

## 2025 NERA Program

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 3:15pm - 4:45pm

### **Building on Parents'/Caregivers' Knowledge of Child Development to Foster Rural Students' Success Symposium 2**

Building on Parents'/Caregivers' Knowledge of Child Development to Foster Rural Students' Success

*Author*  
Detris Adelabu  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Detris Honora Adelabu  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Linda Banks Santilli  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
K'Nadja Sims  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Ritchel Amankwah  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Laysa Hernandez  
*Boston University*

A strengths-based approach to childhood development in rural communities recognizes the potential of children and the resilience of their families and communities. Participants will learn about the impact of a relationship between an urban, northeastern College of Education and a rural elementary school in the South on student outcomes.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 3:15pm - 4:45pm

### **Early Measures of Success of the Sankofa Scholars Undergraduate Research Program to Increase College Success Symposium 3**

Early Measures of Success of the Sankofa Scholars Undergraduate Research Program to Increase College Success

*Author*  
Detris Adelabu  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Detris Honora Adelabu  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Jerry Whitmore Jr.  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
K'Nadja Sims  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Mya Kelly  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Jon Sibley  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Dayanah Belcher  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Jose Cruz  
*Boston University*

*Author*  
Jamila Rodriguez  
*Boston University*

The Boston University Sankofa Scholars Undergraduate Research Program aims to increase persistence and graduate admissions for first generation undergraduates who engage in research to promote equity in education and related fields. The program demonstrates promising success related to student persistence, academic identity, and research interests and engagement.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 3:15pm - 4:45pm

## **Educational Leadership in Context**

**AWARD-WINNING PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS: THEIR STORIES OF LEADERSHIP**

*Author*  
Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Kaitlyn Kakadeles

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Catherine O'Callaghan

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Kristy Zaleta

*Western Connecticut State University*

This exploratory case study identified leadership characteristics of award-winning public school superintendents through the telling of their stories. With superintendency longevity at an all-time low, there is a need for leadership qualities to be explored. The results of this study provide insights for both aspiring and current leaders.

### Investigating Equity Directors' Responsibilities and Expectations in Public Schools

*Author*

Michael Riehl

*William Paterson University/ Evesham Township Schools*

*Author*

Samuel Fancera

*William Paterson University*

This qualitative case study examined the roles, expectations, and evolution of equity directors using context-responsive leadership theory. Interviews with superintendents and equity directors from six public school districts revealed the complexity of the position, superintendents' expectations, the evolution of the role, and how contextual factors influenced their work.

### Leadership in Context: Examining School District Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors to Predict Superintendent Salary

*Author*

Samuel Fancera

*William Paterson University*

*Author*

Lorena Valer

*William Paterson University*

*Author*

Ashley Mungiello

*William Paterson University*

This study examined district-level demographic and socioeconomic variables through the lens of context-responsive leadership theory to predict superintendent base salary. In the tested model, lower superintendent base salary was predicted in higher-poverty school districts and White students accounted for most of the variance in superintendent base salary.

### The Process by Which Teachers Transition from the Classroom to Supervisory Leadership

*Author*

Anthony Bundy

*William Paterson University*

The purpose of this study is to revisit earlier research to identify leadership factors that teachers view as most influential in their choosing to pursue a supervisory career path (Bundy, A. 2020), and to develop recommendations to assist in the identification, selection and development of supervisory leaders.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 3:15pm - 4:45pm

## From Margins to Momentum: Innovative Strategies for Adult Learner Success Symposium 1

### From Margins to Momentum: Innovative Strategies for Adult Learner Success

*Author*

Jennifer Lewis

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Kat Tremblay

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Maura Maxfield

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

April Zenisky

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Presenters explore some of the challenges adult learners face while earning a high school equivalency credential or learning English. This symposium offers examples of systemic barriers and the strategies adult learners, educators, and administrators are utilizing to reshape inequitable educational structures and celebrate the unique strengths of adult learners.

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 3:15pm - 4:45pm

## Music, Technology, and Performance in Student Learning and Well-Being

## Building Literacy Through Music: A Catalyst for Language Development

*Author*

Shu Chen-Worley

*Touro University*

Teachers' knowledge of English greatly influences their instruction. For years, research has highlighted literacy achievement gaps in elementary and secondary education. This paper aims to demonstrate how music can engage diverse learners in building language skills creatively. Participants will explore how music affects learning and identify learners' strengths and talents.

## Building Student Academic Skills and Confidence with Computer-Based Learning

*Author*

Scott Rahner (Jr.)

*New Providence School District (New Jersey)*

*Author*

Scott Rahner (Jr.)

*New Providence School District (New Jersey)*

**Computer-based learning provides teachers the flexibility to target instruction for specific students in need of more support than others. The purpose of this action research project was to explore computer-based math programs that provide students a flexible path of instruction to improve student mathematical skills and confidence.**

## SELF-EFFICACY AND ANXIETY IN MUSIC AND NON-MUSIC PRESERVICE TEACHERS USING MIXED REALITY SIMULATIONS

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Antonia Madison

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia A. B. Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Jody Piro

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Katie O'Callaghan

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Erik Gundel

*Greenwich Public Schools*

This study was used to explore anxiety and self-efficacy in music and non-music pre-service teachers who experienced mixed reality simulations (MRS) in a course. A mixed methods multi-case study resulted in no significant differences for the two variables between groups. Interview responses supported the MRS experience.

### The Power of Performance: Educator and Student Perspectives on Performing Arts Education and Adolescent Well-Being

*Author*

Emily Fitzpatrick

*Endicott College*

*Author*

Kristen DiGiovanni

*Endicott College*

*Author*

Jennifer Flewelling

*Endicott College*

This study examines the perceptions of performing arts education on adolescent well-being. Using surveys and interviews, it reveals that students and educators view the performing arts as vital for emotional expression, confidence, and connection. Findings support the performing arts as essential to holistic student development and mental health.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

### Different Ability and Inclusion in Educational Practice

Disability storytelling and advice-giving as activism: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study

*Author*

Annemarie Vaccaro

*University of Rhode Island: Professor of Education*

*Author*

Annemarie Vaccaro  
*University of Rhode Island*

Findings from a 10-year longitudinal study illuminate how storytelling and advice-giving from disabled people is a form of activism. Qualitative narratives from disabled youth and adults can inspire change by encouraging all of us to remove socially-constructed barriers and to fight ableism in education and beyond.

### Intersectionality in Special Education Classrooms: Exploring Differences in Autism Identification & Early Intervention

*Author*

Mila Acosta-Morales  
*Messiah University*

This paper focuses on the racial/ethnic disparities in identification and early intervention for autism spectrum disorder. After establishing that students of color are underrepresented in early identification/intervention programs, it explores why these disparities exist and what educators can do to help families of color achieve the best outcomes.

### Trauma Training for Preschool Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study

*Author*

Rachel Bond  
*University of Massachusetts- Amherst*

*Author*

Rachel Bond  
*UMass Amherst*

This phenomenological case study explores a trauma training program for preschool educators during COVID-19. Findings highlight persistent burnout, systemic underfunding, and the value of relational, body-based strategies. The study emphasizes the need for trauma training tailored to early educators' realities and supported by broader structural change.

### Who is Outside the Frame? Educators' Figured World of Inclusion

*Author*

Katie Baulier  
*Endicott College*

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how educators' language reflects and reinforces beliefs about inclusion for students with disabilities. Findings highlight how euphemism, abstraction, and deficit-based framing undermine the enactment of authentic inclusion. The session offers strategies for shifting discourse to support equity, agency, and systemic reform.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## Education Equity and Resilience for Youth in Global Contexts

### 'We Keep Teaching': Educator Testimonies from Myanmar's War-Affected Schools

*Author*  
Lugyi No

This study explores how teachers in Myanmar's conflict zones sustain education without formal systems. Drawing on focus group testimonies, it highlights resilience, moral purpose, and reliance on community support. These grassroots educators challenge traditional crisis response models, showing how education persists through informal networks, ethical leadership, and collective commitment.

### Cultural Adaptation and Validation of the Intrafamilial Relationships Scale (ERI) for Salvadoran Youth

*Author*  
Fernando Mena Serrano  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Javier Suárez-Álvarez  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Using iterative translation, cognitive interviews, and psychometric modeling, we adapted the Intrafamilial Relationships Scale for Salvadoran students. The revised, three-factor instrument shows adequate reliability, invariance by gender and grade, and expected associations with mental-health measures, establishing its validity for researching family dynamics in Salvadoran schools and beyond.

### Equitable Access of Every Child to Primary Education in Ekiti State of Nigeria

*Author*  
Samuel Olufemi ADEBULE  
*Institute of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti*

*Author*  
Samuel Olufemi ADEBULE  
*Institute of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, N*

Equitable access to primary education is critical to ensuring sustainable development and social inclusion. In Ekiti State, Nigeria, renowned for its educational heritage, disparities in access still exist. This paper explores the current state of primary education accessibility, identifies barriers affecting equitable access, and proposes actionable strategies for inclusive education.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## Fundamentals, Flaws, and the Future of Standards-Based Assessment Symposium 5

### Fundamentals, Flaws, and the Future of Standards-Based Assessment



*Chair*  
Charles DePascale  
*Psychometric Confections, LLC*

*Author*  
Kristen Huff  
*Curriculum Associates*

*Author*  
Rochelle Michel  
*Smarter Balanced*

*Author*  
Stephen Sireci  
*UMASS Amherst*

Jonathan Steinberg  
*EurekaFacts*

This moderated panel features NERA past presidents discussing standards-based assessment that supports all students. Panelists first identify fundamental principles that apply across assessment contexts. Panelists next discuss flaws in current assessment applications, focusing on future needs. To close, panelists share their vision of the future of standards-based assessment.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

**Insights into Student Effort in Low-Stakes Assessments Across Time and Testing  
Conditions  
Symposium 6**

Insights into Student Effort in Low-Stakes Assessments Across Time and Testing Conditions

*Author*  
Katarina Schaefer  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Mara McFadden  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Jonathan Henriques  
*James Madison University*

Dena Pastor  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Kaijie Liu  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Hunter Castleton  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Jack Gilmore  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Sara Finney  
*James Madison University*

Carol Barry  
*American Board of Surgery*

This symposium examines student effort and performance in low-stakes assessments, focusing on value-added estimates, test order effects, and the interaction of time of day with test sequence. Results highlight how contextual factors influence effort and inform assessment design to improve the accuracy of the interpretation of test scores.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## **Perspectives on Graduate Education**

### **Doctoral Motivation and Writing the Dissertation**

*Author*  
Tricia Stewart  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Nicole DeRonck  
*Connecticut Technical Education and Career System*

*Author*  
Tricia Stewart  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Nicole Cote  
*Western Connecticut State University*

Motivation is a complex and multifaceted construct that influences the completion of long-term academic tasks like dissertation writing. As doctoral students engage in this intensive and isolating process, their ability to sustain motivation becomes a determinant of progress and eventual success. Therefore, we offer solutions to maintain writing motivation.

## Re-envisioning First Year Seminars: Skills Lab for Student Success

*Author*

Laura Millay

*University of Maine*

*Author*

Steven Quackenbush

*University of Maine at Farmington*

*Author*

Gareth Fuller

*University of Maine at Farmington*

*Author*

Kaitlyn Groh

*University of Maine*

*Author*

Afua Kwarteng

*University of Maine*

*Author*

Heather Pixley

*University of Maine*

*Author*

Jeffrey Willis

*University of Maine at Farmington*

*Author*

Debra Allen

*University of Maine*

This collaborative research explores a model to incorporate teaching college skills into first year seminar courses to support student success and retention.

## Sustaining Improvement: Exploring Alumni Engagement in Teaching and Mentoring Roles in an Online Ed.D. Program

*Author*

Eleanor Abrams

*University of Massachusetts Lowell*

This study explores how alumni serve in teaching and mentoring roles within an online Ed.D. program to address faculty shortages and sustain program quality. Through interviews, the research examines alumni motivations, support needs, and belonging—revealing a mutually beneficial model that enhances student success and supports alumni professional growth.

## The Source of my Discontent about Graduate Programs in Educational Measurement

*Author*  
Kurt Geisinger  
*Buros Center for Testing*

This paper is intended to begin discussion about common omissions in educational measurement graduate programs. Four sources of my discontent follow:

1. The need for information on the history of testing.
2. Differential Psychology.
3. Content of tests as opposed to quantitative procedures.
4. Under emphasis on classical test theory.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## **Educational Policy, Teacher Development & Family Engagement**

### **A Model for Effective Professional Development in Reading for Elementary Schools**

*Author*  
Dena Mortensen  
*Title (Optional)*

This study aimed to determine whether elementary teachers found a new model of professional development (PD) effective in building their knowledge and strengthening their reading teaching practices. Classroom teachers participated in the PD and shared their perspectives through focus groups. The results suggested that teachers found the model effective.

### **Bridging Educational Silos: Exploring Professional Learning Opportunities through Academic Library–P12 Partnerships**

*Author*  
Samuel Fancera  
*William Paterson University*

*Author*  
Neil Grimes  
*William Paterson University*

This study explored academic library/public-school partnerships to support professional development and learning (PDL). Findings revealed shared interest and complementary goals, yet systemic barriers limited collaboration. Scalable models like pay-per-session PDL and certification programs offer promise for sustainable partnerships to enhance educators and institutions.

### **Educational Policy and Legislation Grounded in Invitational Education: Reframing Deficit Models Through Inclusive System**

*Author*

Katherine Roe  
*Western Connecticut State University*

This conceptual policy analysis uses Invitational Education to reframe deficit-based legislation and accreditation in U.S. education. Focusing on DEI policy rollbacks, Title IX changes, and Connecticut's CAEP alignment, it offers theory-driven recommendations to create inclusive systems that affirm diverse learners across K–12 and higher education.

### Teachers' perspectives and training to engage families in their child's academic success

*Author*  
Sarah Sanford  
*Meriden Public Schools*

The role families play in their child's learning is often an overlooked component in education. This study examined K-5 teachers' perspectives on the ways they collaborate and engage with parents, and the training and resources they have been provided to successfully partner with the families in their schools.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

### Navigating Polarization and Building Shared Visions in Education

#### Algorithm to Administration: Polarization's Path into U.S. Schools

*Author*  
Diego Leaver

This study traces how media-driven polarization evolved into a structural force shaping U.S. education policy from 2018 to 2025. The analysis of media trends, trust data, and federal actions shows how fragmented information systems undermine consensus, transforming public education into a contested site of ideological and institutional instability.

### Bridging Cultures: Teacher Cultural Competence & Student Engagement

*Author*  
Deirdre Rood  
*William Paterson University*

This study explores how middle school teachers' cultural competence relates to their perceptions of student engagement across diverse school settings. Findings reveal a positive correlation between cultural preparedness and engagement, offering implications for professional development, equity-focused curriculum design, and policy decisions aimed at fostering inclusive, responsive classroom environments.

#### The Middle Ground: Teachers' Perceptions of Inclusion in Middle School

*Author*  
Katie Baulier  
*Endicott College*

*Author*  
Zach Rossetti  
*Boston University*

This study examines how middle school teachers perceive inclusion for students with disabilities and identifies key organizational, environmental, attitudinal, and knowledge-based barriers that hinder its implementation. Findings inform strategies for transforming beliefs, policies, and practices to foster more inclusive secondary school environments.

## The Search for a Shared Vision: Understanding the Policies and Purposes of Civic Education

*Author*  
Brendan Sheran  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

**This paper investigates the policies and purposes of civic education in a politically polarized U.S. Using a literature review and qualitative analysis of policymakers, educators, and students, it finds consensus on importance but conflict over content and implementation, highlighting the need for a shared vision for civic education.**

Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## **Next-Generation Assessment: Merging AI with Culturally Responsive Assessment Principles** **Symposium 7**

### Next-Generation Assessment: Merging AI with Culturally Responsive Assessment Principles

*Chair*  
Javier Suárez-Álvarez  
*UMASS Amherst - Center for Educational Assessment*

*Author*  
Stephen G. Sireci  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Omayya Horton  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Anna Nasyrova  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Aria Immanuel  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Vafa Alakbarova  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Lucy Gitiria  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Peter Tran  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Javier Suárez-Álvarez  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

AI methods deliver groundbreaking cost-effectiveness in measurement, but risk disconnecting from societal needs if trust and equity are neglected. This symposium presents four talks on culturally responsive principles, their application in adult skills assessments, AI-enhanced item development, and AI-driven feedback, charting the next generation of assessments.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## **Practical Uses of AI in Education, Research & Professional Development**

Adapting to AI: Prompting Gemini to Analyze Text-Based Responses and Considering Implications for Professional Knowledge

*Author*  
Laura Millay  
*University of Maine*

*Author*  
Ken Krugler  
*AI for Community*

This paper focuses on challenges encountered during an experiment to extract data from a set of Word documents and PDFs and discusses implications for data professionals learning to use AI.

Enhancing Systematic Review with Generative AI: A Transdisciplinary Team's Exploration of Tools, Tensions, and Transform

*Author*  
Marcus Harris  
*University of Connecticut*

*Author*  
Jimmy Wilson  
*University of Connecticut*

*Author*  
Mikayla Friday  
*University of Connecticut*

*Author*  
Michael Vaccaro  
*University of Connecticut*

This paper shares lessons from a transdisciplinary research team exploring AI in a systematic review on twice-exceptional ADHD students. We critically assess AI's strengths, limitations, and evolving roles across phases, idea generation, screening, extraction, and outreach, while reflecting on broader implications for equitable, reproducible, and inclusive educational research.

### The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Engineering Education: A Review of the Literature

*Author*  
Benjamin Newbury  
*New England Institute of Technology*

This paper aims to provide a review of current literature on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in engineering education to identify trends and gaps in the research. This paper will provide an analysis of conclusions drawn from the research regarding the prevalence and efficacy of AI in engineering education.

### Using Artificial Intelligence to Align Adult Education Standards with Workplace Knowledge and Skills

*Author*  
Anna Sullivan  
*UMass Amherst*

*Author*  
Fernando Mena Serrano  
*UMass Amherst*

This study examined how artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, can help align adult education assessment items with workplace knowledge and skills. We used data from the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) to compare the GPT-4o model with Deep Research and develop a process for tagging items with workforce-relevant information.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## Transitions and College Pathways for Students with Different Abilities & Backgrounds

### ACADEMIC SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF FIRST-GENERATION AND CONTINUING-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

*Author*  
Marcia Delcourt  
*Western Connecticut State University*



*Author*  
David Ciskowski  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Marcia Delcourt  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Marsha Daria  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Jeanette Moore  
*Western Connecticut State University*

Social cognitive theory reflects emergent agency by combining cognitive, motivational, and affective processes. Five indicators of self-perception, pathways thinking, GPA, and undergraduate status were used to predict agency thinking,  $R^2$  adj. = .516. Being a first-generation student was significantly correlated with attitudes toward teachers and self-reported GPA.

### Assessing Career Construction for College Students with Intellectual Disabilities

*Author*  
Sarah Ferguson  
*Rowan University*

*Author*  
Sarah Dubin  
*Rowan University*

This study explores the modification and validation of a career development measure for college students with intellectual disabilities. Grounded in Career Construction Theory and inclusive research practices, the project aims to improve accessibility in measurement and contribute to more equitable approaches in postsecondary education and career development research.

### High School Case Managers' Perspectives of College Programs for Students with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

*Author*  
Sarah Dubin  
*Rowan University*

This study employs a generic qualitative inquiry approach to examine the perspectives of high school special education case managers on college programs for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Findings suggest a need for collaboration and increased awareness to maximize the potential for students with IDD to attend college.

### Transition Planning Team Membership for Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities

*Author*

Kristyn Corace

*Middletown Township Board of Education*

The qualitative descriptive study was designed to contribute to the understanding of transition planning for adolescents with intellectual disabilities. The research study provided information regarding the process from personal experiences. As an experienced special educator, recommendations were made to improve the transition planning process for students and their families.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:15pm - 2:45pm

## **Exploring Teacher Preparation, Practice, and Professional Roles**

A Comprehensive Review of Teacher Cognitive Load Research

*Author*

Kristopher Bertoglio

*New York City Public Schools*

**In the spirit of education for every mind, this is the first review of teacher cognitive load research. This paper synthesizes 52 studies exploring the causes and effects of teacher cognitive load. To support future research and practical applications, this review examines applicable frameworks and implications.**

Early Teaching Intensives (ETIs) as a Crucial Stage of Teacher Education

*Chair*

Graeham Dodd

*Smith College*

*Discussant*

Sam Intrator

*Smith College*

**Amid increasing teacher shortages, Early Teaching Intensives (ETIs) that recruit young people into teaching roles in summer camps and out-of-school programs are proliferating. This paper explores this emerging movement's landscape and presents mixed-method findings on participant learning outcomes and their implications for teacher education pathways.**

Enhancing Nonfiction Writing through Peer Review: A Student-Centered, Cross-Curricular Approach

*Author*

VAISHALI GOLIVADEKAR

*CJCP Somerset, NJ*

*Author*

Mathew Mariani

*CJCP Somerset, NJ*

*Author*

Christian Mathews

*CJCP Somerset, NJ*

This study explores how student-centered practices and cross-curricular collaboration enhance content understanding. Nonfiction writing, often undervalued, can significantly boost academic performance. A single, interdisciplinary nonfiction assignment across core subjects fosters clarity, critical thinking, and real-world connections, leading to measurable improvements in student engagement and overall learning outcomes.

### Paraeducators in Public Secondary Schools: Their Roles and Work Experiences

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Lisa Daigle

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Katherine Roe

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Lauren Moyer

*Fairfield Public Schools*

Paraeducators need a voice to describe their joys and frustrations. A case study captured the perceptions of these professionals with respect to their work experiences. Seven themes were found from responses to interviews and open-ended questions, indicating the changes paraeducators recommend for their profession.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:15pm - 2:45pm

### QuantCrit, Qualitative Inquiry, and Expanding the Research Landscape

#### But, It's Not Enough: The Importance of Qualitative Methods in a Quantitative World

*Author*

Omayya Horton

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

*Author*

Vafa Alakbarova

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

*Author*

Rebecca Woodland

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Quantitative methods often lack the nuanced information provided by qualitative data, especially regarding marginalized communities (Randall et al., 2023). This paper argues for a mixed methods approach to address quantitative limitations. A case study demonstrates how qualitative data filled gaps in survey results, leading to a more accurate evaluation.

### Expanding the Research Enterprise at Non-Research-Intensive Universities

*Author*

Tricia Stewart

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Tricia Stewart

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Katie Lever

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Paul Steinmetz

*Western Connecticut State University*

This case study sought to better understand incidents of faculty research, including grant procurement and student research. We found a need for non-research-intensive universities to expand the research enterprise with various leverages to facilitate research engagement for each faculty member based on rank and department and include students.

### In Pursuit of 'Something Greater': A General Qualitative Inquiry of Career Calling for Non-Tenure Track Faculty

*Author*

Marjorie Blicharz

*Rowan University*

Individuals choose their career based on career interest, skills, or perhaps by experiencing a *career calling*. This General Qualitative Inquiry highlights non-tenure track (NTT) faculty experiences through a self-determination theory and career calling framework. Results include faculty recollections of purpose, pro-social impact, and hard-to-quantify feelings.

### Reframing Quantitative Methods: A Systematic Review of CRT and QuantCrit in Educational Research

*Author*

Catherina Villafuerte

*University of Connecticut*

This systematic review examines integrations of Critical Race Theory and Quantitative Criticalism in U.S. educational research. Analyzing 76 peer-reviewed studies (2019–2024), the review identifies methodological innovations in sampling, culturally responsive measurement, and equity-centered analyses, providing implications for advancing quantitative research methodologies grounded in educational justice.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:15pm - 2:45pm

## **Self-Efficacy: Pathways and Confidences of Special Education and Secondary General Education Teacher Symposium 8**

Self-Efficacy: Pathways and Confidences of Special Education and Secondary General Education Teachers

*Author*  
Lorin Hannah

*Author*  
Joanne Jasmine  
*Caldwell University*

*Author*  
Michael Raguseo

This presentation explores how self-efficacy, belief in the capability to perform tasks successfully, can indicate teacher behavior, performance, and effectiveness in the classroom across multiple settings. Presentations will introduce and explore the impact of teacher self-efficacy (TSE) on student achievement and how applications of TSE can be universal.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:15pm - 2:45pm

## **Student Experiences and Voices in Higher Education**

Geography Matters: The Geography of Opportunity and Student Loan Default

*Author*  
BETUL ISCAN  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This study explores whether college graduates' rural, urban, or suburban backgrounds are related to their likelihood of student loan default. Using national data and statistical modeling, results show that geographic background is not statistically related to student loan default.

Mining Student Voices: Using Text Mining to Analyze Open-Ended Responses in a First-Generation Student Support Program

*Author*  
Xiaoye Yang  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
HsienYuan Hsu  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
Cuibing Wu  
*Framingham State University*

Open-ended student feedback provides valuable insights into program effectiveness, but is difficult to analyze at scale. This study demonstrates how text mining can efficiently process large volumes of qualitative feedback in evaluating a one-semester curriculum designed to support first-year, first-generation college students' transition to university life.

### Student Experiences in a Hyflex Flipped College Algebra Course

*Author*  
Laura Millay  
*University of Maine*

*Author*  
Jonathan Bayless  
*University of Maine at Augusta*

*Author*  
Afua Kwarteng  
*University of Maine*

*Author*  
Kaitlyn Groh  
*University of Maine*

*Author*  
Heather Pixley  
*University of Maine*

*Author*  
Debra Allen  
*University of Maine*

**This collaborative research explores experiences of three college algebra students in a flipped classroom with pre-work, group work problem-solving sessions, and bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with an undergraduate student assistant. Differences and challenges in the students' experiences add nuance to our thinking about implementing flipped classrooms.**

### Student perceptions of mistake-related peer interactions in college courses

*Author*  
Maleka Donaldson  
*Smith College*

In college courses, trial-and-error practice and corrective feedback are foundational. The nature of peer interactions shapes whether and how undergraduates face their mistakes to help build their knowledge and skill. This interview study explores how students perceive the peer culture of learning from mistakes at the collegiate level.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:15pm - 2:45pm

## Understanding Stimuli, Cognition, and Cultural Responsiveness in Test Items

Item Logic: Explicit & Deliberate Understanding of How Test Items Prompt Cognition and Responses

*Author*

Marjorie Wine

*ATLAS, University of Kansas*

*Author*

Alexander Hoffman

*AleDev Research & Consulting*

Item logic (the idea for how an item elicits evidence of proficiency) is usually implicit—limiting scalability, training, and item quality. This paper explores how explicit item logic improves item validity, supports professional judgment, and contributes evidence to support the interpretability of test scores for the proposed uses of tests.

STEM item generation: Can ChatGPT be culturally responsive?

*Author*

Laura Lambert

*James Madison University*

This study evaluates AI-generated multiple-choice items and how a user's query history influences content. Along with tokenization of culture, query history was found to influence multiple aspects of the items. These findings have implications for test developers considering genAI tools that preserve a user's query history.

The Cross-Content Stimulus Evaluation Framework: Recognizing the Relevant Qualities of Stimuli for Assessment Items

*Author*

Marjorie Wine

*ATLAS, University of Kansas*

*Author*

Alexander Hoffman

*AleDev Research & Consulting*

Stimuli shape how items function, influencing difficulty, fairness, and validity. The Cross-Content Stimulus Evaluation Framework (C2SEF) introduces a cognitively grounded approach for analyzing stimuli in large-scale assessments, offering eleven interrelated dimensions to support thoughtful evaluation and decision-making across content areas, alignment references, and diverse test taker populations.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:00pm - 4:15pm

## Crisis, Culture & Censorship on College Campuses

Of Beer, Bro Code, and Bad Decisions: A Critical Autoethnographic Exploration of Masculinity at a White Fraternity

*Author*

Musbah Shaheen

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

In this paper, I use a critical auto-ethnographic approach to examine the construction of masculinity at a historically white fraternity. Through self-reflexive exploration, I interrogate myself in relation to, and in the context of, the structures, systems, ideologies, assumptions, and norms underlying the white fraternity culture.

### Reimagining Higher Education in an Era of Polycrisis: Critical Evaluation and Strategic Foresight to illuminate everyone

*Author*  
Bryan Southworth  
*Uconn*

*Author*  
Bryan Southworth  
*UConn School of Business*

This paper weaves Harvey, Piketty, Meadows, Stein, and Schmachtenberger to “illuminate everyone’s mind” and envision equitable, sustainable learning amid a polycrisis. Empirical insights from 25 faculty interviews and 12 observations inform a research agenda merging *Critical Evaluation* with *Strategic Foresight*, cultivating systemic thinking, AI literacy, and educator-futurist leadership.

### Self-Censorship in DEI Conversations: Impact of Campus Climate for Viewpoint Diversity

*Author*  
Musbah Shaheen  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This study explored self-censorship in diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations by examining their relationship with campus climate and context. Findings demonstrate the role of political orientation and the campus climate for viewpoint diversity in shaping the extent to which undergraduate students self-censor in DEI conversations.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:00pm - 4:15pm

## Differential Item Functioning and Test Security

### Assessing Pre-Exposure Risks of LLM-Generated Item Pools

*Author*  
Sergio Araneda  
*Caveon*

*Author*  
Christopher Foster  
*Caveon*

This study introduces and empirically evaluates “item pre-exposure,” a novel test security risk associated with AI-generated items. Using simulations, we examine how likely it is that unauthorized users can reproduce test items before they are ever administered.

### Comparison of the IRT-C Model and ECDM for Detecting and Explaining Differential Item Functioning



*Author*  
Kevin Krost  
*Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

**This study evaluated the presence of DIF on the TIMSS between EFL and ML students. Several items exhibited significant DIF under both the IRT-C and E-CDM. Examining covariates, home educational resources explained ten items. In four items, a causal mechanism was identified and concluded to exhibit item bias.**

Impact of compromised items and examinee preknowledge on the shape of EAP posterior distributions

*Author*  
Lisa Keller  
*University of Massachusetts - Amherst*

*Author*  
Kevin O'Rourke  
*UMASS Amherst*

A simulation study looked at the impact of compromised items (CI) and examinees with preknowledge (EWP) on the shape of the posterior distributions of EAP estimation. 5 levels/conditions were tested, and results were compared using both the 1PL and 2PL models for comparison.

Toward Equity in STEM Large-Scale Assessment: Validity Evidence from DIF Analyses with 2PL and GPCM

*Author*  
Jungwon Kyung  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
jungwon kyung  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Craig Wells  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Stephen Sireci  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This study investigates gender-based differential item functioning on the MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering Test to promote equity in STEM assessment. Using logistic regression and IRT methods, findings provide validity evidence and examine fairness in large-scale testing, supporting equitable assessment practices for all students.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:00pm - 4:15pm

**Student Work Habits, Self-Efficacy & Pathways to Learning**

## A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of the Writing Pathway Writing Program for 7th and 8th Grade Students

*Author*

Heather Harris

*Herkimer Consulting*

*Author*

Steve Graham

*Arizona State University*

*Author*

Sherry Lewkowicz

*Writing Pathway Innovation Lab at Teaching Lab*

*Author*

Phil Weinberg

*Writing Pathway Innovation Lab at Teaching Lab*

**A pilot study evaluating the use of the Writing Pathway AI tool for creating practice writing exercises compared to conventional writing instruction was conducted for a sample of middle school students. Overall, use of the Writing Pathway tool was associated with large positive effects. However, future research is needed.**

## One classroom, multiple paths: how work habits predict academic achievement in differently paced 7th-grade students

*Author*

Maria Kosogorova

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Maria Kosogorova

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Oksana Ilina

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Sona Antonyan

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Manasi Singhal

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Jenya Brodskaya

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Anna Mirny

*Russian School of Mathematics*

*Author*

Larry Ludlow

*Boston College*

*Author*

Student researchers List in the comments

**This study examines how well classwork and homework behaviors predict academic success among Grade 7 students in an online math program. We split students within one classroom by learning pace, revealing two distinct groups with differing success-related behaviors despite sharing the same level—supporting more targeted and differentiated instruction.**

### Pathways to AP Math in an Urban School District

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Rachel Saunders

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia A. B. Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Kristy Zaleta

*Danbury Public Schools, Rogers Park MS*

*Author*

Laura Mead

*Danbury Public Schools*

Mathematics outcomes were studied for secondary school students in a district that used open enrollment for entry to AP courses. Students completed algebra 1 in either grade 8 (pathway 1) or grade 9 (pathway 2). Those following pathway 1 had significantly higher AP and achievement scores than their peers.

### The Association between Math Self-Efficacy and Math Achievement: A Comparison Across Gender and Race

*Author*

Tram-Anh (Anh) Nguyen

*UMass Amherst*

*Author*  
Holly Laws  
UMass Amherst

This study examines whether math self-efficacy predicts math achievement and whether this relationship varies by gender and race/ethnicity. Using multilevel modeling, results revealed significant group differences in both math scores and the strength of the self-efficacy–achievement link, highlighting implications for reducing achievement gaps through targeted interventions.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:00pm - 4:15pm

## **Studies in School Safety and Climate and Educator/Student Well-Being Symposium 9**

Studies in School Safety, Climate, and Educator and Student Well-Being

*Author*  
Lori Cooper

*Author*  
Ally Bear

*Author*  
Colleen Penzone

*Author*  
Kammy Puza

*Author*  
Melanie Christopher

*Author*  
Kali Reb

*Author*  
Lisa Marie Ferry

This symposium presents research on school climate, safety, and social-emotional learning. Studies address restorative practices, educator well-being, resilience, professional development, and student mental health interventions. Findings highlight evidence-based adaptations in practice and research across educational contexts, with implications for promoting supportive environments.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:00pm - 4:15pm

## **Teacher Well-Being and Student Connections to Nature**

Exploratory Case Study of Educators' Experiences: Compassion Fatigue as an Unintended Consequence of a Pandemic

*Author*

Peter Dittmar  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Peter Dittmar  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Tricia Stewart  
*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*  
Nicole Deronck  
*Connecticut Technical Education and Career System*

*Author*  
Sheri Prendergast  
*Ridgefield Public Schools*

**This qualitative exploratory case study seeks to gain knowledge of educators' experiences with compassion fatigue during the global pandemic. Due to the lack of research on educator secondary traumatic stress, it is important to understand the perceptions of educators during this time and how to support them in the future.**

### Exploring Motivation, Attitudes, Behavior, and School Climate in Predicting Environmental Awareness in Hong Kong Grade 8

*Author*  
LIFEN HU  
*SUNY Albany*

Analysis of TIMSS-2023 data for 4,463 Hong Kong Grade-8 students showed that environmental awareness is driven by motivation, environmental attitudes, and behaviors. School climate and teaching exposure were non-significant, though disadvantaged schools and girls lagged. Results emphasized student agency and education to achieve SDG 4.7.

### Illuminating Shadows: Reconnecting Adolescents with Nature through Tao-a/r/tographic Pedagogy

*Author*  
Meng kai Zhang

This inquiry explores how Tao-a/r/tography can support adolescents with electronic addiction in reconnecting with nature. Through outdoor observation, art-making, interdisciplinary exploration, and peer teaching-learning, they engaged in slow, reflective learning that fostered sensory awareness, and holistic well-being in an increasingly digital world.

### Lessons Unlearned from the Pandemic: Leadership for the Outdoor Classroom

*Author*  
Wesley Meeker

*Southern Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Jess Gregory

*Southern Connecticut State University*

A study on a Northeast university's campus community garden revealed varied pandemic recollections. Administrators fondly recalled outdoor teaching innovations, while faculty remembered restrictive mandates. This paper examined these "learned and unlearned" lessons from COVID-19 for higher education leaders regarding outdoor education and future indoor environmental risks.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:30pm - 5:45pm

## **Poster Showcase**

### **A Continuing Examination of Treatment Fidelity in a Cross-age Dialogic Reading Intervention**

*Author*

Cassie Nemec

*Southern Connecticut State University*

The current study examines the treatment fidelity of a cross-age DRIVE intervention in two consecutive school years. Fifth graders were trained on and later read to first graders using the approach. We present results on how well the EMPOWERED strategies were used during training and paired reading sessions.

### **A Scoping Review of Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing Applications in Evaluation Studies**

*Author*

Ibrahim Osumanu

*University of Connecticut*

*Author*

Bianca Montrosse-Moorhead

*University of Connecticut*

*Author*

Kylie Anglin

*University of Connecticut*

*Author*

Christopher Rhoads

*University of Connecticut*

Machine learning and natural language processing are increasingly utilized in evaluation studies; however, their trends are not well-documented. This scoping review assesses their application in evaluation studies and validity. Initial findings reveal limited detail on specific methods and minimal discussions of validity, calling for a more comprehensive methodological reporting.

## Accounting for Nesting and Measurement Error in Criterion-Related Validity for Behavioral Screening

*Author*

Katie Pelton

*University of Connecticut*

*Author*

Katie Pelton

*University of Connecticut*

*Author*

D. Betsy McCoach

*University of Connecticut*

This simulation study aims to understand how contextual effects – which impact both predictor and criterion measures – impact criterion-related validity estimates when relating total scores across behavioral measures. We vary intraclass correlation and degree of error and compare correlations, multilevel linear regression, structural equation models (SEM), and multilevel SEM.

## AN EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (ECE) PROGRAM: THE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVE

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Raymond Manka

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Frank LaBanca

*Area Cooperative Educational Services*

*Author*

Jacob Greenwood

*Ridgefield Public Schools, Ridgefield, CT*

This study will examine teachers' perspectives regarding the creation and implementation of Early College Experience (ECE) programming at a suburban high school. A mixed-methods study will be used to examine why teachers choose to participate in an ECE program and their experiences in the program after one semester.

## Analysis of Exam Items for Assessment of Undergraduate Knowledge of Chemistry

*Author*

Erica Light

To assess effectiveness of an undergraduate chemistry curriculum, this analysis applied both item-response theory (IRT) and classical test theory (CTT) models. Data are from a pilot multiple-choice examination administered across three levels with 148 chemistry students in spring of 2018. Results would contribute to reliable program assessment.

### Are Lesson Plans Generated by ChatGPT Developmentally Appropriate? – A Critical Analysis by Early Childhood Educators

*Author*

Saigeetha Jambunathan  
*New Jersey City University*

*Author*

J.D. Jayaraman  
*New Jersey City University*

This study explored a ChatGPT-generated kindergarten math lesson. 138 early childhood educators evaluated it via a 25-item survey. Most found it appropriate but offered improvements based on classroom experience. Teachers supported AI use with caution. Findings highlight that while AI is helpful, human oversight remains essential.

### Comparative Evaluation of MI and Bootstrap Methods for Standard Error Estimation in IRT Score Inference

*Author*

Lucy Gitiria  
*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

*Author*

Scott Monroe  
*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

This study tackles calibration uncertainty by evaluating multiple imputations and bootstrap methods for estimating standard errors and confidence intervals related to IRT ability scores. Through a simulation-based design, the results will guide best practices for accurate score reporting and effective decision-making.

### Elevating Success: Understanding the Aspirations of High-Achieving Rural African American Students

*Author*

Olivia Adelabu  
*Princeton University*

This study examines the goals and aspirations of high-achieving, rural African American students. Grounded in goal-setting theory, it explores how gender, GPA, and parental education influence goal quantity, type, and temporal extension (short or long-term). This work reframes deficit narratives to highlight this often-overlooked population.

### Enhancing College Mental Health Help-Seeking through Emotional Intelligence: Recommendations from the Literature

*Author*

Jolina Halloran  
*Pace University*

This literature review examines how emotional intelligence, viewed through the SEL framework, influences college students' help-seeking attitudes. Findings show EI can reduce self-stigma but also increase sensitivity to judgment. SEL strategies are recommended to foster supportive campus environments and promote health help-seeking to



enhance student well-being.

## Evaluating Item Fit Using the Nominal Response Model

*Author*

Andrea Hebert

*Cognia*

*Author*

Andrea Hebert

*UMass*

*Author*

Kevin O'Rourke

*UMass*

*Author*

Lisa Keller

*UMass*

This study examines model fit for the Nominal Response Model (NRM) using simulated and real-world assessment data. The analysis explores how response category sparsity and examinee ability relate to item calibration quality. Preliminary findings suggest NRM has potential for item modeling under specific data conditions, informing future psychometric research.

## Evaluating Knowledge Tracing, Process Mining, and Graph-Based Models for Advanced Learning Analytics

*Author*

Jungwon Kyung

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Jungwon Kyung

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

**This systematic review compares knowledge tracing, process mining, and graph-based models in K-12 STEM education, examining their effectiveness, interpretability, and equity implications for advanced learning analytics. Findings guide AI-enhanced, personalized, and explainable learning interventions to inform equitable educational practices and future research.**

## Evaluating performance of IRT Residual DIF detection approach (RDIF) considering test length and scoring method

*Author*

Haneul Lee

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Craig Wells

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This study evaluates the performance of IRT Residual DIF detection method (RDIF) under various conditions, especially test lengths and scoring methods through simulation studies. Specifically, this study compares DIF detection accuracy of RDIF across test lengths and scoring methods, also investigates the conditions in which RDIF most effectively identifies DIF.

### Impact of Teacher Training on Student Reading Achievement in Azerbaijan: A Propensity Score Matching Analysis

*Author*

Vafa Alakbarova

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This study examines the causal impact of reading-focused teacher professional development on student reading achievement in Azerbaijan using PIRLS 2021 data. Propensity score matching addresses selection bias, comparing reading scores between students taught by trained and untrained teachers. Results show no significant effect of teacher training on student achievement.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF A BOYS ICE HOCKEY PROGRAM: THE COACHES' PERSPECTIVE

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Matthew Kelly

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

Amateur athletics are ingrained in American society. Due to the unique nature of boys ice hockey, recruitment, team formation, club membership, facilities, ranking systems, etc., differ from other sports. To understand these issues, this project will examine perceptions of head hockey coaches about their experiences in an athletic conference.

### Implicit Gender Bias in Large Vision–Language Models' Evaluations of Classroom Lessons

*Author*

Miles Baldwin

*Author*

Miles Baldwin

Using a counterfactual audit, we tested whether the widely used vision–language model GPT-4o exhibits implicit bias when evaluating classroom lesson excerpts. Excerpts were embedded in images depicting a male or female teacher. Despite prompts to assess only the lesson text, evaluations were affected by teacher gender.

## Improving Reading in Struggling Elementary Students Using a Cross-age Dialogic Reading Intervention: A Two-Year Study

*Author*

Cheryl Durwin

*Southern Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Dina Moore

*Southern Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Cassie Nemec

*Southern Connecticut State University*

We present a two-year replication of a pilot study investigating whether dialogic reading can be implemented as a cross-age intervention in a Title I elementary school to improve below-average comprehension/vocabulary. Undergraduates trained fifth grade students (Big Buddies) to use the approach with first graders (Little Buddies).

## Leveraging Elementary Teachers' Social-Emotional Competencies Through Educational Neuroscience

*Author*

Kara Sievel

*Southington Public Schools*

This convergent mixed-methods study explored an eight-week neuroscience-based SEL training for six elementary teachers. Results from twelve CASEL-aligned video sessions and reflections demonstrated teachers' value in neuroscience, fluid application of practices to regulate educator emotions, and positive shifts in perceptions of students amid systemic workload barriers.

## Primary Source Review as an Ideal Introduction to Historical Research

*Author*

Vikram Joshi

*None*

*Author*

Debbie Sharnak

*Rowan University*

This project, a collaboration between a high school student and a university professor, identified 10 key sources to explore the Ford Foundation's role in Argentina (1950–2000). It illustrates how structured primary source research can serve as an effective introduction to historical inquiry at the secondary level.

## Rethinking AI Writing Feedback to Embrace Epistemic Diversity

*Author*

Jusil Lee

This study examines how ChatGPT's writing feedback may marginalize non-Western rhetorical styles and reinforce dominant epistemic norms. By focusing on learners whose ways of knowing differ culturally, it raises concerns about epistemic injustice and calls for critical reflection on the design of AI-mediated feedback in academic settings.

## The Role of Marcussen and Søn's in the Organ Reform Movement

*Author*

Layla Joshi

*None*

This study explores how Marcussen & Søn's organ innovations shaped the 20th-century Organ Reform Movement. Through historical research and performance-based inquiry, it highlights how technological shifts influenced organ design and playing style. The findings underscore the importance of organists' instrument knowledge in achieving informed performance and repertoire choices.

## The Role of Parents in Shaping Post-secondary Pathways for High School Women

*Author*

Taghrid Elterk

*Author*

Taghrid Elterk

*University of Massachusetts of Lowell*

This study seeks to understand the barriers that affect high school women in their decision-making about post-secondary education in Gateway Cities by interviewing those who pursued higher education, with an emphasis on the role of parents in shaping their college aspirations and decisions.

## Upper Elementary Teachers' Values: Barriers to students' self-determination in autonomy-supportive classrooms

*Author*

Sarah Goodale-O'Brien

*Endicott College*

**This phenomenological study reveals the values and beliefs of upper elementary teachers in autonomy-supportive classrooms, identifying the supporters and barriers to students' self-determination. Implications emphasize the need for alignment between upper elementary teachers' values, students' motivational development, and school routines and policies in a post-COVID learning landscape.**

## Validating the DRIVE Intervention: Long-term Retention of Dialogic Reading Strategies in Elementary School Students

*Author*

Cassie Nemec

*Southern Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Xochitl Sanchez Guerrero

*Southern Connecticut State University*

The current study is a follow up from Year 2 (2023-2024) of the cross-age DRIVE intervention pilot to assess how well students retain the EMPOWERED strategies they were trained on in Year 2 to read to first graders.

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## Rights, Resources & Student Leadership Roundtable 4

Amplifying SOGIE student leadership: An inquiry into student-led inclusion practices in an urban high school

*Author*

Lauren Chicoski

*Metropolitan Business Academy*

This research in progress roundtable presentation shares a qualitative study of a student-led, citywide Gender and Sexuality Alliance summit in an urban public school district. The summit was designed to celebrate SOGIE, or LGBTQ+, student strengths, challenge deficit perspectives, and connect to district practices through UDL and student leadership.

One Hour, Lasting Impact: Librarian Reflections on Inclusive Research Instruction in First-Year Writing

*Author*

Youlim Lee

*UMass Lowell*

This study examines how academic librarians reflect on inclusive teaching in one-shot research instruction for first-year writing. Through interviews and analysis of instructional materials, it identifies strategies like affirming tone and cultural relevance. Findings point to institutional constraints and offer guidance for improving instructional design and collaboration.

Stakeholder-Driven Evaluation of Learning Resources: A Case Study in Participatory Evaluation

*Author*

Vafa Alakbarova

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Vafa Alakbarova

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Rebecca Woodland

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Charlotte Elwell

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*

Omayya Horton

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This article presents a participatory evaluation of a nonprofit supporting caregivers. Through collaborative weekly stakeholder meetings, surveys and interviews, and joint analysis, the study assesses resource effectiveness and user needs. Findings from 353 surveys and interviews show how centering stakeholder voices strengthens evaluation rigor, learning, and practical application.

## The CRDC and Civil Rights for Students in LEA Policies, Do We Still Have Those?

*Author*

Wendy Jean Sonstrom

*LEARN*

The latest Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) had required questions about student harassment and bullying policies on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion. With CRDC submission during a period of policy upheaval (winter 2025), this case study of a Northeastern state is an exploration of this dissonance.

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## AI and Reimagined Learning Roundtable 3

### Beyond the Algorithm: Reimagining Education through Transformative Applications of Artificial Intelligence

*Author*

Pravallika Vemulapalli

*University of Bridgeport*

This study explores how artificial intelligence can dismantle educational barriers through inclusive design. Grounded in Universal Design for Learning and Human-in-the-Loop AI, it examines AI's potential to personalize instruction, support diverse learners, and promote equity. Findings highlight benefits, risks, and implications for teacher preparation.

### Co-design Equitable Future for Generative AI supported Multilingual Writing

*Author*

Geyng Zhang

*Boston College*

*Author*

Chuqi Wang

*Boston College*

*Author*

Weiqiao Zhang

*Boston University*

With U.S. higher education's linguistic mononormativity and the rise of Generative AI, this study examines how Generative AI can support multilingual writers. Grounded in translanguaging, third space, and literacy networks, we co-create and analyze a workshop fostering inclusive, equitable writing practices leveraging AI, multilingual students' diverse resources.

### Illuminating the Margins with AI-Enhanced Virtual Reality in STEM Education

*Author*  
Jungwon Kyung  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
jungwon kyung  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This systematic review explores how AI-enhanced VR in computer and science education can support personalized, equitable learning aligned with NERA's theme, "Illuminating the Margins." Findings highlight the potential of immersive technologies to improve conceptual understanding and engagement for diverse learners while addressing accessibility and equity in STEM education.

### Research-Based Culture Content and Language Immersion: A Case Study

*Author*  
Lilliam Malave  
*University at Buffalo*

*Author*  
Lilliam Malave  
*University at Buffalo*

It presents research-based integrated formal and informal second language and culture learning experiences. Mandarin language/Chinese culture classes, mentoring, and site visits were provided through a six-week immersion SA. It focuses on the participants' increase in Mandarin language proficiency, interest in Chinese culture, and potential impact-multiplier effect.

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

### Critical Perspectives on Access and Persistence in College Roundtable 2

#### A Critical Case Study: No Such Thing as 'Special Education' in Higher Education

*Author*  
Julianna Perez  
*Rowan University*

The purpose of this critical case study is to determine how students with disabilities experience an important transitional period in their educational journeys, and how the professors and larger institutions they commit to attending influence the development of this aspect of their identity.

#### Exploring the vocational callings and barriers of foster youth in college- a mixed methods design

*Author*  
Marjorie Blicharz  
*Rowan University*

**This proposed mixed-methods design explores the lived experiences of foster youth in college as they navigate higher education and develop their vocation. Through a qualitative-dominant sequential transformative design, their experiences can interrogate current systems, spotlight their voices, and lead to change in policy and practice.**

#### The First Year Experience: A Critical Narrative Inquiry of the First College Year for Neurodivergent Students

*Author*

Kerri Jarzabski

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This paper explores the meaning making of neurodivergent students as they consider their lived experiences navigating their first year of college in an ableist postsecondary environment. Findings are based on data collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants at a large public university in the northeast.

#### Using Intergroup Threat Theory to Investigate International Students' Intent to Remain in the US

*Author*

Joseph Sireci

*University of Oklahoma*

*Author*

Amber St Marie

*University of Oklahoma*

*Author*

H. Michael Crowson

*University of Oklahoma*

Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) is used to explore the long-term residency and work intentions of graduate students in a conservative state during the second Trump presidency. Adaptations of standardized measures of threat are utilized to explore how the political climate is perceived and impacts long-term intentions of students

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

### Intergroup Dialogue & Inclusion Roundtable 6

#### Pathways to Supporting Black Women Scholars in Higher Education

*Author*

Cammie Jones-Friedrichs

*University of Southern Mississippi*

**Black women have played significant roles in higher education, particularly in times of crisis. However, less than 10% hold administrative or executive roles at the academy. This ongoing study examines the barriers that Black women face in academia, which hinder their career advancement, as well as strategies to support them.**

#### Rethinking Ability: Disrupting Diagnostic Norms Through Cognitive Justice in Medical Education

*Author*



Gerard Robertson  
*Rutgers Health - New Jersey Medical School*

This study explores how medical education marginalizes neurodivergent learners and proposes a shift from deficit-based models to Universal Design for Learning. Using mixed methods, it identifies policy gaps and develops inclusive, strength-based frameworks to redefine ability, aiming to foster equity and cognitive justice in medical training environments.

### The Right to Remain Silent: The Impact of Colorblind Ideologies on Engagement in Intergroup Dialogue

*Author*  
Jaelle Faison  
*Howard University*

This study explores relationships between colorblind ideologies and adults' willingness to engage in intergroup dialogue. Using a mixed-methods design, it examines ideological and identity-based barriers to dialogue, aiming to foster self-reflection, promote equity in educational psychology, and inform culturally responsive practices across academic, policy, and community settings.

### Unseen and Underserved: Rethinking Mental Health Support in Diverse Communities

*Author*  
Allyson Clarke  
*Howard University*

Mental health challenges among community college students are well-documented, yet two-year HBCUs remain underrepresented in both research and policy discourse. This study seeks to explore how these institutions communicate mental health disability services and whether their practices align with federal legal standards and student needs.

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

## Mindfulness, Movement, Nature & the Arts in Education Roundtable 1

### Animal- and Environmental-Education Program Increases Prosociality in Students Throughout Grades 1 – 3

*Author*  
William Samuels  
*Hunter College, CUNY*

*Author*  
Calix Dela Santa  
*Hunter College*

A study of 1,960 students in China found that the *Caring for Life* program—combining animal- and nature-based content with academic instruction—significantly improved prosociality over three years. Results support school-based, biophilic interventions as effective tools for enhancing children's social development in non-Western educational contexts.

### Benefits of Mindfulness and Movement Routine- A Pilot Study

*Author*  
Sujata Norman  
*The University of Hartford*

*Author*  
Barbara Sanchez  
*University Of Hartford*

This study investigates an eight-week mindfulness and movement program to reduce burnout and stress among faculty and staff. Participants complete brief, twice-weekly video sessions. Pre- and post-assessments will evaluate mental and physical outcomes, offering insights into scalable, cost-effective strategies for enhancing well-being in academic environments.

### Beyond the Spotlight: Illuminating South Asian Female Identity to Transcend Barriers and (Re)imagine Theatre Education

*Author*  
Sobha Kavanakudiyil  
*The City College of New York - CUNY*

This research in progress examines factors influencing career pathways in the performing arts, centering on female-identifying performing artists from racially and ethnically diverse communities. The study applies the theoretical framework of Asian Critical Theory and Feminist Theory to explore how identity, culture, and institutional barriers shape professional trajectories.

### How Practicing Mindfulness and Understanding Self-Efficacy Foster Mindset Change in Pre-Service Teachers: The SEMS Study

*Author*  
Sujata Norman  
*The University of Hartford*

*Author*  
Tiffany Bennett  
*West Chester University of Pennsylvania*

This presentation explores how mindfulness and self-efficacy practices reduce stress, boost confidence, and support mindset shifts in teachers. The presentation discusses how the study engaged six participants in reflective exercises, collaborative discussions, and practical strategies designed to promote emotional resilience, teaching readiness, and long-term success in diverse classrooms.

Friday, October 24, 2025 8:30am - 10:00am

**Supporting Students with Diverse Needs Worldwide**  
Roundtable 5

## Challenges Facing Primary-Aged Students with Special Needs in Trinidad and Tobago: A Literature Review

*Author*

Natakki Jones

*University of Rhode Island*

*Author*

Kayon Murray-Johnson

*University of Rhode Island: Assistant Professor of Education*

This integrative literature review examines challenges impacting public school students with special needs in Trinidad and Tobago. Preliminary findings include: teacher/administrator negative perspectives, inadequate policy implementation; lack of resources; siloed practice, and advocacy efforts. Findings show need for research on implementation of inclusion for students with varied special needs.

## Educating for Gross National Happiness in Bhutanese Schools: A Literature Review

*Author*

FNU Lhaden

*UMass Lowell*

This review examines Bhutanese teachers' conceptualizations and implementation of Gross National Happiness education. It highlights philosophical foundations, pedagogical practices, and systemic challenges. Findings reveal varied understanding, limited resources, and policy-practice gaps. Implications include the need for clearer guidance, sustained teacher support, and alignment between holistic goals and classroom realities.

## Learning in the Shadows: Afghan Girls Resisting Taliban Bans through Underground and Digital Education Spaces

*Author*

Marzhan Ayabekova

*Education*

This in-progress study examines how Afghan girls resist education bans through informal learning. Drawing on feminist and resilience theories, it analyzes existing literature to frame education as political resistance. With IRB approval pending, the next phase will involve interviews with Afghan students and NGO educators to deepen the analysis.

## Urban Middle School General Education Teacher Beliefs In Supporting Students with Disabilities

*Author*

Nisha Acharya Julien

*Center for Measurement Justice*

This mixed methods study explored urban middle school general educators' beliefs and comfort in supporting students with disabilities (SWDs) in inclusive classrooms. Survey results (N=75) and follow-up interviews (N=5) revealed positive beliefs about inclusion but low confidence in adapting instruction for SWDs, highlighting a key implementation gap.

Friday, October 24, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## **AI for All: Practical Uses in Education Symposium 4**

### **AI for All: Practical Uses in Education**

*Author*

Marcia Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Marcia A. B. Delcourt

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Katie O'Callaghan

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Wes DeSantis

*Ridgefield Public Schools, Ridgefield, CT*

*Author*

Aura Lippincott

*Western Connecticut State University*

*Author*

Dylan Sprague

*Western Connecticut State University*

Educators are harnessing the power of AI at all academic levels. This tool compels us to revise our expectations regarding technology, as we create curriculum; explore teaching strategies; evaluate programs; as well as search for better ways to locate resources and express ourselves. This session describes each of these pursuits.

Friday, October 24, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## **Building Educator Capacity with Reflection, Leadership Training & Adaptive Tech**

### **Cultivating Teacher Leaders: A Study of Strategy Design and Professional Development**

*Author*

Samuel Fancera

*William Paterson University*

This study explores strategies to enhance teacher leadership and the design of professional development modules to support their implementation. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from school leaders and teacher leaders, findings highlight key practices to foster leadership and collaboration. Results inform scalable, school-based approaches to teacher leadership.

### **Empowering Children by Expanding Teachers' Knowledge of Adaptive and Assistive Technologies**

*Author*  
Johanna Kerrigan  
*Endicott College*

*Author*  
Joy Dangora Erickson  
*Endicott College*

*Author*  
Jennifer Flewelling  
*Endicott College*

This capstone explores teacher perceptions of adaptive technology (AT) in learning. Through educator surveys, it identifies gaps in AT understanding and integration. Findings informed a professional development module equipping teachers with practical, inclusive strategies to use AT effectively, promoting equity, innovation, and support for all learners.

### Enhancing Reflection and Future Growth Through Collaborative Debriefing

*Author*  
Kaitlin Donahue  
*Bridgewater State University*

*Author*  
Jacquelynne Anne Boivin  
*Bridgewater State University*

*Author*  
Shawn O'Neill  
*Bridgewater State University*

**This paper is focused on the value of structured, shared debriefing for undergraduate teacher candidates. It supports the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Program's "cluster" model, which integrates weekly debriefs to foster reflective practice, instructional strategies, and improve pre-service teachers' readiness for the classroom.**

### Interpersonal Competence in Evaluation: Stakeholder Experience, Team Perception, and Learning Reflections

*Author*  
Susannah Marcucci  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
Youlim Lee  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
Lugyi No  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
Taghrid Elterk  
*UMass Lowell*

*Author*  
FNU Lhaden  
*UMass Lowell*

**This study explores the role of interpersonal competence in program evaluation. Results indicate that interpersonal competence enhances both stakeholder satisfaction and evaluator development. Findings underscore the need for intentional training and reflective practice in evaluation education to promote inclusive, ethically grounded evaluations.**

Longitudinal Study of K-12 Principal Leadership Coaching Perspectives: Balancing Immediate Needs with Long-Term Goals

*Author*  
Jenna Nichols  
*University of Pennsylvania*

This study examines the changing dynamics of coach-principal dyads during a year-long coaching process for K-12 principals. Using interviews and phenomenological analysis, we examine how goals are set and addressed, how coach-principal relationships grow, and how coaches and principals drive professional and personal development in sessions.

Friday, October 24, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## Measurement Models and Methodological Assumptions

Analyzing the Dimensionality of Personality Scales Using Positively and Negatively Worded Items

*Author*  
Aria Immanuel  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Author*  
Stephen Sireci  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

The application of positive and negative items simultaneously threatens the internal structure of the psychological scales. This study provided an empirical analysis of the threats using both item styles in a measure of personality scale.

Are Diagnostic Classification Models with Partial Monotonicity Constraints Enough to Ensure Accurate Classifications?

*Author*  
Alfonso Martinez  
*Fordham University*

Diagnostic classification models require monotonicity constraints on the item parameters to ensure model identifiability and proper model interpretation; however, these constraints are inconsistently enforced in practice and software. Via a simulation study, we examine how different monotonicity constraint enforcement strategies affect the

accuracy of examinee attribute/profile classifications.

## Can GenAI Score Ethical Reasoning Essays? Evaluating Copilot with Interrater Agreement and Rasch Modeling

*Author*  
Kaijie Liu  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
John D. Hathcoat  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Yu Bao  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Hunter R. Castleton  
*James Madison University*

Though performance assessments, especially essays, are widely used to evaluate student learning, their scoring process can be time- and resource-intensive. This study explores whether Microsoft Copilot can serve as a consistent and reliable rater of ethical reasoning essays using interrater agreement, interrater reliability, and a Many-Facets Rasch Model.

## Revisiting Distributional Assumptions for Generalizability Studies of Count Data

*Author*  
Adam Lekwa  
*Rutgers University*

Measures that produce counts of correct responses are commonplace in educational practice and research. Reliabilities of data produced by such measures are often studied in the context of Generalizability Theory. In this simulation study I revisit distributional assumptions in the estimation of variance components for count data in Generalizability Theory.

Friday, October 24, 2025 10:15am - 11:45am

## The Expanding Role of AI in Assessment, Leadership & Knowledge Production

### AI Knowledge and Test-Taking Effort: Examining Student Behavior in Low-Stakes Assessments

*Author*  
Jada Willse  
*James Madison University -- CARS*

*Author*  
Jada Willse  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Jonathan Henriques  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Emma Puckett  
*James Madison University*

*Author*  
Brian Leventhal  
*James Madison University*

We explore the implications of generative AI use on low-stakes assessments in higher education. Analyzing student effort, performance, and behavior, we examine whether likely AI-assisted responses introduce construct-irrelevant variance. Findings contribute to ongoing discussions about assessment validity, student engagement and the evolving role of AI in education.

### Between the Lines: Using AI to Analyze Language in Inclusive Practices Measures and Research Reporting

*Author*  
Michael McCarthy  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

*Author*  
Michael McCarthy  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

*Author*  
Mallory Smith  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

*Author*  
Melissa Stoffers  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

*Author*  
Christina Cipriano  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

This study builds on a global review of tools used to measure inclusive education. Using AI-assisted discourse analysis, we examine how disability and inclusion are framed in both the measurement items and in how researchers report their findings and describe students with disabilities in their studies.

### Beyond the Classroom: Harnessing AI to Assess Disability Discourse Among U.S. Political Leaders

*Author*  
Michael McCarthy  
*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*



*Author*

Michael McCarthy

*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

*Author*

Christina Cipriano

*The Education Collaboratory at Yale, Yale Child Study Center*

This study uses AI to collect and score U.S. politicians' statements about people with disabilities. Using a four-point scale, from dehumanizing to affirming, we assess how rhetoric shapes stigma and education policy. Results are mapped live to support advocacy, public awareness, and civic accountability:

<https://www.disabilitydiscoursematters.org/>

## Educational Leader AI Readiness: Cultivating Acceptance for Future-Ready Classrooms

*Author*

Jess Gregory

*Southern Connecticut State University*

This study assessed whether AI literacy shifted educator attitudes toward AI use, employing the TAM. By embedding AI tools and explicit instruction, it investigated changes in perceived usefulness, ease of use, and overall acceptance. The goal was to cultivate AI-ready leaders, ensuring equitable, future-ready learning for every mind.

## What is a Researcher?: Foucault and Researcher Ethics in the Age of GenAI

*Author*

Cecile Sam

*Rowan University*

This conceptual paper reimagines the ethical role of researchers in the age of generative AI by extending Foucault's "author function" to the researcher. Framing researchers as transdiscursive figures, it explores their power to shape discourse, knowledge, and ethics amidst digital divides and evolving AI-driven epistemologies in higher education.

OCTOBER 22-24, 2025