality of AI-integrated pedagogy. When faculty develop structured pedagogical competencies, they are better equipped to redesign assignments, incorporate AI literacy, facilitate co-intelligent learning environments, and promote deeper student engagement. The analysis indicates that pedagogical frameworks function as adaptive mechanisms that enable faculty to align instructional design with rapidly evolving technological environments.

Conclusions

The findings highlight the importance of faculty capability expansion as a strategic response to AI disruption in higher education. Rather than focusing solely on AI tool adoption, institutions must invest in pedagogical development that integrates learning frameworks and human-centered competencies. By expanding faculty instructional capacity, universities can transform AI disruption into an opportunity to strengthen academic rigor, deepen student learning, and prepare graduates for an increasingly AI-enabled workforce.

Conference Topic: Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

Best Practice Presentation: Real-World Ready: A Suburban Iowa School District's Mission to Provide Authentic, Real-World Learning Opportunities to Students

TJ Warren, Instructor, Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) Careers, Cedar Falls Community School District, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Biography: TJ Warren is the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) Careers Instructor for Cedar Falls Community School District in Cedar Falls, Iowa. He works closely with juniors and seniors who are either interested in engineering or uncertain about what they want to do after high school. Using the CAPS Network principles and framework, TJ helps his associates explore career opportunities, develop durable skills, and solve real-world problems in partnership with local employers. Additionally, TJ serves as the K-12 STEM & Community Career Facilitator where he plans programs and advocates for authentic learning opportunities and experiences throughout the district's K-12 experience. Prior to his current role, TJ spent 15 years mentoring, advising, and coaching students in the higher education landscape. Through his time in various roles at Upper Iowa University, Wartburg College, and the University of Northern Iowa, as well as 2 years in the private sector at YouScience, TJ developed a passion for helping others pursue their purpose. He believes one of his unique purposes in the world is to help others pursue theirs.
In his free time, TJ is a keynote speaker and writer, and he enjoys drawing, reading, spending time with his family, playing board games with his friends, and catching the latest superhero movie.

Best Practice Presentation Description: Over the past 10 years, the Cedar Falls Community School District, located in Northeast Iowa, has been on a mission to provide authentic learning opportunities to its students. The district's aim is to prepare students for their purpose and real-world success. It's been a journey, but over the last few years, major strides have been made towards helping students better prepare for their postsecondary endeavors.
In this presentation, TJ Warren, Cedar Falls CAPS Careers Instructor and K-12 STEM & Community Career Facilitator, will be sharing about the various programmatic elements the district is doing to prepare students for life after graduation. Participants will gain insight into the district's CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) program; a program modeled off of the global CAPS Network framework which focuses on profession-based, experiential learning opportunities and durable skill development. This presentation will also showcase how this work has extended into earlier grades as well, including the 6th and 7th grade levels.
This session is ideal for educators and leaders interested in building meaningful, community-connected learning experiences that prepare students to be future-ready. Throughout the session, practical examples and structures will also be shared to illustrate how authentic learning can be scaled across a system, not just within a single program. Time will be reserved for questions and discussion as well.

LUNCH & STUDENT PERFORMANCES 12:45 PM - 1:40PM

Chicago Center of Music Education

The Chicago Center for Music Education (ChiME) provides access to evidence-based music therapy and engagement-based music programs that develop critical skills and foster self and social growth. We strive to inspire a higher level of humanity through music and we believe that everyone should have access to the many benefits of music education. Our program objectives aim to help participants reach their true potential through the joy of music-making and the acquisition of essential life skills. We teach children to value differences and celebrate diversity through repertoire, curriculum, and relationship-building activities. Our goal is to provide everyone with opportunities to tap into their creativity, express themselves musically, and grow their skills and character through music.

ChiME was founded in 1981 as the Suzuki-Orff School for Young Musicians with the inaugural class of 15 families from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Today we serve around 3,300 participants through Music Classes, Private Lessons, and Music Therapy at our West Town location as well as Classroom Music instruction during and after school at Chicago area partner schools. During 2024 we delivered instruction to students in 182 classrooms throughout our 26 partner schools and organizations (including 17 Chicago Public Schools), 180 after-school program participants, over 100 private lesson students, 40 Early Childhood families, 20 individual Music Therapy clients, and 50 summer camp participants. Every year, we also put on between 20-30 performances for audiences ranging from 10 to 300. Approximately 69% of our participants are economically disadvantaged and 35% have diverse learning needs.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4
FUTURE REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION 1:40PM - 2:30 PM

A dynamic panel featuring authors of the journal's upcoming issue. This session will explore innovative research on supporting student success, with a focus on social-emotional learning, technology integration, and digital wellness for teens with mental health needs.

Radhi Al-Mabuk, Ph.D.
Board President, Ad Astra Research Institute

Professor Emeritus of Education
Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations,
University of Northern Iowa, IA

MODERATOR

PANELISTS

Tinukwa Boulder, Ph.D.

Professor of Practice
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading (TLL),
School of Education,
University of Pittsburgh, PA

Mabel Okojie, Ph.D.

Professor of Education and Workforce Development
Mississippi State University, MS

Jennifer Laffier, PhD, RCAT, RP

Director, Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab
Assistant Professor, Frazer Faculty of Education,
Ontario Tech University, CANADA

Madison Westley

Doctoral Student
Manager, Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab
Ontario Tech University, CANADA

FutureReview
International Journal of Transition, College, and Career Success

https://www.adastrari.org/futurereview

Conference Topic: Equity, and Data-driven Strategies for Improving Learning Environments

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4 1:40 PM - 2:30 PM

Best Practice Presentation Title: Connecting Your SIP to Professional Learning,

Dr. Jeremy Burnham
Assistant Principal of Innovation
Elgin High School, IL

Biography

Dr. Jeremy E. Burnham's core value in education is to enjoy what you do because we are lucky to be educators. Dr. Burnham was a career-changer in education. He fell for teaching as a coach for athletes with special needs. He earned his Masters's in Teaching from Seattle University and his Doctorate in Supervision and Leadership from Loyola University of Chicago. He has used all his certifications (except for Superintendent) and has taught ESL, Social Studies, English, and Special Education. He has worked in rural and urban settings. Taught adults and future teachers, presented locally and nationally, and has been a member of several Illinois State-based committees. Dr. Burnham's personal philosophy is that every day should feel like extra credit – so what are you going to do with your bonus points?

Session Description:

This session explores how to intentionally connect School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals to meaningful, ongoing professional learning. Grounded in our three priority areas: close reading and writing, focus conversations, and belonging. In this session we will examine how adult learning structures can directly shape student experiences in classrooms.

Participants will engage in a practical look at how we are redesigning department time to prioritize collaboration, clarity, and application, while reserving whole-staff meetings for targeted professional learning. We will highlight the role of modeling effective instructional practices, as well as the continued use of Lunch and Learns to create responsive, teacher-driven learning opportunities aligned to real classroom needs.

The session will also emphasize the importance of coherence: ensuring that what we say we value in our SIP is consistently reflected in how staff learn, plan, and teach. Attendees will leave with clear examples of staff deliverables that provide both direction and accountability, tools that help measure impact, monitor progress, and bring greater clarity to our shared goals.

By the end of the session, leaders will be better equipped to align professional learning structures with instructional priorities, creating a more focused and cohesive approach to improving student outcomes.

Conference Topic: Keeping Up with Curriculum Design: Implementation Trends, Student Assessment Strategies and Measurement Tools

Dr. Prof. Almazbek Beishenaliev
Founder and Director of the Regional Institute of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4 1:40 PM - 2:30 PM

Paper Presentation Title: Transition to 12-Year Schooling in the Kyrgyz Republic: A Comparative Analysis of Stakeholder Perspectives Before and After Reform Implementation

Biography

Dr. Prof. Almazbek Beishenaliev, Founder and Director of the Regional Institute of Central Asia, a research-based think tank in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Former Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Swiss Confederation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Former Visiting Scholar and Professor at John Hopkins University, University of Northern Iowa, USA, Vice Chancellor of Vistula University in Poland.

Has over 60 national, 10 international publications, and 6 monographic books.

Abstract:

Aim of the Study: This study explores stakeholders' perspectives on the shift from 11 to 12-year secondary education system in the Kyrgyz Republic. Through comparing teachers', students', and parents' opinions on the reform before and after its implementation, the current study identifies its areas of effectiveness and limitations, highlighting constraints for future policy interventions.

Methods: The study applied a comparative analysis design. In April 2025 (pre-reform), responses from 885 participants including 394 teachers, 390 parents, and 94 students were collected through an anonymous survey. In April 2026 (post-reform), the same questionnaire was administered, concentrating on the perceived advantages and challenges of the reform. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores) and chi-square tests, with one-way ANOVA used, where appropriate, to compare mean responses across stakeholder groups.

Results: Approximately half of respondents reported being 'familiar' with the reform (59.6% of students, 47% of parents, and 47.9% of teachers). Parents and teachers also anticipated issues such as inadequate infrastructure, unprepared curricula, and insufficient teacher resources and training before reform implementation. Post-reform responses have also highlighted these challenges and high risks of the reform.

Conclusions: Although the shift to the 12-year education system in Kyrgyzstan is justified by educational needs and supported by most survey respondents, the current mechanism of its implementation is not adequate for a smooth transition. Research findings emphasize the need to invest in school infrastructure, teachers professional development, and curriculum refinement. Study limitations include small sample size compared to the country-wide scale of the reform and a short post-implementation window. Despite that, the findings of the study can provide crucial empirical recommendations to adjust the reform policy and its implementation strategies.

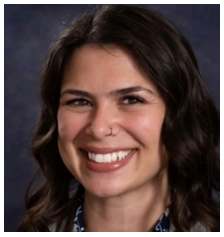
BREAKOUT SESSIONS 5 2:35 PM - 3:25 PM

Conference Topic:
Mental Health and Wellness

Workshop: Making Space for What Matters: Increasing belonging and engagement in the classroom through micro-strategies for mental well-being

Melina O'Grady, M.Ed., is a consultant and trainer dedicating over 30 years to education and youth development. Her experience spans residential facilities, schools, arts organizations, and out-of-school programs. Melina specializes in supporting organizations at the individual and the systems level, focusing on trauma and resilience, equity, mindfulness and social-emotional development. A founder of Bay Area Teen Voices, she advocates for transformational learning environments that engage all learners. Melina holds a Master's in Arts and Education from Harvard University and a Healing Centered Engagement certification from Flourish Agenda.

Kate Patton Regal, LICSW, has 25 years of experience addressing barriers to success for students, schools, and organizations. She designs and supports programs for youth facing challenges from adversity, chronic stress, and trauma. Kate's proactive, collaborative approach and systems thinking drive increased student engagement and learning. Committed to equity in education, Kate combines on-the-ground support with strategic vision to foster resilience. She holds a Master's in Social Work from Boston University.



Taiany Goulart, LMHC, has over a decade of experience supporting children, adolescents, and families in residential care, youth services, in-home programs, and schools. She emphasizes recognizing individual strengths and fostering culturally sensitive environments where individuals can thrive. Taiany's work reflects her commitment to celebrating diversity and empowering communities. She holds a Master's in Forensic Psychology from Roger Williams University, a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Counseling Psychology from Northeastern University and brings real-world expertise and passion to her youth-focused initiatives.

Workshop Overview

In recent years, we have seen a significant uptick in teacher and student stress levels and reports of worsening mental health and lack of effective coping strategies. In this session, we will focus on making space for releasing some of that stress throughout the school day through techniques that can be readily integrated into educators' toolkits. We will leverage case examples and research-based strategies to demonstrate how in-classroom self-regulation, mindfulness, and peer socialization strategies promote student and staff well-being. The discussion will focus on how the use of calming corners, affirmations, theater games, math games, and intentional teaching strategies can impact classroom success, including improved participation and increased attendance. We will also invite participants to map out the key pressure points during their school days and try out practices to relieve the pressure.

Walker Therapeutic and Educational Programs (Walker) is a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization dedicated to improving social-emotional and academic outcomes for students through integrated work in education, behavioral health, and special education. Walker offers consulting and training to schools and districts that focuses on nurturing systems and strategies that support a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing. This includes multitiered systems of support, high levels of engagement, rigorous learning, intentional focus on the ecosystem of children's lives and the supports that stay with them as they transition from one phase to another. Many of our districts have high levels of multilingual, immigrant and special education students. In this complex and shifting landscape, we emphasize designing universal approaches that center the needs of all students, especially those with trauma histories and higher needs.

Workshop Learning Objectives

In this workshop, participants will be able to: Identify their high pressure points during the school day/academic year; Identify 2-3 micro-strategies for mental wellbeing to bring back to the classroom; Engage in playful practice of strategies that improve mental wellness. Presentation Agenda: Core inquiry--How do we make space for what matters in the classroom?; Introducing micro-strategies using case studies and examples; Pressure mapping. What times of day do you experience the highest stress level?; Small discussion groups; Q&A about integration of practices; Closing mindfulness activity

Walker's approach incorporates the use of trauma-informed practices and healing-centered engagement in our trainings. We create a welcoming environment for a diverse group of participants, and we make space for that diversity to emerge through prompted pair shares, small groups and individual reflection. We approach learning as a multi-directional exchange where participants are learning from presenters, we are learning from you, and participants are also learning from and building connections with each other.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Drs. Vincent Connelly, Matthias Grünke, and Dr. Terrance Kwame-Ross. The session moderator is TBA

The Effects of Self-Questioning and Prompt Fading on Text Comprehension in Lower Secondary Students

Vincent Connelly, Ed.D.
Associate Professor of Special Education
The University of New Hampshire, NH

Matthias Grünke, Ph.D.
University of Cologne, GERMANY

Biography

Dr. Matthias Grünke holds the position of full professor in Special Education at the University of Cologne and previously served as a visiting professor at the University of Sunderland for six years. Before his tenure at Cologne, he was a full professor at the University of Oldenburg and served as an interim professor at the University of Leipzig. Dr. Grünke completed his Bachelor's and his Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. Subsequently, he enrolled in an extensive doctoral program in Special Education at the University of Cologne, which led to a PhD awarded 'summa cum laude'. He further obtained a postdoctoral degree in Special Education from the same institution. Dr. Grünke is a certified Montessori educator, behavior therapist, and client-centered counselor. His research primarily focuses on assessing the effectiveness of various teaching methods and learning strategies, particularly those aiding children and teenagers who face academic challenges.

Abstract: Objectives

Reading comprehension is a foundational prerequisite for successful educational transitions from primary to secondary schooling and for sustained academic engagement across subject areas. Students with persistent comprehension difficulties are at increased risk of academic failure and restricted educational participation (Sencibaugh, 2007; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). The present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a structured instructional approach combining Self-Questioning and Prompt Fading to improve text comprehension among lower secondary students with significant comprehension difficulties. The primary objective was to determine whether strategically guided instruction supports students' transition toward independent comprehension strategies and improved academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in cognitive and metacognitive models of reading comprehension that conceptualize comprehension as an active, self-regulated construction process (Cain et al., 2017; Catts, 2018). Self-Questioning is understood as a metacognitive strategy that promotes monitoring, integration, and evaluation of textual information (Daniel & Williams, 2021). Prompt Fading is theoretically embedded in the Gradual Release of Responsibility framework, which emphasizes the systematic transfer of cognitive responsibility from teacher to learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Hall et al., 2021). Through the gradual reduction of instructional prompts, learners are supported in internalizing comprehension strategies and applying them autonomously.

Methods

A single-case experimental multiple-baseline design across participants was employed in accordance with established quality standards for single-case research (Kratochwill et al., 2023). Participants were lower secondary students attending an inclusive school in Germany who demonstrated pronounced difficulties in text comprehension despite adequate decoding skills. Following a baseline phase without strategy instruction, a combined Self-Questioning and Prompt Fading intervention was introduced in a staggered fashion across participants. Text comprehension was assessed repeatedly using curriculum-aligned comprehension tasks. Data were analyzed through visual inspection of individual learning trajectories and descriptive statistics. Social validity was examined using student questionnaires addressing acceptance, perceived usefulness, and motivational effects.

Results

Across all participants, the introduction of the intervention was associated with clear and immediate improvements in text comprehension performance. Visual analysis revealed distinct phase changes coinciding with the onset of strategy instruction, with comprehension levels remaining consistently higher during intervention phases. Importantly, the systematic fading of prompts did not result in performance declines, indicating successful internalization of the Self-Questioning strategy. These findings align with prior research demonstrating the effectiveness of prompt fading for fostering independent strategy use in students with learning difficulties (Rouse et al., 2014; Grünke et al., 2025).

Scientific Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of evidence-based, strategy-focused reading interventions for students with learning difficulties. By demonstrating the effectiveness of combining Self-Questioning with Prompt Fading in a secondary-school context outside the United States, the findings extend existing research and respond to calls for international replication (Grünke et al., 2025). The results highlight the potential of structured instructional approaches to support educational transitions, promote learner autonomy, and enhance equity in access to academic texts.

Conference Topic:
Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

Best Practice Topic: Reconceptualizing College Readiness: A Methodological Framework for Continuous Student Insight Across Educational Transitions

Dr. Terrance Kwame-Ross
Augsburg University,
Minneapolis, MN.

Biography:
Terrance Kwame-Ross, Ph.D., is the Sabo Professor and Endowed Chair in Public Service and Citizenship and Associate Professor of Education at Augsburg University. His work centers on reconceptualizing how educators understand and support student development, particularly across critical educational transitions.
Drawing on educational psychology, youth development, and lived classroom experience, Dr. Kwame-Ross develops practice-based frameworks that challenge static notions of readiness and reposition teaching as a site of continuous interpretation and growth. He is the creator of the Motivation–Availability–Progress (M-A-P) Interpretive Framework, which offers educators a real-time method for understanding student engagement, access, and developmental movement across the K–16 pipeline.
His scholarship is driven by a commitment to bridging theory and practice in ways that advance equity, deepen learning, and transform how educational systems recognize and respond to student potential.

Abstract:
Aim of the Study: This paper addresses a persistent limitation in college readiness research and practice: the overreliance on static indicators that inadequately capture students' lived transition into postsecondary education. In response, the study introduces the Motivation–Availability–Progress (M-A-P) Interpretive Framework, a conceptual model designed to help educators and institutions more accurately understand, support, and monitor student readiness as a continuous developmental process across educational transitions.

Methods: This conceptual study draws on an integrative synthesis of interdisciplinary scholarship, including college readiness, student engagement, teacher support, ecological development, and grounded and embodied learning. These traditions are combined to construct M-A-P as a practice-oriented methodological framework that enables educators to use everyday instructional interactions as systematic sources of evidence about student development across the K–16 continuum.

Results: The analysis demonstrates that college readiness can be more effectively interpreted through three interrelated dimensions: motivation, availability, and progress. The framework reveals that many perceived readiness gaps reflect misaligned instructional design or insufficient support structures rather than student deficits. A focused illustration involving Black male students in predominantly White institutions highlights the framework's ability to surface inequitable transition conditions while maintaining broad applicability.

Conclusions: The M-A-P framework provides a scalable and actionable approach for strengthening college readiness and early persistence. By positioning instructional interaction as a site of diagnostic insight, the model supports earlier, more precise, and more equitable interventions. This paper directly aligns with conference priorities focused on educational transitions, student success, and practice-based strategies that improve postsecondary access and persistence outcomes.The framework has direct implications for instructional design, teacher preparation, transition programming, and integrated readiness systems, and offers a foundation for future empirical and design-based research aimed at improving student success across educational pathways.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Drs. Mabel Okojie, Tinukwa Boulder, and Theresa O'Neil. The session moderator is TBA

Conference Topic: Personalized Learning: Tailoring Education to Each Student's Unique Needs

Paper: Doctoral Advising as Pedagogical Practice: Lessons from a Non-Completion of Dissertation Study

Mabel Okojie, Ph.D, Mississippi State University, MS

Tinukwa Boulder, Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh, PA

Biographies:

Dr. Mabel CPO Okojie is a professor at Mississippi State University. She earned a Ph.D. in Educational Studies from The Ohio State University. Her focus in teaching and research includes Foundations of Education and Technology Integration, Workforce Program Planning, Adult Learning, Doctoral Advising Strategies, and Educational Research Methodologies.

At MSU, she has developed many new courses, demonstrating her commitment to curriculum innovation. Dr. Okojie has also published numerous peer-reviewed articles and participated in many professional conferences. Furthermore, she is the co-principal editor of the **Handbook of Research on Adult Learning in Higher Education**, which addresses adult learning methodologies and technology applications. In addition to her editorial work, Dr. Okojie has graduated and mentored numerous Ph.D. students as a major adviser and dissertation director.

Dr. Tinukwa Boulder is Professor of Practice in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading (TLL) and Director of Innovative Technology and Online Learning in the Office of the Dean, School of Education, at the University of Pittsburgh. She holds a doctorate in Instructional Systems and Workforce Development from Mississippi State University.

With over a decade of experience in higher education, Dr. Boulder's expertise spans critical instructional design, faculty development, project management, technology integration, consultative leadership, and college-level teaching. She draws on the design justice framework to center and support the diverse learners' pedagogical needs. Her current research explores liberatory pedagogy and design justice in online learning.

Abstract: Purpose of Research

Ph.D. students dropped out of the program after completing coursework. Noticeable attribution usually began at the dissertation writing stage. The purpose of this research was to identify issues that impeded the completion of the dissertation as planned. Advising methodologies, the relationship between advisers and advisees, including patterns of communication and the quality of coursework, were among the factors that could contribute to non-completion of the dissertation.

Methodology: The researchers used a mixed-methods approach described as convergent design (QUAN + QUAL) (Mills & Gay, 2019), combining a quantitative questionnaire, a semi-structured written questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. Of the 55 Ph.D. students who completed the questionnaire, 10 volunteered to participate in the unstructured interview, but one student was unable to take part as planned. As a result, nine doctoral students were involved in the interview process. The researchers used the framework method and content analysis to analyze the interview data.

Results: The result showed that 90% of the students interviewed agreed, in various ways, that communication between doctoral students and their advisers, including their committees, was shallow and limited. Findings indicated that students would like an orientation to discuss guidelines, rules, regulations, and expectations for doctoral students as they enroll in the doctoral program. The result showed that 80% of the participants believed that having a mutual understanding with the advisers would help them (students) to have open communication.

Conclusion: The researchers concluded that the quality of interaction and relationship between the doctoral advisees and their academic advisers could be powerful indicators of successful completion of a doctoral program. The analysis concluded that a structured advising session with a specific timeline for completing dissertation activities was needed. An unequal relationship has led students to change their advisers, which could further delay the completion of their Ph.D. programs.

Conference Topic:
Theories and Practice of Effective Transitions to Higher Education and Workforce

Paper: *Evaluation of Learning Modalities and Anatomical Knowledge: A Mixed Methods Study in First Year DPT Education*

Theresa O'Neil, PT, MS, DPT, EdD, OCS, FAAOMPT
ranklin Pierce University, NH

Biography:
Theresa O'Neil, PT, MS, DPT, EdD, OCS, FAAOMPT, is an Assistant Professor in the DPT-NH program and an APTA Board-Certified Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist. She serves as a clinical resource specialist in vestibular and post-concussion rehabilitation for Beth Israel Lahey Health in Woburn, Massachusetts, integrating advanced clinical practice with academic scholarship.

Abstract:

Aim: Anatomical knowledge is fundamental to student success in Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) education. Teaching methods and learning resources in anatomy education vary across programs. During anatomy coursework, students progress from undergraduate surface learning and transition to graduate deep learning practical application. Transformation from rote memorization to knowledge integration across systems is critical to successful retention and application. Identifying which learning options students perceive as most beneficial to developing anatomical knowledge may impact implementation of learning tools. The purpose of this study was to examine effects of various learning tools on confidence levels in anatomical knowledge in first year DPT students.

Methods: A sequential explanatory mixed method design used surveys to measure confidence levels objectively and captured student perceptions on preferred learning tools. Participant eligibility criteria included all first-year students enrolled in a DPT program. A survey was designed to assess participants' self-reported level of confidence (scaled from 0 to 100) in multiple domains of anatomical knowledge. The survey was validated by six content experts. Students were surveyed and matched at course initiation (pre-test) and at course completion (post-test). Also, four students participated in semi-structured focus group interviews upon course completion. Thematic content analysis was performed to summarize themes.

Results: Twenty-six students completed both pre-test and post-test surveys. Wilcoxon signed ranks test revealed significant improvement in overall confidence levels from pretest (50.0 [28.6 to 61.4]) to post test (86.8 [75 to 86.8]) ($z = 4.395$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative thematic analysis indicated that use of visible body, hands-on learning in palpation, and cadaver labs were most beneficial to increased confidence levels.

Conclusions: Findings indicate increased student confidence in anatomical knowledge via utilizing multiple learning resources. These findings may be utilized to inform learning resource selection and address student learning preferences.

LAKEVIEW VIEW ROOM **3:25 PM - 3:40 PM**

Poster Presentations, Networking & Showcase Lounge

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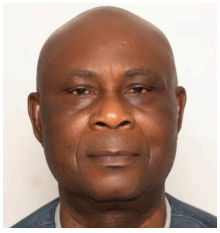
Conference Topic:
Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

POSTER PRESENTATION 3:25 PM - 3:40 PM

Poster Title: Awareness, Perception, and Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools for Enhancing the Teaching and Learning of Vocational-Based Subjects in Nigerian Technical Colleges



Victor Uwaifo, Ph.D.
Professor of Vocational and Technical Education
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, NIGERIA

Biography

Professor Victor Oziengbe Uwaifo is a Professor of Vocational and Technical Education at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria. He has been involved in university teaching and research since 1999 and is the immediate past Head of the Department of Vocational and Technical Education. Professor Uwaifo holds a Ph.D. in Technical Education from Ebonyi State University, Nigeria, and has published extensively in the areas of vocational and technical education, adult education, teacher education, curriculum development, and instructional effectiveness. His scholarly work focuses on strengthening skills development and improving educational outcomes through Technical and Vocational training."

Abstract:

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recent times has brought transformative changes across various sectors, including enhancing the learning of Vocational and Technical based subjects in most schools around the world. This integration of AI in the teaching and learning processes has emerged as a transformative force, offering personalized learning, simulations, and real-time feedback all over. Despite its potential, the adoption of AI tools in enhancing learning of vocational based subjects in Nigeria and most developing countries remains limited. This study examined teachers' awareness, perceptions and utilization of AI for teaching and learning in Nigerian Vocational schools. A descriptive research design was employed with a sample of 165 teachers drawn from Edo state technical colleges. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics. Findings revealed a low level of teachers' awareness regarding AI tools in enhancing vocational subjects with most teachers lacking familiarity with AI applications in their teaching and learning process. However, the perception of AI potential benefits was generally positive, with technical teachers recognizing the value of AI in enhancing student engagement and offering individualized learning experiences. The study amongst others recommended the need for targeted professional development programs to improve teachers' understanding and utilization of AI in the teaching and learning process. It however calls for a broader application of AI's role in Vocational and Technical education programme and provides insights for policy and practice to optimize its use particularly in resource constrained regions in Nigeria and other developing countries.

Conference Topic:
Digital Transformation: Integration of Technology / AI

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 6 3:40 PM - 4:30PM

Paper: MagicSchool: An exploration of the use of Generative AI by southwest Ohio teachers

Brett Burton, Ed.D.
Associate Professor of Education; Program Director of Educational Administration
Xavier University, OH

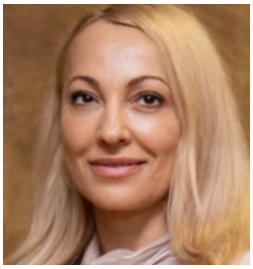
Abstract: Artificial intelligence has been used for over a decade in K-12 education as schools have adopted smart systems to identify student needs and adaptive programs to make personalized learning feasible. Large language models, however, are a new generative form of AI now available to the public. This form of AI is now available specifically for K-12 teachers as a "teacher assistant" to help them create lesson plans, design differentiated assessments, and write goals for Individualized Education Plans (IEP). This qualitative study used a survey to investigate the used of Generative AI by K-12 in-service teachers in southwest Ohio. Findings indicate that teachers are beginning to use Generative AI for planning and communication. The evidence and findings from his study concluded that teachers in southwest Ohio are in the early stages of learning how to use Generative AI.

Biography:

Dr. Brett Burton is an Associate Professor of Education and Program Director of Educational Administration at Xavier University, where he has served since 2019. He has led significant program innovation, including the development of fully asynchronous graduate courses, the launch of multiple superintendent and treasurer licensure cohorts, and the establishment of school district partnerships that strengthen leadership pipelines. Under his leadership, Xavier's Online Graduate Education Program rose substantially in national rankings, reflecting his commitment to program quality and student success. Dr. Burton's research agenda focuses on school safety, leadership, and equity, with numerous peer-reviewed publications and contributions to the field of educational leadership. Prior to higher education, he served as a principal and assistant principal, where he improved student achievement, expanded access to advanced coursework, and implemented comprehensive MTSS and PBIS frameworks. He is an active leader in the profession, serving as President of the Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration. Across all roles, Dr. Burton is recognized for his commitment to mentoring aspiring leaders, advancing equitable practices, and bridging research with practical application in schools. His scholarship specifically examines behavioral threat assessment, crisis preparedness, and the intersection of school safety with leadership decision-making in K–12 settings. He also explores the use of generative AI in education and issues related to anti-racist leadership, particularly the experiences of leaders of color in predominantly White institutional contexts.

Conference Topic: Digital Transformation: Integration of Technology / AI

Best Practice Presentaton Topic: Relational Teaching in the Age of AI through The HistoryMakers Digital Archive



Erica Ceka, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Governors State University, IL

Biography:

Dr. Erica Ceka is an Assistant Professor at Governors State University, where she teaches graduate courses in the Master of Public Administration and Interdisciplinary Leadership Doctoral Programs. Her research focuses on collaborative governance and nonprofit leadership. Driven by a relational and human-centered teaching philosophy, Dr. Ceka is dedicated to promoting equity in public services and education. She designs courses that prioritize student experiences to deepen their understanding of justice and prepare future leaders to approach public problems with empathy, equity, and critical inquiry. Dr. Ceka currently serves as President-Elect of the Greater Chicago Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration, reflecting her dedication to professional service and leadership in the public affairs field.

Abstract: Aim of the Study: The rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) into higher education has raised concerns about academic integrity, assessment validity, and student engagement. This best practice presentation aims to demonstrate how relational teaching principles and intentional assignment design can sustain meaningful learning in AI-pervasive contexts. The session shares a teaching approach that integrates Reversed Bloom's Taxonomy with socially engaged pedagogy using The HistoryMakers Digital Archive (THMDA) to preserve dialogic engagement while embracing innovation.

Methods: Course assignments were redesigned using Reversed Bloom's Taxonomy to begin with higher-order cognitive tasks such as creation, interpretation, contextual analysis, and critical judgment rather than summary or recall. Relational teaching principles, such as understanding student context, fostering dialogue, building trust, encouraging transparency, and offering structured support, were embedded throughout course design. THMDA was intentionally integrated as a socially engaged pedagogical resource, grounding inquiry in lived narratives and plural perspectives before students engaged with AI tools. While AI use was not required, students were taught how to use it responsibly and critically as a support tool rather than a substitute for thinking.

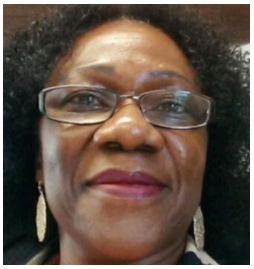
Results: Implementation of this integrated approach resulted in increased student engagement, more sustained classroom dialogue, stronger application of theoretical concepts, and greater transparency in discussions about AI use. Students demonstrated improved ability to connect theory to lived experience, critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, and articulate their reasoning processes. Assignments revealed deeper contextual awareness, enhanced interpretive skills, and more reflective engagement with course material.

Conclusions: This case illustrates that meaningful engagement in the Age of AI depends on intentional alignment among assessment design, relational teaching practices, and socially engaged pedagogy. Relational teaching anchored in lived narratives supports inclusive, human-centered learning while preparing students to navigate emerging technologies thoughtfully. The approach offers a practical model for faculty seeking to strengthen engagement, maintain academic rigor, and foster transformative learning in contemporary higher education.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Rachel Adeodu and Dr. Rania Sadeq. The session moderator is Mr. TJ Warren

Conference Topic: Innovative Teaching Methods to Addressing Student Needs

The Search for Balance: Adapting Teaching & Learning to Meet the needs of Gen Z and Millennial students in Early Childhood Pre-service Teacher Education courses.



Rachel Adeodu, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Coordinator, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Education Department, Northeastern Illinois University, IL

Biography: Dr. Rachel Adeodu is a faculty member and the coordinator of the Early Childhood Education program in the Teacher Education Department at Northeastern Illinois University where she teaches courses in the field of Early Childhood Education. She also served as the chair of the Department for five years, leading the department through the pandemic and the transition to online teaching and learning. Rachel received her Ph.D. in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood concentration from the University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada, her M. Ed in Educational Administration from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and her B.A. Education in English Language Arts from Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. She is a former kindergarten and second grade teacher, and her areas of expertise include early childhood reading methods, curriculum and instruction, and home-school-community relationships. Her current work focuses on the politics of language acquisition in young children in the Global South and Gen Z and Millennial learning preferences in early childhood pre-service teacher education.

Presentation Description: Aim: The Aim of the Study is to compare the ways in which two generations of Early Childhood Pre-service Teacher Education candidates learn in order to adapt learning to their needs.

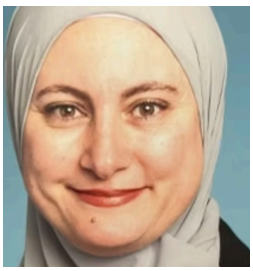
Methods: For this exploratory study, a short survey was conducted in three different undergraduate early childhood pre-service education courses and one graduate course. The candidates fall into two major categories: Gen Z (1997-2012), and millennials (1981-1996). The survey focused on four areas: 1) relationship with Technology, 2) preferred learning format, 3) communication style, and 4) attention style. Candidates' responses were collated for analysis.

Preliminary Results: While Gen Z candidates are digital natives, expect seamless technology integration and prefer to use their mobiles first, millennials are digitally savvy though not native, but are comfortable with technology and tolerant of mixed formats. In relation to preferred learning format, Gen Z candidates are Interactive and visual; they prefer bite sized content and micro learning, while millennials prefer structured lessons, longer explanations, and step by step walkthroughs. In relation to communication style, Gen Zs prefer direct, concise, fast and chat style messages, while millennials are email friendly and comfortable with longer written communication. The attention style of Gen Zs shows the need for variety, short micro-bursts of lessons, and multitasking, while millennials have a longer sustained focus and are comfortable with traditional lectures.

Conclusion: Since there are differences in these two generations of students, the quest for a balanced means of reaching all students continues. Understanding this led to making changes to syllabi, including creating hybrid courses, modularizing content, short lectures, short videos, more classroom group assignments, using presentations to demonstrate understanding, and teaching micro lessons to demonstrate application of knowledge. In spite of changes, challenges include students' lack of preparedness for class and my concerns about the depth of knowledge, understanding and critical thinking.

This is a moderated session featuring presentations by Dr. Rachel Adeodu and Dr. Rania Sadeq. The session moderator is Mr. TJ Warren

Conference Topci: Personalized Learning: Tailoring Education to Each Student's Unique Needs



Rania Sadeq, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Early Childhood Education
Saint Xavier University, IL

Paper: Play is Serious Work: What Adults Fail to Appreciate About Children's Play

Biography: Dr. Rania Sadeq is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at Saint Xavier University, where she specializes in child development, play-based curriculum, and motivation in both students and teachers. Her scholarly work also examines the experiences of refugee and displaced children and their access to education.

Dr. Sadeq is deeply committed to teaching and student mentorship. She regularly teaches courses in child development and psychology, teacher training, and curriculum design. She integrates real-world experiences, active learning strategies, and research-based pedagogies to enhance student engagement and support academic success.

She holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Organizational Change from Roosevelt University, a master's degree in teacher preparation and art education from the University of Central Florida, and a bachelor's degree in English Literature and ESL from Yarmouk University in Jordan. Her academic research focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in education, approached through qualitative research methodologies.

Beyond academia, Dr. Sadeq is passionate about community engagement and global child advocacy. She regularly collaborates with colleagues and community partners to support initiatives that advance equity, learning, and well-being for children and families.

Abstract:

Aim of the Study: The purpose of this paper is to examine the critical significance of play in children's development and to challenge the persistent misconception that play is merely recreational or of limited educational value. Although the historical roots of play extend far beyond the scope of this paper, the present study focuses specifically on the role of play within contemporary educational systems, curricula, and policy contexts. The central aim is to argue that play constitutes an essential component of children's learning and growth and should therefore be recognized as a serious and indispensable element of early childhood education.

Methods: This paper employs a qualitative, evidence-informed approach that synthesizes empirical research, developmental theory, and educational practice. Scholarly literature from psychology, early childhood education, and cognitive development is reviewed to identify how various forms of play support children's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. Additionally, policy documents and curriculum frameworks are examined to highlight gaps between research-based recommendations and current educational practices. The analysis also incorporates practical examples drawn from observational accounts and practitioner experiences to illustrate how play functions in real-world learning environments.

Results: The review demonstrates that play consistently contributes to foundational developmental outcomes. Findings indicate that play supports language acquisition, problem-solving, creativity, self-regulation, and social competence. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that when adults intentionally recognize, facilitate, and value play, children engage in richer and more meaningful learning. Several distinct types of play—such as symbolic play, constructive play, social play, and physical play—each provide unique developmental benefits that align with educational goals across early childhood curricula.

Conclusions: The paper concludes that play is children's serious work and should be treated as such within educational systems. To fully support children's development, parents, educators, and caregivers must adopt play-centered approaches and advocate for policies that protect time, space, and resources for meaningful play experiences.

Conference Topci:
Personalized Learning: Tailoring Education to Each Student's Unique Needs

Presentation Title: *Creating Access and Opportunities: Recommendations for Increasing the Number of Black Male Students Attending College*

Larry J. Walker, Ed.D.
Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Coordinator, Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education , The University of Central Florida, FL

Biography:

Dr. Larry J. Walker is an Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Coordinator in the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education at the University of Central Florida. Previously, he held faculty appointments at Loyola University Maryland and Howard University. Dr. Walker's research focuses on leadership, policy, and racism. Additionally, he served as the Legislative Director for former Congressman Major R. Owens. His job included supervising the legislative staff, making policy recommendations to the Congressman, drafting legislation among other responsibilities. Dr. Walker is also a political analyst and appeared on Live NOW from Fox, Fox Business, and numerous regional outlets.

Presentation Description:

Recent research highlights the decrease in Black male students enrolled in college. The challenges are rooted in PreK-12 and higher education barriers, including limited access to same-race educators/mentors, antiquated discipline policies in PreK-12 settings, and external challenges. For this reason, educators and policymakers must develop specific policies and initiatives to address these issues. Throughout the presentation, the facilitator will provide student-centered ideas to close the opportunity to succeed gap. The recommendations will help PreK-12, higher education leaders, and policymakers increase the number of Black males enrolled in college.

AWARDS CEREMONY & CLOSING REMARKS
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM

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The Future Review has published five issues and the sixth issue is expected to be published soon. The issues are available to read for free online.

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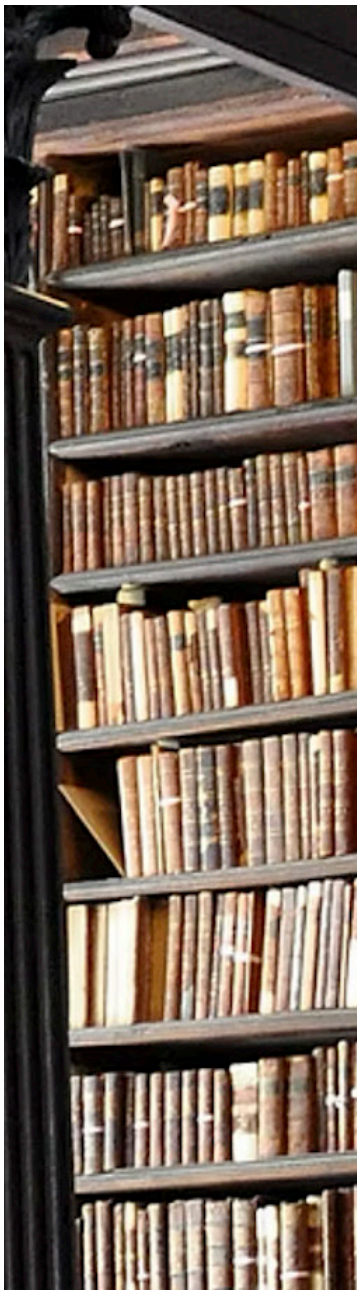

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