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Teacher-Scholars as classroom leaders: The power of inquiry

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Community of Scholars Proposal

Publication Title:

Teacher-Scholars as classroom leaders: The power of inquiry

Abstract:

The graduate special education programs affirm the competence of every individual, equal access to quality education, and social justice as the critical tenets of the program's inclusive philosophy (Beliefs, Special Education Division, 2015). How do we prepare teachers to be leaders of their classrooms, providing a quality education for **all**? There are many "strategies" available to special education teachers; inquiry provides educators a means to enrich their teaching by collecting practice-based evidence of the efficacy of their instruction.

The design and implementation of an inquiry project based on classroom practices is a requirement in educator licensure graduate programs. The purpose of this teacher action research is to deepen connections between theory and practice as well as reinforce and expand knowledge of teaching skills and instructional strategies to support the inclusion of all students in classrooms (Stringer, 2014). Engaging in inquiry promotes the teacher candidates' identity as a classroom leader and scholar.

A *Teacher-Scholar Showcase* is an essential component of the graduate Special Education practicums. The showcase is a scholarly community that engages teacher candidates by highlighting their inquiry projects, providing opportunity to disseminate their scholarship, receive and respond to feedback from peers, and become comfortable in communicating results. The Showcase is open to a larger community, including family, peers and faculty members.

Teacher-scholars with special education faculty will present their scholarship in the format of a poster session. This session demonstrates their inquiry into their own teaching, and their growing identity as a classroom leader and teacher-scholar.

References:

Belief and Mission statement of the Special Education Division (2015).
Stringer, E. (2014). *Action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Description for publication in the program

Teachers are scholars. This presentation highlights teacher candidates and alum of the Graduate Special Education licensure programs by presenting their action-research inquiry

projects completed during practicum. Faculty will discuss the *Teacher-Scholar Showcase* that is infused into the practicum, creating a scholarly community that engages teacher candidates in the dissemination of their scholarship. Current teacher candidates and alum will present their scholarship utilizing a highly interactive “poster session” format giving the teacher-scholars another opportunity to disseminate their scholarship as classroom leaders.

Names of all the presenters and their affiliations: Lesley University seminar students, current and former. Dr. Gail Cahill, Dr. Beverley Evans, Dr. Barbara Govendo, and Dr. Linda Lengyel, Lesley University faculty. [if selected, we will provide a handout with teacher candidate and alum names, inquiry questions, and abstracts]

Format: Paper presentation formatted as a poster session. One room needed for this presentation.

Note: If selected, we would like to request a session time late in the day so that presenters who work in the schools could come closer to the end of the school day.

We hope that future and current seminar students would be encouraged by their professors to come to be inspired by other University students!