



Inquiries & Investigations Symposium 2026



Developmental Research School
at the University of Florida

P.K. YONGE DRS
TEACHER INQUIRIES &
INVESTIGATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Welcome to the 2025–26 Inquiries and Investigations Symposium!

This annual gathering brings together partners from P.K. Yonge, Florida’s other Lab Schools, the UF College of Education, and colleagues from across the University of Florida and beyond who share a commitment to inquiry, collaboration, and impact. We are grateful to come together to make our professional questions public, learn from one another, and strengthen teaching and learning through research-informed practice.

As a developmental research school with a statutory mission to design, test, and disseminate promising practices, P.K. Yonge relies on strong partnerships—on our campus, across UF, around the state, and beyond—to inform and advance our work. Together, we explore theories of action that support high-quality learning opportunities and strong outcomes for all students we serve.

Our vision is to graduate every student as a creative, dedicated, and resilient learner. Guided by our “P.K. Why,” we work as an integrated PreK–12 system to ensure every student is prepared for success beyond graduation. Mastery, student agency, and purposeful collaboration drive our continuous improvement as we work together to meet the needs of each learner.

Thank you to our planning committee, Mickey MacDonald and Emily Eubanks, as well as Dawn Szymanski, and Rose Farley for their support of this event. We also extend our sincere thanks to today’s lunch sponsor, Dr. Phil Poekert and UF Lastinger Center for Learning.

P.K. Yonge faculty are encouraged to apply for the Dennison Teacher Research Outstanding Manuscript Award and the Dennison Teacher Researcher Excellence Award, which recognize impactful, classroom-centered research conducted in collaboration with university partners. The call for awards will be released in February.

Thank you for advancing the thoughtful connection between research and practice that defines this symposium.

Dr. Carrie Geiger
Director
P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School

Agenda At-a-Glance

8:00 - 8:30	Registration & Coffee	Performing Arts Center Lobby
8:30 - 9:30	Welcome & Keynote Dr. Carrie Geiger, P.K. Yonge Director Dr. Nancy Dana, UF COE-STL Professor	Performing Arts Center
Break / Move to Secondary Building		
9:40 - 10:30	Discussion Session 1	1st Floor Blue and Green
10:35 - 11:50	P.K. Yonge CTE Pathways & AP Academic Electives Rotations	1st Floor Blue and Green
11:50 - 12:50	Lunch	Westside Cafeteria
	Invited Lunch Session Lab School Leadership	Q-Bldg. 502
12:55 - 1:35	Featured Sessions Jan Merritt, Dr. Jose D. De Leon Alejandro, Raeanna Kramer, Kiera Robbins <i>UF Lastinger & P.K. Yonge – A Partnership in Fostering Mathematical Proficiency through the Math Matrix</i> Lisa Fabulich and Peggy Roach <i>Mastery-Based Grading Reboot</i>	Blue 111 / 112 Green 131 / 132
1:35 - 2:15	Poster Session Lastinger and PK Yonge	1st Floor Blue and Green & Commons
2:20 - 3:10	Discussion Session 2	1st Floor Blue and Green
3:15 - 3:25	Closing Remarks and Evaluation FINAL EVALUATION LINK	1st Floor Commons

Evaluation QR Code



Keynote – Dr. Nancy Dana

Lighting the Way: Inquiry and the Pursuit of Hope in the Developmental Research School

Dr. Dana is a nationally and internationally recognized scholar, teacher, and mentor whose work centers on practitioner inquiry—also known as teacher inquiry or action research—as a powerful form of professional learning. She began her career in higher education at Pennsylvania State University in 1992 and has served on the faculty at the University of Florida since 2003. For more than 30 years, her research has focused on how educators systematically study their own practice to improve teaching, learning, and school communities.



Dr. Dana's scholarship highlights teacher leadership, the professional contexts that support inquiry (such as Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development Schools), and how inquiry supports the learning of educators across roles, including classroom teachers, principals, and university faculty. She has authored 11 books and more than 100 articles and book chapters that make inquiry accessible, practical, and impactful for educators.

Her work has expanded inquiry into online and job-embedded professional learning through federally funded research and award-winning program design. Dr. Dana has received numerous honors for her teaching, research, and mentoring, including national awards from Learning Forward and the Association of Teacher Educators, and induction into the University of Florida's Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars.

In addition to her university work, Dr. Dana partners with schools and districts across the U.S. and internationally to support meaningful, inquiry-driven professional learning grounded in teachers' real classroom experiences.

Discussion Session Protocol

Group Size: 3 + Audience -- 2 Presenters, 1 Facilitator, Audience

Time: 50 minutes

Step One: Presentations

Time: 30 Minutes; 15 Minutes per Presenter

Each presenter takes a turn sharing his/her inquiry. Presentations cover the following:

- Context and Background (Description of inquirer's classroom/school, dilemma that led to inquirer's wondering)
- Statement of Wondering(s)
- Description of Any Intervention/Action Implemented as a Part of Inquiry Process
- Data Collection Strategies Employed
- Findings
- Implications for Practice (Changes/action teacher inquirer has made or wishes to make based on what was learned through the inquiry)
- New Wonderings for the Next Inquiry Cycle

Step Two: Questions for Individual Presenters

Time: 10 Minutes Total; 5 Minutes Q/A per Presenter

After each presenter has finished sharing his/her inquiry, the facilitator asks, "What questions do you have for this presenter?" Participants pose questions and presenter answers.

Step Three: Looking Across the Inquiries

Time: 10 Minutes

A. Silent Reflection and Writing Time (*2-3 minutes*)

Each group member picks one question from the list below and writes a two-minute response. (Looking Across Inquiries Response Sheet for each session in program)

- What commonalities exist across these two presentations?
- Looking across both presentations, what conclusions can we draw?
- What insights have you gained into your own teaching from the two presentations?
- What insights have you gained into student learning from the two presentations?
- What implications will your learning from the two presentations have for your own teaching practice?

B. Discussion (*5 Minutes*)

Facilitator leads the group in discussion of their written responses to the questions above.

Step Four: Debrief

Time: 2 Minutes

Participants reflect on how this presentation format worked for the group.

Discussion Session 1 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

9:40 – 10:30

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 116	Rachel Still <i>Secondary Science Faculty</i>	Shark AI: Flexible Classroom Approaches Using Fossil Shark Teeth Classification	This session shares our experience implementing the Shark AI curriculum developed by the Florida Museum of Natural History. The program trains teachers to introduce middle school students to artificial intelligence through hands-on sorting and classification of fossilized shark teeth using Google's Teachable Machine. We highlight why early AI literacy matters and demonstrate how the curriculum's flexible structure allowed us to adapt lessons to meet the unique needs of our different classrooms. Participants will gain insight into engaging students with authentic scientific data, promoting inquiry, and fostering critical conversations about how AI learns and why that matters.
	Dr. Brenda Breil <i>Secondary Science / Electives' Faculty</i>	Supporting Sixth and Seventh Grade Engineering Students in Learning About AI and Applying Medical AI	AI is becoming increasingly important. Supporting my students in learning about AI while still developing my own understanding of AI was challenging. Students engaged with AI to learn about AI. Students then described a medical AI technology and explained how it could help remediate a loved one's challenge. Surveys were used for purposes of developing the unit and capturing students' interest and understanding. Journaling captured what did and did not work. Student work provided opportunities for feedback. Overall, students were comfortable working with AI and enjoyed learning about the possibilities of AI in solving real world problems.
Facilitator – Luigi DiFranco			

Discussion Session 1 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

9:40 – 10:30

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 113	Dr. Jean Sterner <i>Secondary Math Faculty</i>	Shifting to Student-Centered Mathematics: A Teacher Inquiry into Workshop-Style Algebra II Instruction	This practitioner inquiry explores the impact of workshop-style instruction on student engagement, confidence, and achievement in two Algebra II classes. Seeking an alternative to traditional lecture-based instruction, I implemented a five-week, student-centered workshop model featuring rotational stations, collaborative learning, and differentiated practice. Data sources included pre- and post-assessments, classroom observations, and a student perception survey. Findings showed gains in student achievement and confidence, along with increased peer discourse and sustained engagement. Students reported greater agency and support for pacing and collaboration. Results suggest workshop-style instruction can promote equitable participation and deeper mathematical understanding in secondary mathematics classrooms.
	Grisell Santiago <i>Secondary World Languages Faculty</i>	Using Music and Video to Strengthen Listening, Vocabulary, and Engagement in Spanish Classes	This teacher inquiry investigates how integrating Spanish-language songs through YouTube videos influences student engagement, listening comprehension, and vocabulary development in World Language classes. Noticing a need to strengthen listening strategies and sustain student attention, I redesigned lessons to include music-based learning experiences that reflect students' everyday media consumption. Through ongoing reflection, classroom observation, and analysis of student participation and responses, I examined how students connected to song content and applied new language structures. Findings suggest that using songs increased motivation, supported vocabulary acquisition, and encouraged active listening. This inquiry highlights how intentionally adapting instruction can deepen student learning and inform continued growth in Spanish instruction across course levels.
Facilitator – Angie Gonzalez			

Discussion Session 1 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

9:40 – 10:30

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 111	Alison Prascak <i>Elementary Faculty, K-1 Learning Community</i>	Differentiated Support and Whole Group Instruction: The Path to Higher Math Achievement	This practitioner inquiry examines how creative learning games and high-interest instructional experiences influence student motivation, engagement, and achievement in mathematics. Seeking to differentiate instruction while supporting diverse learners, I implemented small-group instruction and whole-group math games designed to encourage participation and mathematical discourse. Data from STAR Math assessments across PM1–PM3 were analyzed to identify trends in student growth and achievement. Throughout the inquiry cycle, I intentionally listened to students’ mathematical thinking and test-taking strategies during discussions to inform targeted support. Findings suggest that engaging, game-based experiences paired with responsive instruction can strengthen student confidence, motivation, and performance in mathematics.
	Natalie James <i>Elementary Faculty, K-1 Learning Community</i>	Enhancing Engagement with Diverse Literature in Early Elementary	In early elementary classrooms, diverse literature plays a critical role in representation and identity development. My research examined how minoritized students engage with diverse books during Individualized Daily Reading and what practices help strengthen their connections to culturally relevant texts. Using student conferences, reading interest inventories, field notes, and video-recorded lessons, I analyzed students’ book selections and reflections. Findings indicate that personalized book recommendations and focused author studies increased students’ willingness to choose “mirror” texts. This work highlights the power of intentional text selection and instructional practices that elevate diverse voices and foster meaningful reading engagement.
Facilitator – Raeanna Kramer			

Discussion Session 1 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

9:40 – 10:30

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 136	Greg Linne <i>Secondary Social Studies Faculty</i>	Enhancing Historical Argumentation: Utilizing Peer Feedback to Improve AP World History Long Essays	This teacher inquiry explores the use of structured peer feedback to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of writing instruction in a growing classroom setting. In response to increasing class sizes, I implemented peer feedback as a central instructional strategy, dedicating time to teaching feedback protocols and closely monitoring student interactions. Findings suggest that peer feedback reduced teacher workload while deepening students' historical thinking skills, fostering collaboration, and increasing confidence with AP-style writing tasks. This inquiry highlights how intentionally teaching and supporting peer feedback can enhance student learning and support sustainable instructional practices.
	Robert Marski <i>Secondary Performing Arts Faculty</i>	Democracy in the Music Classroom: Perceptions on the Student-Led Ensemble	During the pandemic, students were encouraged to provide their own feedback and make musical decisions due to restrictions on full-ensemble rehearsals. After returning to traditional settings, student-led ensembles became a consistent part of the program. To understand student perceptions, a questionnaire was administered. Results indicated that students highly valued the student-led format, felt it increased their ownership of the program, and believed it should continue. These findings suggest that student voice can meaningfully enhance engagement and ownership not only in music ensembles but across broader classroom settings.
Facilitator – Kathryn Janicke			

Discussion Session 1 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

9:40 – 10:30

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 130	Sanil Nadar <i>Secondary Science Faculty</i>	Antimicrobial Resistance and One Health in the High School Biology Curriculum	This teacher inquiry examines the integration of a one-week antimicrobial resistance (AMR) unit into a high school biology curriculum using a One Health framework. Recognizing that AMR is largely absent from U.S. secondary science curricula, I collaborated with Dr. Daniel Czyz, Professor in Microbiology and Cell Science at the University of Florida, to design instruction grounded in Universal Design for Learning and team-based learning. Students engaged in lectures, expert-facilitated discussions, laboratory investigations, and poster presentations exploring AMR mechanisms and mitigation strategies. Pre- and post-assessments and student surveys indicated increased student knowledge, engagement, and understanding, highlighting the value of intentionally designed, content-rich, and collaborative instruction for teaching complex, real-world scientific issues.
	Dr. Jon Mundorf <i>Lastinger Affiliate Faculty for Literacy</i> Jesse Steif, Amanda Wilson, & Danielle McMaster <i>Lastinger Center</i>	Co-Constructing Professional Learning to Advance K-12 Literacy Instruction	This session shares a re-emerging school-university partnership between the Lastinger Center for Learning and P.K. Yonge designed to strengthen literacy practice and improve student outcomes. Together, we are exploring how inquiry-driven professional learning, collaborative course engagement, and shared knowledge building can better support teachers in applying evidence-based literacy practices. Presenters will describe key lessons from our first year of collaboration, highlight how practitioner insights are shaping future professional learning design, and engage participants in dialogue about the content and delivery models most needed to support educators in today's classrooms.
Facilitator – Lilly Anderson			

PK Yonge CTE Pathways and AP Academics

10:35 – 11:50

Location	Presenters	Pathway / AP Academics
1st Floor Blue Room 113	Leigh Anne Brewster & Bill Miller <i>Project Lead the Way Engineering Faculty</i>	Engineering
1st Floor Blue Room 111	Damien Boada & Luigi DiFranco <i>Computer Science Faculty</i>	Computer Science with AI
1st Floor Blue Room 116	Jennifer Bennett & Mandy St. Peter <i>Design and Entrepreneurship Faculty</i>	Entrepreneurship Digital Design & Blueprint
1st Floor Green Room 133	Dr. Jamie Burg & Robert Edmondson <i>Modern Music & Entrepreneurship Faculty</i>	Entrepreneurship Modern Music
1st Floor Green Room 131	Reese Allen-Rutledge <i>Secondary Science Faculty</i>	Health & Healthcare Professions
1st Floor Green Room 130	Peggy Roach, Dr. Mayra Cordero, & Kevin Fabulich <i>Advanced Placement Faculty</i>	AP Academic Electives

Featured Presentations

12:55– 1:35

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 111 / 112	Jan Merritt <i>Lastinger Affiliate Faculty for Mathematics</i> Dr. José De León Alejandro <i>Manager – Lastinger Center Mathematics Team</i> Raeanna Kramer & Kiera Robbins <i>Elementary Faculty, 2-3 Learning Community</i>	UF Lastinger Center & P.K. Yonge: A Partnership in Fostering Mathematical Proficiency Through the Math Matrix	José De Leon Alejandro and Jan Merritt partner with P.K. Yonge second-grade teachers RaeAnna Kramer and Kiera Robbins to present best practices in mathematics instruction from the Lastinger Math Matrix course Fostering Mathematical Proficiency. The session showcases how the Math Matrix guided instructional planning and tool selection within the Eureka Squared curriculum to support diverse addition and subtraction strategies. Emphasis is placed on student math discourse and exit tickets that reveal varied problem-solving approaches. Classroom photos, student work, and teachers' reflections illustrate how these practices promote an engaging and accessible student-centered learning environment that supports all learners, regardless of ability, in sharing mathematical thinking.
Facilitator – Dr. Jalea Turner			

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 131 / 132	Lisa Fabulich <i>Secondary Science Faculty</i> Peggy Roach <i>Secondary Math Faculty</i>	Mastery-Based Grading Reboot	Participants will engage in a discussion of the benefits of Mastery-Based Grading and strategies for implementing it. We will present concrete ways to design assessments aligned to specific learning outcomes to give students multiple chances to demonstrate proficiency.
Facilitator – Dr. Carla-Ann Brown			

Poster Session

1:35 – 2:15

Location	Presenters		Topic
1st Blue Open Spaces #1	Jill Ozog <i>VPK Director K-1 Learning Community Leader</i>	Michaela Allbritton <i>VPK Instructor</i>	The Early Advantage: How Pre-Kindergarten Shapes Tomorrow's Learners
1st Blue Open Spaces #2	Danielle Leuschen de Pico <i>Coordinator, Research & Evaluation, Early Childhood</i>		Early Childhood Lastinger Center for Learning
1st Blue Open Spaces #3	Julianna Banks <i>Coordinator, Research & Evaluation, Literacy</i>		Literacy Lastinger Center for Learning
1st Blue Open Spaces #4	Wallace Pinto Junior <i>Researcher, Math Postdoctoral</i>		Mathematics Lastinger Center for Learning
1st Blue Open Spaces #5	Luiz Franco Giovanini <i>Manager, Data & Reporting New Worlds Reading</i>		New Worlds Reading Lastinger Center for Learning
1st Blue Open Spaces #6	Nico Mora Claudia Gasner Yue Xu <i>Florida Tutoring Advantage</i>		New Worlds Reading Lastinger Center for Learning

Poster Session

1:35 – 2:15

Location	Presenters		Topic
1st Green Open Spaces #1	Toni Johnson <i>Elementary Faculty, K-1 Learning Community</i>		Amplifying Family Voice: Perceptions of Kindergarten Literacy Skill Progress through Home Practice and School Communication
1st Green Open Spaces #2	Dr. Ashley Pennypacker Hill <i>Secondary Principal</i>	Dicy Watson <i>Director of Elementary Programs</i>	Leading as One: One Wave, One Family, One Purpose
1st Green Open Spaces #3	Megan Koppitch <i>Media Specialist Student Government Advisor</i>		Creating a Culture of Leadership Through Student Driven Government
1st Green Open Spaces #4	Kamie Hemmerich <i>K-12 Performing Arts Faculty</i>		Increasing Character Development with Research and Transfer Among High School Students
1st Green Open Spaces #5	Luigi DiFranco <i>Secondary CTE Faculty, Computer Science and AI</i>		Cultivating Code Quality: Structured Peer Review in Secondary Computer Science
1st Green Open Spaces #6	Damien Boada <i>Secondary CTE Faculty, Computer Science and AI</i>		Assessing Artificial Intelligence for Secondary Students

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 116	Ewelina Czyz <i>Secondary ELA</i> Lindsey Franklin <i>Secondary ELA</i> Dr. Angela Kohnen <i>UF COE Professor</i> Bridget Newell Annie Henley <i>UF COE PhD Candidates</i>	The Role of Generative AI Feedback in the Writing Classroom: A Dream or a Nightmare?	As ELA teachers, we are committed to providing feedback that supports student growth, yet time and workload make this work challenging. Partnering with the University of Florida, College of Education Professor and doctoral students, we examined how generative AI feedback tools function in real classroom writing contexts. We collected student essays and compared feedback from multiple AI platforms to feedback provided by classroom teachers. Our analysis showed that AI feedback often produced longer, homogenizing rewrites that risk diminishing student voice, while human feedback remained contextual, concise, and relationship based. These findings highlight the need for thoughtful, teacher-guided integration of AI into writing instruction.
	Sara Montgomery <i>Secondary Science</i>	Too Much to Do, Too Little Time - The Use of AI in 6th Grade Science	The emerging role of AI in education has many implications for practice. There are many tools powered by generative artificial intelligence (gen AI) and often these tools are offered as a feedback solution; gen AI can provide feedback nearly instantaneously, which could alleviate the burden on teachers with large numbers of students. Yet educators have a moral obligation to preserve the human relationships that are the center of deep learning. This research investigated the role AI can play in this feedback process while not sacrificing the personal connection between teachers and students.
Facilitator – Megan Weber			

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 113	Clint Kovach <i>Secondary Social Studies Faculty</i>	NATO: Providing Security or Producing Chaos? An Activity about Claims and Evidence	Participants will attempt to answer a question with no answer. Does the existence of NATO afford the world with a sense of security or does NATO's presence on the world stage cause chaos, forcing those not in the organization to feel threatened. The goal of the lesson is to learn about past, present, and possible future history, but more importantly how to make a claim and support that perspective with evidence.
	Kevin Fabulich <i>Secondary Social Studies Faculty</i>	Moving Beyond Classical Economic Theory in the High School Classroom	High School economic curricula should embrace an expansive approach to the subject that involves an introduction of ethical theory. By limiting student experience to only the positive claims of classic economic theory we divest the subject from its power as a tool to help students evaluate normative claims of how our lives and our society should act. Combining classic economic theory with both modern criticism and application of ethical theory will help our students more accurately apply economic analysis as members of our democratic society.
Facilitator – Lilli Bing			

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Blue Room 111	Dr. John Bell <i>Secondary Math / Electives' Faculty</i>	Five Months, Endless Stories: A Study of an African American History Elective	This study explores the experiences of eighth-grade students and their instructor in an elective course that examines American history through African American perspectives. The course integrates pivotal historical events with African American narratives to enrich understanding of national development. Data were collected from student-generated artifacts produced during formative and summative assessments, in addition to reflective entries extracted from student course journals.
	Megan Miller <i>Secondary Social Studies Faculty</i> Jillian Miley <i>Secondary Language Arts Faculty</i>	When ELA and Civics Intertwine: A Cross-Curricular Collaboration in Middle School Holocaust Studies	Teaching middle school students about the Holocaust is an undeniably complex task that demands both historical accuracy and emotional sensitivity. This session explores how a cross-curricular collaboration between 7th-grade ELA and Civics classes can help students engage with such a painful history through a culturally responsive, student-centered lens. Using qualitative reflection and classroom artifacts, the study examines how emphasizing individual stories, civic understanding, and cross-curricular collaboration supports students in confronting prejudice while centering hope. Through this symbiotic partnership of the humanities, we present a model for educating about injustice that is both rigorous and deeply human.
Facilitator – Reese Allen-Rutledge			

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 136	Dr. Kristina Belvin <i>Elementary Faculty, 4-5 Learning Community</i>	Studying My Practice: A Teacher Inquiry into Vocabulary Growth in Fourth Grade	As a fourth-grade English Language Arts teacher at P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School, I have observed that my students often struggle to retain and apply new vocabulary, even when using a structured program like CCC Vocabulary. This inquiry explores how instructional adjustments, such as adding morphology-focused mini-lessons and integrating authentic word study routines, might strengthen students' understanding and use of Greek and Latin roots. Grounded in reflection and classroom data, this study examines how intentional, research-informed changes to vocabulary instruction can enhance students' language growth and support my development as a reflective practitioner.
	Angie Flavin <i>Secondary ELA Faculty</i> Michael Poole <i>Secondary ELA Faculty</i>	Background Knowledge done Right: How to Truly Enhance Student Understanding of New Topics.	Participants will hear about a variety of methods to build background knowledge by introducing and enhancing unfamiliar topics to middle schoolers before they engage in reading a fictional piece centered on the topic.
Facilitator – Catherine Walker			

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 133	Lisette Monzon Paz <i>Secondary World Languages Faculty</i> Han Zheng <i>UF-COE Doctoral Candidate ESOL & Bilingual Education</i>	Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Through Digital Game-Based Learning in the Spanish Classroom	<p>This presentation examines how digital game-based learning (DGBL) supports vocabulary acquisition and student engagement in a high school Spanish classroom. Using Gimkit, we observed how varied game modes sustain interest and promote repeated retrieval and meaningful exposure to target vocabulary. A key shift in the project involved moving from teacher-created games to a model in which students designed their own Gimkit activities. Early findings suggest that student-generated games increase learner agency, deepen vocabulary processing, and strengthen peer collaboration. The presentation also features student reflections and practical strategies for teachers seeking to integrate play-based DGBL into language instruction.</p>
	Caley Lape <i>Elementary Faculty, K-1 Learning Community</i>	From Play to Performance: Using Quizizz to Prepare Kindergarteners for the STAR Early Literacy Assessment	<p>This teacher inquiry examines how developmentally appropriate test preparation can improve kindergarteners' confidence and performance on the STAR Early Literacy Assessment. Using Quizizz, a gamified learning app, students practiced metacognitive strategies and test-like questions over four weeks. Data showed all 20 students made growth, with 85% meeting end-of-year benchmarks. The findings suggest that playful, intentional, and reflective test preparation can enhance assessment readiness without sacrificing developmentally appropriate instruction. This study underscores the value of growth mindset, metacognition, and technology in supporting young learners' success in state-mandated testing environments.</p>
Facilitator – Amanda Ortiz			

Discussion Session 2 – Secondary Building 1st Floor

2:20 – 3:10

Room	Presenters	Topic	Abstract
First Floor Green Room 130	Jennifer Bennett <i>Secondary CTE Faculty – Blueprint, Entrepreneurship</i>	More Than Just a T-Shirt Class: Rigor, Relationships, and Joy in CTE	This session highlights best practices for fostering student engagement through hands-on, student-driven projects. Participants will explore strategies to help learners stay organized, collaborate effectively, and take ownership of their work. Emphasis will be placed on creating adaptable approaches that can be implemented across disciplines, supporting both motivation and meaningful learning. Attendees will leave with practical ideas to increase participation, enhance collaboration, and promote deeper engagement in their classrooms, along with tools to help students manage projects successfully and build skills that transfer beyond the school environment.
	Dr. Jamie Burg <i>Secondary CTE Faculty – Modern Music, Entrepreneurship</i>	The Influence of Interpersonal Relationships within Popular Music Learning Environments Rooted in Non-formal Learning	Given that popular music is authentically learned in a non-formal environment among peers (Green, 2002), it is important to consider how student success can be influenced by interpersonal relationships among peers and their teachers. The purpose of this multiple case study was to consider how participants described the influence of interpersonal relationships on students' musical achievement. Four modern music programs were individually studied, considering both teacher and student perspectives. A cross-case analysis was completed to reveal key themes including empowerment, negotiation, and authentic learning. These themes demonstrate the central role of relationships and how they impact student-driven music learning experiences.
Facilitator – Heidi Harriss			