Emerging Scholars in Equity: Community Conversations

Research to Practice

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IUPUI
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GREAT LAKES EQUITY CENTER

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Our Moderator

Timberly Baker, Ph.D.

Research Associate,

The Equity Project at Indiana University ,

Bloomington, Indiana

Presenting Scholars

- Cassandra Gray, Ed. D.
- James Kigamwa, Ph. D.
- Gwendolyn J. Kelley, Ph. D.
- Rosiline Floyd, Ph. D.

Our Goal

- Provide a forum for a group of new scholars who have focused their work on the education of students of color to:

  - Present their dissertation findings to an audience of pre-service educators, practitioners, other scholars in the field of education, and concerned community members

  - Provide a foundation for an interactive exchange of ideas about issues of equity

Overview of Presentations

- Major Findings from Literature Review

- Purpose of the Study

- Participants

- Methodology

- Key Findings

- Conclusions

- Implications for Practice

- Recommendations for Future Research

Cassandra D. Gray, Ed. D.
Oakland City University, 2011

INDIANA THIRD GRADE READING ISTEP+ SCORES COMPARISONS IN A PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO A PUBLIC ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

Major findings from Literature Review

- Federally mandated desegregation and compliance did not eliminate discriminatory practices for many African American students.

- Desegregation measures failed to close the achievement gap among African American students in urban schools and in poverty stricken areas (Thattai, 2001).

- The charter school movement was promoted to provide more opportunities for at-risk urban students.

- The push for charter schools has been contentious.

- Traditional public schools proponents have argued that their mission is to service all students and that charter schools will not be able to fulfill that mandate (Barr, Sadovnik, & Visconti, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in academic achievement in reading between a traditional elementary school and a public charter school program.

Participants

- Two schools were selected in a large urban district in the southwest region of the state.

- Lafayette School: Located downtown in a southwest Indiana city. The school served K-8 students, with a total student population of 283 students

- Jefferson Academy: Located on the north eastside in a southwest Indiana city. The school served K-5 students, with a total student population of 243 students.

Table 3.1

Demographics by Ethnicity for Lafayette School and Jefferson Academy

Schools	Black	White	Multiracial	Hispanic	Asian
Lafayette School	57%	26%	15%	2%	0%
Jefferson Academy	81%	4%	14%	1%	0%

Table 3.2

Free and Reduced Lunch for Lafayette School and Jefferson Academy

School	Paid	Reduced	Free
Lafayette School	5%	6%	89%
Jefferson Academy	24%	13%	63%

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Methodology

- For Triangulation of data, three reference points were used: English/language arts ISTEP+ scale scores at third grade schools, two interviews from the schools' principals and four surveys from the third grade teachers at each school.

- Statistical data analysis was conducted on 3rd grade ISTEP+ English/language arts scale scores using PASW Statistics GradPack 18.

- The interviews were launched by email in which the principals responded to them.

- Four online surveys from Zoomerang.com were deployed to the four third grade teachers.

Key Findings

- There was no significant difference between the two schools in how the schools prepared students at the primary grades for reading, and the null hypothesis was retained.

- Differences noted in programs components included:
  - **Traditional School Reading Program**
    - Used basal reading text for grades K, 1, 2, and 3 to prepare students for reading at the primary grades.
    - Implemented tiered reading blocks for K, 1, 2, and 3 to prepare students for reading at the primary grades.
    - Assessments were as follows for the primary students: DIBELS, Acuity, and tests from the basal tests.
  - **Charter Reading Program**
    - Implemented scripted reading programs for grades K, 1, 2, and 3 to prepare students for reading at the primary grades.
    - Implemented Response-to-Intervention (RTI) for grades K, 1, 2, and 3 to prepare students for reading at the primary grades.
    - Assessments were as follows for the primary students: DIBELS, Acuity, and tests from NWEA.

Conclusion

- The mean for the schools showed a slight difference:
    - Lafayette School: 404.0667
    - Jefferson Academy: 429.2833

- However, there was no significant difference between the two schools in how the schools prepared students at the primary grades for reading,

    Both schools:

    - Different methods for preparing the students for reading.

    - Different instructional methods.

    - Prepared the students with SBRR instructional methods. However, teachers did not indicate according to surveys that they differentiated instruction to meet the needs of at-risk students.

    - Triangulated assessments for the students in reading to impact student achievement.

- In sum, the charter school was not outperforming the traditional public school in student achievement, with like demographics, in the area of reading at third grade.

Implications for Practice

Implications for the practice should be as follows:

1. Teach core reading programs with fidelity and provide teachers with the resources needed to improve reading instruction.

2. Create more flexible groupings among students in reading and limit the number of students in that group to make reading groups smaller per class size and teacher-student ratio should be observed.

3. Professionally develop teachers in scientifically-based reading research practices (SBRR).

4. Help school leaders connect with the student's cultures in which they serve.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendation for Future Research are as follows:

1. Conduct a longitudinal study yearly to determine if charter schools are impacting student achievement.

2. Make sure the dominant culture has leaders that are reflected in the school community that do not conflict with cultural competency.

3. The qualitative component of this research design should be expanded for future use.

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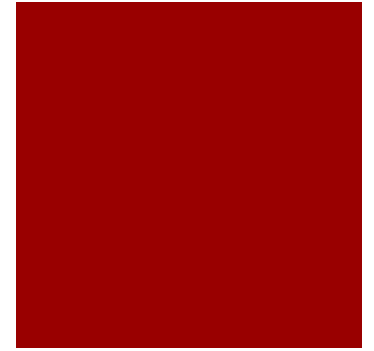
Moderator Reflections

James C. Kigamwa, Ph. D.
Indiana University, 2012

Negotiating English Language Development and Heritage Language Maintenance: One Family's Story.

(From the dissertation: HERITAGE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE AMONG AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE US: A CASE OF THREE FAMILIES.)

Major findings from Literature Review

- Bourdieu (1991:57) " … one cannot save the value of a competence (language) unless one saves the market…"

- Language shift is a sociolinguistic term for when members of a minority language community adopt a majority language as their vehicle of communication. (Appel & Muysken, 1987).

- Complete shift takes at most three generations (Fishman, 1991; Portes & Shauffler, 1994). Shifts are difficult to reverse (Fishman, 1991). Shifts reflect changes in social and cultural values (Crawford, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

- Set out to investigate acquisition and maintenance of heritage languages among children of African immigrants in the US.

- Determine tensions associated with parents' development of English language proficiency while maintaining their heritage language.

- Implications of the language shift to families and educators.

Participants

- This family is drawn from a larger study of three families. (Parents, Children, and Grandparent.)

- Permanent Resident immigrants from a (then) Francophone Central African country (Rwanda) in the late 1990s. (Changed: Lang. of Instruction from French to English October, 2008.)

- At migration parents were proficient speakers of French, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Swahili (father)

- Needed to learn English – fast!

- The children were born in the US.

Methodology

- Qualitative study – using ethnographic methods in a multiple case study.

- Data Collection
    - Interviews with parents
    - Observations (home and in public)
    - Focus groups with children
    - Family focus groups

- Data Analysis
    - Interviews recorded
    - Interviews Transcribed
    - Codes assigned using AtlasTi software
    - Salient themes identified.

Key Findings

- **Siblings had varied HL experiences (Changing home environment)**
  - The home language environment tilted quickly towards English as the older girl progressed through early elementary school. Parents were also learning English. "… the older was speaking English, the younger one followed …" (Parents also followed!)
- **Parents' use of HL in covert communication**
  - Three languages at play in this family, conversations with:
    - With Grandma were in Rwandese
    - With Children were in English
    - Between parents were in Kinyarwanda and sometimes French
  - Children complained that HL was used to 'isolate' them or to discuss consequences.

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Key Findings (continued)

- **HL Gains at Home were Lost as children began School**
  - "… (she) was okay in Rwandese … (until) she started school."
  - "… my older kid, when she was little I spoke in Kinyarwanda because I didn't know English. So, under three years old, she was okay in Kinyarwanda … (until) she started school…"

- **Ascribed bilingualism 'burden'**
  - "… what other languages do you speak?..." (RFamilyGirl 2)
  - "… since you are from another place (you) are supposed to have some other special techniques (languages) …" (CFamilyGirl1).

- **Parents' resigned to Language shift. (Helpless!)**
  - "… in South Bend, there are so many (Rwandese but) … they don't speak Kinyarwanda … they dance to Kinyarwanda (music) … but their children cannot speak the language..

Conclusion

- Start of school marks the beginning of 'accelerated' HL loss for children as English proficiency develops. Need for Alertness.

- Some teachers and students assume children are bilingual/multilingual. This imposes a bilingualism 'burden'/expectation on children.

- Parents conversing among themselves and with grandma in HL is not adequate for children to acquire HL. Language has to be intentionally directed at children for them to develop HL.

- Children seemed to associate the practice of parents' switching from English to HL to obscure meaning in conversation with negative consequences or imminent rebuke.

Implications for Home Language Practice

- Parents should be more deliberate about maintaining the using of the HL at home when children start going to school.

- Parents should not use the HL to obscure meaning in conversations

- Parents should not use HLs to reprimand their children. Practice reproving or assertive correcting in English. ☺

Implications for Culturally Responsive Practice

- Encourage children to celebrate and value their HLs:
  - Celebrate World Day of Languages (February, 21st.)
  - How? Give an assignments on translation of common words to English (greetings, names of items, etc.).

- Teachers should determine early if children speak their HL proficiently and if they don't teachers should avoid setting any expectations for bilingual practice.

- Teachers are encouraged to invite parents to school if they would like to benefit from immigrant multicultural experiences. I've been invited to my child's class.

- Teachers should (where possible) discuss with parents the importance of bilingualism and encourage development of HL in addition to other foreign languages.
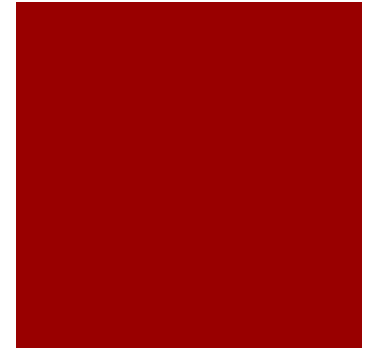
Recommendations for Future Research

- What is the correlation between academic achievement and heritage language ability among (African) immigrant children in the different K-12 grades? *(Could lead to stronger case for HL dev.)*

- How do late-teens/young adults feel about their ability/inability to speak their HL? *(Findings will advice parents on how their children will feel about HL loss 10 years later.)*

- What strategies can schools/teachers engage in promoting appreciation of HLs among their students and parents? (Raising the 'market' value.)

- To what extent do concerns about children's English language development among parents contribute to language practices that favor the shift to English?

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Moderator Reflections

Gwendolyn J. Kelley, Ph. D.
Indiana State University, May 2012

HOW DO PRINCIPALS' BEHAVIORS FACILITATE OR INHIBIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURALLY RELEVANT LEARNING COMMUNITY?

Major findings from Literature Review

- Subtle and overt bias influence how educators meet the needs of their students.

- There still remains an uneasiness about discussing issues related to equity, race, and the influence of teacher beliefs on academic achievement.

- A growing body of work (*theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative*) defines the traits and practices educators need to embrace becoming culturally proficient in working with non-white students.

- Culturally responsive learning environments can be developed when there is a deliberate focus spearheaded by effective principal expectations.
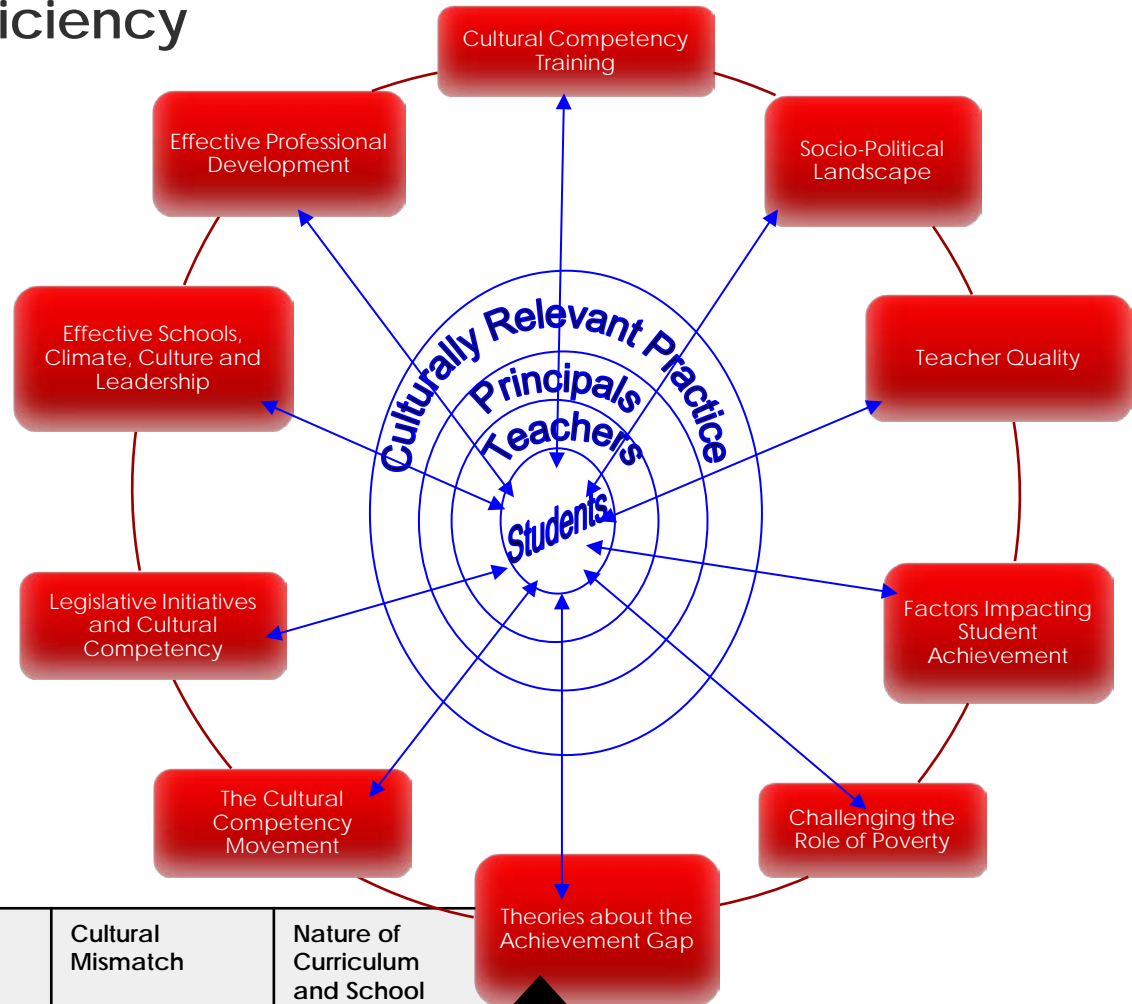
A Circle of Learning for Understanding about Facets of Cultural Proficiency

About this Model

The topics explored in the literature review of this study were varied, but they all brought clarity and understanding to components of what being culturally proficient means.

This model is based on a design presented by John Henrik Clark and Kaba Kamene (Kamene, 1998), who believed in teaching and learning in a circle. In a circular pattern of thinking, speaking or learning, one begins by looking at a key premise and then explores aspects of it, but always returning to the key idea.

Rather than a linear approach, which is a more European way of developing an argument, this method is very similar to a wheel with a hub at the center with spokes that connect to the outer frames.

Cultural Competency Training

Socio-Political Landscape

Effective Professional Development

Effective Schools, Climate, Culture and Leadership

Teacher Quality

Culturally Relevant Practice

Principals

Teachers

Students

Factors Impacting Student Achievement

Legislative Initiatives and Cultural Competency

The Cultural Competency Movement

Challenging the Role of Poverty

Theories about the Achievement Gap

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Cultural Deficit Model	Racially Integrated Schools	Stereotype Threat	Cultural Mismatch	Nature of Curriculum and School
Pedagogical Practices of Teachers	Language Acquisition	Cognitive Dissonance	The Reality of Racial Issues	Whiteness, Power, and Privileges, and Implication for Educators
Dominance	Micro-aggression	Equity Traps		

Purpose of the Study

- To determine how principals' behaviors facilitate or contribute to the development of a culturally relevant learning environment

- To determine the principal's role in creating a culturally relevant learning environment

Participants

- From a pool of principals from 316 schools with a 50% or greater non-white population in the state, 12 principals were chosen.

- Selection Criteria included:
    - 3 years experience or more as administrator at school
    - 50% or greater non-white students population
    - An overall upward academic data trend

- Participant profiles:
    - 4 African American Principals – 3 Women; 1 Male
    - 8 White Principals – 5 Females; 3 White Males
    - 6 Large city, 5 Urban Fringe, 1 Mid-sized City

Methodology

- Principals were contacted by phone to set up face-to-face interviews throughout the state.

- Interviews lasted an average of one hour

- As a qualitative study, interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed.

- As major themes emerged, participants provided feedback to validate findings

Key Findings

- **Five Major Themes Emerged:** Principals in the study demonstrated the following behaviors:

  1. Having high expectations for all (6 Sub-themes)

  2. Developing a sense of community among staff and students (7 Sub-themes)

  3. Using strategic analysis of data and monitoring/evaluation of staff (5 Sub-themes)

  4. Providing professional development that includes cultural diversity training (6 Sub-themes)

Key Findings

5. Building awareness and knowledge about cultural competency   (11 Sub-themes)

- Awareness of need

- Concern about staff demographics

- Reflective practices

- PD opportunities

- African American males needs addressed

- ELL needs addressed

- Caring connections

- "Othermothering" triatis

- Willing to have frank conversations

- Different levels of awareness

Conclusion

Based on findings from the principals interviewed:

- Principals are a vital factor in promoting change in a school's culture and climate.

- These principals possessed many skills ascribed to effective principals based on best practice research.

- Principals were aware of a need to address culturally responsive practices and they displayed varying degrees of understanding about how to create a culturally responsive learning environment.

- Based on recognized continuums, none of the schools represented in the study had reached a high degree of proficiency in demonstrating culturally responsive practices.

Implications for Practice

1. Schools district must implement and monitor effective **policy, strategies, and practices** to ensure all students receive equitable educational opportunities, resources, and outcomes from teachers who are culturally proficient.

2. Principals must **receive training and support from their district** to implement and monitor culturally relevant policies, procedures, and practices.

3. Principals **must develop a frame of reference** to determine how culturally aware they are and be able to assess their own level of cultural proficiency.

4. Principals **must stay current on literature and research** that helps them to develop understandings about cultural proficiency.

Implications for Practice

5. Principals must **understand what deficit-model thinking is** and how it impacts teacher expectations and student learning.

6. Principals must **passionately "talk the talk" and "walk the walk'** of cultural proficiency as a model to their staff

7. Professional development for teachers must **be deliberately designed not to produce feelings of guilt, but provide understandings and background knowledge**.

8. Principals and teachers must **receive practical strategies** to implement and monitor the use of culturally relevant instruction, materials, and practices.

Implications for Practice

9. Principals must insure that students **learn about people from their own heritage** who have can serve as role models of achievement and the ability to overcome challenges.

10. Principals must ensure that teachers **balance instruction about global cultures with the including instruction related to the cultures of the students** in their classrooms, because both are important.

11. Every school should have **designated curriculum specialists** who help teachers analyze data and plan specific interventions for individual students who need support, in addition to focusing on the needs of each sub-group within a school.

12. **Teacher evaluations** must contain indicators on a rubric scale that describe levels of cultural proficiency.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Increase the number of studies** on the role of principals in creating culturally responsive environments.
2. **Add the voices** of teachers, students, and parents to studies to strengthen understandings
3. **Analyze how other states' plans** comply with state legislation related to cultural competency training.
4. **Use cultural audits** and their feedback to produce new understandings.
5. **Further validate the themes and sub-themes** generated from this study by creating an inventory for individual principals to use and reflect on their practices.

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Moderator Reflections

Rosiline D. Floyd, Ph. D.
Indiana State University, 2009

YES WE CAN: THE IMPACT MEMBERSHIP IN BLACK GREEK SORORITIES HAS ON THE EXPERIENCE AND PERSISTENCE OF BLACK WOMEN STUDENTS AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Major findings from Literature Review

- Black women represent the fastest growing demographic at PWIs, yet only 46% graduate

- Black students attending PWIs struggle with adjusting to an culturally different, academically challenging and socially alienating environment.

- BGLO membership positively correlates with interpersonal relationships, social support networks, mentoring, and racial identity development on PWIs.

- Historically Black Greek sororities provided an environment where Black women could participate in community service, build friendships and develop leadership skills separate and distinct from White male, White women and Black male(Bonner and Patton)

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this study was to explore the impact membership in Black Greek sororities has on the experiences of Black women students at 4-year predominantly White institutions. Specifically, this study will addresses how these relationship impact persistence.

Participants

- The participants were 15 Black women, in their third or fourth year of matriculation, at three predominantly White 4-year institutions, in the Midwest.

Methodology

- Demographic surveys

- Semi-structured interviews

- Using these frameworks as lens for collecting data:
    - Critical Race Theory
    - Black Feminist Thought
    - Nigrescence

Key Findings

- Black women live between the duality of oppressions based on race and gender.
  - **Sally contended**," At a predominantly White institution, you are reminded of race everyday."
  - **Cassie elaborated**, "I never just wake up and think I am a woman. I am not a man. But I know I am Black."

- Social and cultural differences shadowed by race continued to impact the experience of the Black women at PWIs .

- Race and racism in a racilized space

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Key Findings

- *Membership seemed to ameliorate some of the stress of Black women students attending PWIs*

- A Place of our own

- Personal enrichment and academic enrichment

- Leadership development

- Academic and social integration

- Historical perspective

- Without my sorors

Conclusion

- Race and racism continues to significantly impact the experience of Black women students at PWIs .

- The sisterhood of Black Greek sorority membership helped to mitigate the circumstances

- Membership in Black Greek sororities increased self-esteem and self-beliefs, enriched academic achievement and developed a sense of community, all positive indicators of persistence.

Implications for Practice

- Supporting BGLOs is critical to all stakeholders including: faculty, administration, students, and alumni chapters.

- Administration increase inclusiveness with representations: websites, videos part of Pan-Hellenic

- Faculty should on engaging Black students and be mindful of biases and discriminatory practices.

- BLGOs provide the majority of culturally relevant programming for students of color on campus. Administration should increase support with both attendance and funding when necessary.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Universities should disaggregate data among Black students and to study the experiences of Black women as their own entity.

2. Conduct a longitudinal study investigating the experiences of women who successfully matriculated and those who failed to persist at PWIs is needed.

3. Further investigation of the intersection of race and gender for Black women at PWIs.

4. Investigate the role of race as an impeder to Black student success.

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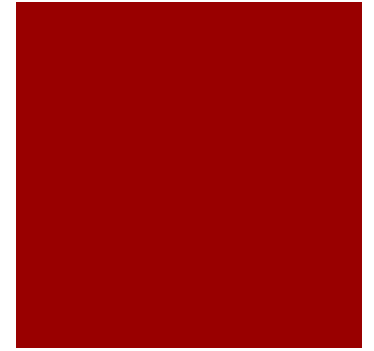
Moderator Reflections

Common Threads

- What new knowledge was gained from the studies?

- What is the connection between reading, language development, school leadership, and post-secondary success?

- What major themes run throughout all of the presentations?

- What practices may require re-thinking about how we operate in the educational arena?

Thank you for your support

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IUPUI School of Education

Indianapolis, IN

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