

# Reports of Research

## **Exploring the Relationship between Measures of General and Social Justice Framed Teacher Dispositions and Attitudes toward Inclusive Education for Students with Exceptionalities: A Formative Investigation**

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### *Abstract*

The role that teacher dispositions play in preparing preservice teachers has been a topic of vast controversy over the last decade. Further, the role that belief and positive perceptions of inclusive education should play in teacher education programs is also fervently debated. With the new model and new governing bodies (CAEP) of teacher education accreditation posing a challenge to many colleges in New York State, this topic is of utmost importance at the current time. This formative study investigates the potential relationship between measures of general and social justice framed teacher dispositions and preservice teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Results indicate that while no apparent relationship was found between experience in the classroom and attitudes toward inclusive education, there was a small but significant correlation between measures of general and social justice framed teacher dispositions and attitudes toward inclusive education. As this is a formative study, results are carefully contextualized and limitations and suggestions for future research are identified.

# **From Concept to Reality: The Metamorphosis from Student to Teacher Using Young Adult Literature as a Vehicle for Growth**

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## ***Abstract***

Embracing a unique opportunity on campus, this paper documents a project in which senior undergraduate secondary English education students were able to participate in a campus Common Read of a young adult novel. During the Common Read, the students were able to meet with the author and explore the text in multiple classes with both the lenses of student and pre-service teacher. The education students also had the opportunity to teach a sample lesson or series of lessons around the text. The experience helped inform practice regarding the exposure to and teaching of young adult literature and contemporary authors for pre-service teachers. New teachers developing their teacher voice were able to do so in a safe and supportive environment.

# **Teacher Learning Communities in Urban Settings: Impact on Classroom Practice**

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## ***Abstract***

Teacher Learning Communities (TLC) consist of a small group of teachers who meet regularly to collaboratively deepen their pedagogical understandings by engaging in collective inquiry in order to examine their daily practice, improve student learning, and construct new knowledge about teaching and learning. This paper explores the experiences of 17 teachers working in three urban schools and attending monthly TLC meetings. The findings indicate that the TLC meetings promoted a sense of responsibility for the teachers' own learning, and provided a safe environment where they shared successes and challenges. In addition, this study discusses the ways in which the TLC sessions were an opportunity for teachers to support each other in implementing formative assessments that positively impacted classroom practice. Recommendations on how to address the needs of emergent bilinguals and children with disabilities in the TLC meetings are provided.

# **Evolving Reflections: A Narrative Inquiry of an Emerging Educator**

## **Suggested Running Head: Evolving Reflections**

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### ***Abstract***

As Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) intensify, the importance of identifying and documenting reflective pedagogy increases. This narrative inquiry provides insight into how an emerging educator engages in reflective pedagogy, social positioning, and discourse analysis. Field texts include transcribed conversations with students, analytic memos, and journal entries from the first author. In this study, we illustrate her experiences as an emerging educator developing an identity as an educational professional; and through it we hope to provide some insight for teacher educators and emerging educators.

# **Summer Science Snapshot: A Developing Partnership Model to Spark Interest in STEM Among Rural Learners**

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## ***Abstract***

As pressures grow to increase the number of scientists and engineers cultivated in the United States, the nation is ramping up its focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. National and international organizations are calling on higher education institutions to rethink how STEM has been portrayed in society and create new methods to teach and learn science—and particularly engineering—in K-12 classrooms. We perceive this focus as an opportunity to build on the foundations children have developed by bridging the gap between what students have learned in their local environment and the required curricula.

We contend children in every community possess the knowledge and tenacity to succeed in STEM. A child's innate curiosity about how the world works and their place in it can be nurtured through intentional learning opportunities. These opportunities, steeped in creativity and design processes, build skills and encourage the exploration and application of their own knowledge. Affirming the value of what a child already knows allows her to generate a vision of herself as an innovator, a scientist, or an engineer.

Recognizing that traditional methods of teaching science in the U.S. merits a reworking, and that students' local knowledge is largely untapped, a team of educators—a collaboration among higher education institutions, local resources, and a rural elementary school—used out-of-school time to explore place-based learning techniques and engineering-design tasks. This paper describes this collaborative model and shares findings related to the potential impact this place-based summer program has on student interest in STEM.