



Annual Inquiries, Investigations, and Innovations 2011-12

Story Circles

An innovative approach to exploring biases and assumptions about ourselves and others

Dr. Paige Allison

How Can We Implement Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom more Efficiently to Help Students Succeed?

We are working to implement technology to help students communicate more in the Spanish language. We are also trying to see how we can connect this to student success on the National Spanish Exam (our district measure)

Grisell Santiago
Lizzie Rodriguez

Changing Practices During the Navigation of a New Science Curriculum

We investigated how one 6th grade teacher enacted an inquiry-based science curriculum. Specifically, we set out to answer the following questions: How are science-teaching practices shaped during the process of curricular enactment? What issues do teachers confront as they move from a reliance on textbook to an evidence-based curriculum? Analysis revealed there were challenges but the curriculum afforded transformation in teaching practices and opportunities for all learners to be successful.

Dr. Mayra Cordero
Dr. Rose Pringle (UF)

"Did I really learn what I was supposed to learn?" Taking Assessment for Learning to the Next Level

During the 2011-2012 school year, we focused on having students take ownership of their learning. Our inquiry project takes an in-depth look at our current uses of AFL- I can statements, formative assessments, and self-assessments and we worked on helping students develop a plan to study and learn the topics they didn't master on tests.

Kristin Weller
Alicia Stephenson

Students in Need of Support, Self-regulated Learning, and a 21st Century Model of Teaching and Learning

As our elementary school transitions into a new building that allows for more 21st century teaching and learning, we will also have the opportunity to shift how we differentiate our instruction. I will be conducting my dissertation during the fall of the 2012-2013 school year, when we move into our new school building, collaborating with teachers and focusing on our students in need of support and how we can scaffold their self-regulated learning.

Ashley Pennypacker

Social Justice In the English Classroom

I intend to examine how my students used inquiry to further their understandings of issues they found interesting. Additionally, I will look into various student choices made during the inquiry process.

Kathleen Yurko

Building a Successful Blended Learning Course

In what ways can I successfully engage students in a blended learning environment to master course content of the Creative Photography class? With clear learning goals presented both in the classroom and online, will the students work independently from home to build their base knowledge of course content?

Susan I. Johnson

In What Ways Does Utilizing PASS Strategies to Preview IQWST Content During Intervention Reading Support Science Content Learning?

In this project we will examine how the implementation of PASS reading strategies will impact the understanding of the science content and retention of vocabulary for a group of students who struggle to read the content area nonfiction texts in the IQWST curriculum.

Dr. Mayra Cordero
David Combs

Writing That Works Wonders

We engaged middle school students in writing projects centered around their interests in a way that nudged them to enjoy all kinds of writing, to take challenges and chances, and to be willing to write well. We discovered that projects done with enrichment students can work for all students!

Carolyn Harrell
Tiffany Dunn

Is Offering a “Guaranteed C” for Completing Assigned Work, Regardless of Quiz and Test Performance, a Pedagogically Efficacious Practice?

To entice “non-traditional AP students” to enroll in AP classes and to provide a "safety net" for the very real possibility of formal assessment failure (such as AP-level unit tests and end of course exams), I offer a “Guaranteed C” to all students. This research involved collecting survey data to try and determine intended and unintended consequences of this practice.

Dr. Gary Boulware

How Do We Continuously Scaffold 21st Century Research Skills for High School Students?

In what ways can I continue teaching the research skills to help our HS students be prepared for senior projects? Today's classroom research projects require a fresh approach to teaching 21st century students how to utilize online resources in the media center? The focus of my inquiry is to scaffold the progression of research skills that HS students will need to access information for their senior projects.

Penny Chou

To Teach or Not to Teach: Teaching Culturally Sensitive Topics in Social Studies and Language Arts Classrooms

This 2-year inquiry project was presented at the national NMSA/AMLE conference in November of 2011. This presentation will openly discuss teacher discomfort and fear of teaching controversial topics in the classroom. Strategies for overcoming such fears include using historical fiction, shared-inquiry discussions, online communities, and student projects emphasizing social justice and student voice.

Shannon Hamlett Leontiades

A Dream for Global Peace: Igniting the Flame for Social Justice with the Jane Addams Children’s Book Award Winners

This presentation will showcase how the Jane Addams award winners can be used as a springboard for explorations of social justice issues. These texts can provide an opportunity for students to see themselves and others, explore constraints and underpinnings of social expectations, and imagine a different way of being. Books invite us to consider issues of equity and justice from the perspective of the characters, as well as our own life experiences.

Dr. Ruth McKoy Lowery (UF)

Connecting with Nature to Address Emotional Needs and Promote Academic Success

Presentation focuses on using nature (e.g., gardening, ropes course, etc.) to address students' emotional needs (e.g., self-esteem, stress, social skills), while creatively promoting learning in an alternative classroom environment.

Dr. Jacqueline Swank (UF)

In What Ways has Moving to a More Blended Learning Environment Allowed for Ongoing Assessment for Learning, implementation of Differentiated Instruction within a Secondary Biology Classroom and Preparation for the Biology EOC Exam?

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, incoming 9th graders will be required to pass a state-created Biology End-of-Course exam in order to graduate. Thus, meeting academic standards (learning targets) has become non-negotiable. I will share what I have learned as I continue to transform my curriculum to include Assessment for Learning and differentiated instruction within a blended learning environment.

Mickey MacDonald

Teacher Observation/Feedback Cycle: Lessons Learned

Lessons learned from this year's implementation of the Marzano frameworks: Inter-rater reliability findings, peer observation and feedback dilemmas, and ideas for next steps.

Dr. Kathy Dixon (UF)

Using a Web-based Environment to Support Classroom Curriculum

Students travel virtually to 10 different countries in search of indigenous world music. The students create a page in the wiki, which documents their research.

Melanie Harris