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**Dr. Kim E. Boyd, Dean,**College of Education

Since the first year of offering the Doctorate in Educational Leadership (1999), 64 individuals have earned their Ed.D. Many doctoral graduates have leadership and administrative positions in public or private schools, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. As of 2011, twenty of the graduates with their Doctorate in Educational Leadership are currently in leadership positions in institutions of higher education at either private or state colleges or universities serving as deans or associate deans.

For the seventh year, the Graduate School of Education is publishing this review of the doctoral abstracts from the Ed.D. candidates who successfully completed and defended their dissertations during the fall of 2010 and spring 2011. I hope that you will find them of interest and perhaps cause you to reflect on current issues in elementary/secondary school education, adult learning, and higher education or even conduct further research in these areas.

These dissertation abstracts represent hours of research study, frustration, dedication, and labor of the candidates, and their committees. They also represent hours of love, sacrifice, and support of families and friends. Each Doctoral candidate has successfully defended their dissertation before the Graduate Council and were faced with challenging questions regarding their research and study before being awarded the Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

As the Doctoral candidates are told before their defense, "you should be the world's leading expert on the topic of your study when you go into your defense—at least for 20 minutes. By the time you finish your defense, the topic of your research will have already expanded and surpassed your research knowledge base."



**Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair,**Graduate School of
Education

As Chair of the Graduate School of Education, I am proud to showcase the dissertation research of our 2010-2011 new Doctors in Educational Leadership.

The faculty of the Graduate School of Education believes that God has called each of our adult learners to impact the world for Christ. The working educational professionals participating in our programs are daily walking out the College of Education's vision.

Transformed Educators
Transformed Society
The Miracle Ahead
A Transformed Generation

Throughout this showcase, please note the diverse research topics and settings chosen by our new Doctors in Education. Each one has made significant contributions and has proven to be an expert in his or her chosen topic. It is our pleasure to share the nature of their research with you in this publication.

## **DISSERTATION CLASS OF 2010-2011**

Degrees leading to an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

## Dr. Jeffrey Kyle Keeney

Whole Person Assessment: A Quantitative Approach To Assessing Undergraduate Students Spiritually, Physically, Intellectually, And Socially At A Private Christian University

## Dr. Cheryl Jefflyn Daniels Washington

A Multi-Case Study Of The Demographic, Culture, And Climate Characteristics Of Urban Christian Schools That Have Narrowed The Achievement Gap In Mathematics In Grades 4 And 8

### Dr. Jarod Leroy Mendenhall

An Analysis Of The Factors That Contribute To The Perceived Effectiveness Of A Targeted Intervention Program For At-Risk Students

#### Dr. Deborah Anne Williamson

Characteristics Of Successful Middle Schools Whose English Language Learners Have Continually Achieved High Academic Performance

## Dr. Cynthia Ray Smith Burleson

The Relationship Between Type Of Teacher Certification, Years Of Teaching Experience, District Size, Socioeconomic Status, And The Gain In 2007-08 Third Grade Oral Reading Fluency Scores Of Oklahoma Students

### Dr. Carroll L. Smith, Jr

The Ability Of The No Child Left Behind Act To Enable School Reform: Beliefs Of Illinois School District Superintendents

## Dr. Stephen Gene Glazier

The Effect Upon College Completion For Hispanic And White College Students Who Completed Developmental Math In College As Documented In The Nels: 88 Survey

## DR. JEFFREY KYLE KEENEY MAY 2010

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Whole Person Assessment: A Quantitative Approach To Assessing Undergraduate Students Spiritually, Physically, Intellectually, And Socially At A Private Christian University

Successfully defended his dissertation on May 28, 2010



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Otto (Chair), Dr. Keeney (New Doctor), Dr. Miller and Dr. Roso



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Jeffrey Keeney

NAME: Jeffrey Kyle Keeney DATE OF DEGREE: August 2010

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: Whole Person Assessment: A Quantitative Approach to Assessing Undergraduate Students Spiritually,

Physically, Intellectually, and Socially at a Private Christian University

PAGES IN STUDY: 152 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Higher Education Administration

## **Purpose and Method of Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a significant difference in Whole Person Assessment (WPA) General Education scores for undergraduate students from their first academic calendar year to their graduating senior year; if there was a relationship between WPA General Education scores for students during their first academic calendar year and the type of K-12 school they attended; and if there was a significant difference in undergraduates' WPA General Education scores from year-to-year. The researcher conducted a quantitative ex post facto analysis using a paired sample t-test and Pearson correlation involving undergraduate students at the university being studied. The WPA program is comprised of two components: student's field of study (major) and general education. For the purpose of this study, only scores from the general education component were analyzed due to all undergraduate students being required to take general education courses. An alpha level of .05 was used for all analysis.

First, the researcher performed a paired sample t-test analysis to determine if there was a significant difference in WPA General Education scores for undergraduate students beginning their first academic calendar year to their graduating senior year. Results indicated there was significant growth during this time.

Second, the researcher performed a Pearson correlational analysis to determine if there was a significant relationship between the type of K-12 school attended by undergraduate students and their first academic calendar year WPA General Education scores. Results indicated that no significant relationships existed.

Third, the researcher performed a paired samples t-test to determine if there was a significant difference in WPA General Education scores from year-to-year. Results indicated there was significant growth between the first and second year, no significant growth between the second and third year, and no significant growth between the third and fourth year. In fact, results indicated regression between the third and fourth year.



# DR. CHERYL JEFFLYN DANIELS WASHINGTON JULY 2010

**TITLE OF STUDY:** A Multi-Case Study Of The Demographic, Culture, And Climate Characteristics Of Urban Christian Schools That Have Narrowed The Achievement Gap In Mathematics In Grades 4 And 8

Successfully defended her dissertation on July 19, 2010



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Norton, Dr. Miller, Dr. Washington (New Doctor), and Dr. Roso (Chair)



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Cheryl Washington

NAME: Cheryl Jefflyn Daniels Washington DATE OF DEGREE: August 2010

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: A Multi-Case Study Of The Demographic, Culture, And Climate Characteristics Of Urban Christian

Schools That Have Narrowed The Achievement Gap In Mathematics In Grades 4 And 8

PAGES IN STUDY: 370 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Christian School Administration

## Purpose and Method of Study

The purpose of this research was to identify the demographic, culture, and climate characteristics of two urban Christian schools that have narrowed the racial achievement gap to determine how these schools are narrowing the gap. The achievement gap in the United States between white and black students has widened to a 33% difference. Urban Christian schools have actively addressed the growing problem of low student achievement among the nation's poor and minority students, but research-based evidence addressing how these schools are successful is scant. This research utilized a multi-case study approach to examine two gap-narrowing urban Christian schools in the Mid-Atlantic region. Site visits were conducted to collect research data through observations, interviews, school documents, and the National Center for Educational Statistics Schools and Staffing Surveys. A cross-case analysis of the research findings and pattern-matching logic was used to compare the research findings to Jensen's (2006) enriched environment theory to explain how these schools have narrowed the gap.

The results of the study indicated that gap-narrowing urban Christian schools have analogous characteristics as gap-narrowing public, charter, and Catholic schools. They are in contrast to most urban public schools. Their culture and climate characteristics produce an enriched learning environment that correlates with Jensen's (2006) enrichment theory and explains how these schools narrowed the racial achievement gap. The enriched school environment was characterized by the degree of contrast in the school operations, the social and emotional student development, the challenging academics, and the active learning opportunities. In addition, a communitarian culture of faith and prayer led by an authoritative and paternalistic leader and effective degreed teachers supported the spiritual, physical, creative, and intellectual development of African-American students in a structured, orderly, and safe environment. The study refuted the conclusion of Lubienski and Lubienski (2006) and Jeong (2007) and found that there were no observable correlations between gap narrowing and the socioeconomic background of the families, the type of governing bodies of the schools, or the number of enrolled minority students.



# DR. JAROD LEROY MENDENHALL AUGUST 2010

**TITLE OF STUDY:** An Analysis Of The Factors That Contribute To The Perceived Effectiveness Of A Targeted Intervention Program For At-Risk Students

Successfully defended his dissertation on August 17, 2010



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Roso, Dr. Davidson, Dr. Mendenhall (New Doctor), Dr. Myers (Chair) and Dr. Oliver



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Jarod Mendenhall

NAME: Jarod Leroy Mendenhall DATE OF DEGREE: August 2010

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis Of The Factors That Contribute To The Perceived Effectiveness Of A Targeted Intervention

Program For At-Risk Students

PAGES IN STUDY: 155 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Public School Administration

## Purpose and Method of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe those factors most important to the perceived effectiveness of a targeted intervention program for at-risk students. This research was a qualitative multiple case study of 3 public school sites that had developed and implemented a targeted intervention program for at-risk students. Approximately 450 students in Grades 7, 8, and 9 were being served in the three programs. The focus of the programs was to create an environment where students were provided the necessary supports to gain the needed skills to proceed academically and experience success. The primary sources of data for this study were documentation, archival records, interviews, and direct observations. A cross-case synthesis technique was used to analyze the data. This technique treated each intervention program at the individual school sites as a separate case study; yet it permitted the researcher to aggregate the findings across the three case studies.

The three intervention programs in this study differed in the number of students being served, age of the participants, and grade of the participants. However, the programs were set up by the school district with the same general educational philosophy, access to equitable resources, and a similar student focus. The common intervention practices identified by this study included: increased availability of specialized counseling services, increased instructional time, increased parental involvement, focused school-within-a-school model, and enhanced student engagement efforts. School administrators should be knowledgeable of the potential benefits of these intervention practices when developing programs designed to serve the educational needs of at-risk students.



# DR. DEBORAH ANNE WILLIAMSON AUGUST 2010

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Characteristics Of Successful Middle Schools Whose English Language Learners Have Continually Achieved High Academic Performance

Successfully defended her dissertation on August 23, 2010



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Miller, Dr. Roso (Chair), Dr. Williamson (New Doctor), and Dr. Hullinger



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Deborah Williamson

NAME: Deborah Anne Williamson DATE OF DEGREE: August 2011

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: Characteristics Of Successful Middle Schools Whose English Language Learners Have Continually

Achieved High Academic Performance

PAGES IN STUDY: 140 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Public School Administration

## Purpose and Method of Study

The education of children whose native language is not English has been problematic from Colonial United States to the present day. Policies for educating these children have been decided in the ever-changing political arena, and so the methods and manner of lesson delivery were found to be inconsistent and often ineffective. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, mandates were put into place that brought the education of English language learners to the forefront. The educational ability of this group heavily influenced the ability of all school groups to maintain success academically. Research has shown that reading scores usually fall for students in middle school; this has been shown to be true especially for English language learners (ELL). This study described the characteristics of middle schools where ELL are performing in the passing range in reading. This multiple case study analyzed three urban middle schools in Oklahoma; the schools were similar demographically in population and economics. Artifacts used for the study were criterion-referenced test scores as required by NCLB, school observations, and interviews with key administrators and teachers.

This study concluded that middle school ELL show academic proficiency in buildings where data were used to maximize their academic strengths and weaknesses and to place them with competent, caring teachers and leaders throughout the building who were accountable for their success.



# DR. CYNTHIA RAY SMITH BURLESON APRIL 2011

**TITLE OF STUDY:** The Relationship Between Type Of Teacher Certification, Years Of Teaching Experience, District Size, Socioeconomic Status, And The Gain In 2007-2008 Third-Grade Oral Reading Fluency Scores Of Oklahoma Students

Successfully defended her dissertation on April 7, 2011



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Davidson, Dr. Miller (Chair), Dr. Burleson (New Doctor), and Dr. Hullinger



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Cynthia Burleson

NAME: Cynthia Ray Smith Burleson DATE OF DEGREE: May 2011

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: The Relationship Between Type Of Teacher Certification, Years Of Teaching Experience, District Size,

Socioeconomic Status, And The Gain In 2007-2008 Third-Grade Oral Reading Fluency Scores Of

Oklahoma Students.

PAGES IN STUDY: 132 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Public School Administration

## **Purpose and Method of Study**

This study investigated the relationship between type of teacher certification, district size, years of teaching experience, and the gain in 2007-2008 third-grade oral reading fluency (ORF) scores of Oklahoma students. Gains in third-grade ORF scores were calculated from existing post-third-grade scores minus pre-third-grade scores using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for the 2007-2008 school year. This study utilized stepwise multiple regression analysis to establish whether the variables, type of teacher certification, district size, and years of teaching experience, could predict gains in student academic achievement.

The research question examined was, What is the relationship between type of teacher certification, district size, years of teaching experience, and the gain in 2007-2008 third-grade ORF scores of Oklahoma students?

Results from the regression analysis indicated that type of teacher certification was the strongest predictor of third-grade ORF gains and gains were higher for students taught by traditionally certified teachers. Years of teaching experience and district size were also predictors of gains in third-grade ORF scores, with an optimum district size of 250-499 students.



# DR. CARROLL L. SMITH, JR APRIL 2011

**TITLE OF STUDY:** The Ability Of The No Child Left Behind Act To Enable School Reform: Beliefs Of Illinois School District Superintendents

Successfully defended his dissertation on April 7, 2011



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Oliver, Dr. Smith (New Doctor), Dr. Myers (Chair), and Dr. Davidson



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Carroll Smith, Jr.

NAME: Carroll L. Smith, Jr. DATE OF DEGREE: May 2011

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: The Ability Of The No Child Left Behind Act To Enable School Reform: Beliefs Of Illinois School District

Superintendents.

PAGES IN STUDY: 176 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Public School Administration

## Purpose and Method of Study

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the beliefs of Illinois public school superintendents concerning the ability of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to enable school reform. A secondary purpose of this study was to describe the extent to which those beliefs varied based on the size of school district, type of school district, location of the district, and length of experience as a superintendent. The entire population of Illinois' 868 public school superintendents for the 2008-2009 school year was asked to participate in this study. A total of 349 completed surveys (40% response rate) were included in the data analysis. The survey questions took the form of superintendent belief statements concerning the ability of NCLB to assist them in leading school reform. The data were analyzed by SPSS 17.0 software based on the frequencies of responses of the superintendents' beliefs concerning NCLB. Ordinal regression analysis identified which predictor variables impacted the outcome variable.

The responses to the survey showed mixed results for the five beliefs as more superintendents disagreed than agreed that NCLB had helped them lead school reform, improve freedom and flexibility in working with the community, and to increase the number of educational choices available to parents. However, more superintendents agreed than disagreed that NCLB had helped them strengthen school district accountability systems and assisted them in developing goals and objectives concerning the usage of proven educational methods. Although the influence of the independent variables differed from belief to belief, the size of the school district was shown to be a significant predictor in four of the five beliefs. School district location was a significant predictor in three beliefs, and superintendent experience was a significant predictor in two beliefs. Type of district was not a significant contributor to the predictability of any of the beliefs.



# DR. STEPHEN GENE GLAZIER APRIL 2010

**TITLE OF STUDY:** The Effect Upon College Completion For Hispanic And White College Students Who Completed Developmental Math In College As Documented In The Nels:88 Survey

Successfully defended his dissertation on April 8, 2011



Photo (from left to right): Dr. Hullinger, Dr. Miller, Dr. Glazier (New Doctor), and Dr. Davidson (Chair)



Dr. Patrick Otto, Chair of the Graduate Department, Oral Roberts University College of Education, Congratulates Dr. Stephen Glazier

NAME: Stephen Gene Glazier DATE OF DEGREE: May 2011

**INSTITUTION:** Oral Roberts University **LOCATION:** Tulsa, Oklahoma

TITLE OF STUDY: The Effect Upon College Completion For Hispanic And White College Students Who Completed

Developmental Math In College As Documented In The Nels:88 Survey

PAGES IN STUDY: 102 CANDIDATE FOR: Doctor of Education Degree

MAJOR FIELD: Educational Leadership/Public School Administration

## Purpose and Method of Study

The population of interest in the study consisted of white and Hispanic high school graduates in the United States who attended college and completed a college developmental mathematics course. Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 were employed, and a longitudinal, quasi-experimental research design was implemented. The independent or predictor variables in this study were ethnicity (Hispanic or white, non-Hispanic) and whether a developmental mathematics course was taken in college. The dependent variable was whether or not the student received a bachelor's degree within 8 years of graduating high school. Control variables were used to address the possibility that college graduation rates varied as a function of demographic or educational characteristics of the subjects.

Results from the study showed that taking a developmental mathematics course in college did not increase the likelihood of college graduation in the targeted student groups. Additional results showed that females were more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree than males, higher SES had a positive effect on the likelihood of obtaining a bachelor's degree, higher anticipated educational attainment and higher expected educational needs at age 30 were positively related to obtaining a bachelor's degree, and students with higher standardized math scores were more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree than students with lower standardized math scores.

Based on these findings it was recommended that educational administrators provide resources to developmental course programs to increase the percentage of students who graduate, continue to collect data on developmental course outcomes, and continue to develop methodologies to further test the relationship between taking developmental mathematics courses and the likelihood of college graduation.





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