
Mid-Western Educational Researcher

Volume 30, Issue 4

Editors' Notes

Best wishes for the new year! We hope you found time to enjoy family and friends during the holiday season. We are pleased to share Issue 4 of the *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*.

Feature Article

Denise K. Frazier of Purdue University Northwest, with *Engaging High Ability Students in Literacy: A University and Elementary School Transformational Partnership*, examines how a service learning literacy course impacted preservice teacher perceptions of intermediate-aged high-ability children in a mid-high poverty school, and how the educators in the partnering school viewed the experience. Results indicated that after the service learning program, preservice teachers better understood how to lead a novel study while challenging and mentoring gifted students, leading to a university-school partnership that was mutually beneficial to both collaborators.

Special Section: Institutional Research

Tasha Dannenbring from the South Dakota Board of Regents served as editor of a special section on institutional research for *MWER*. In her introduction, she describes how institutional research has evolved to assume an increased leadership role in critical areas, including strategic planning and reporting, institutional effectiveness, predictive analytics, data governance, and accreditation, and introduces articles that showcase work done by institutional researchers across the country concerning these critical functions.

With their article *Infusing Data Campus-Wide to Drive Institutional Change*, Meridith Wentz, Amanda Brown, and Jeff Sweat of the University of Wisconsin-Stout examine Stout's strategies for data use in the institutional planning process in response to growing demands from external and internal stakeholders. UW-Stout, a recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2001, continues to use the Baldrige framework and criteria in their balanced scorecard, to gather data and help the institution make data-driven positive changes.

Mark A. Byrd of Kennesaw State University, Laura S. Woodward and Naida Simon of Wayne State University, and Song Yan of Oakland University share the background and details about Wayne State's Graduation and Retention dashboard in their article *Analytical Collaboration for Student Graduation Success: Relevance of Analytics to Student Success in Higher Education*. Using a dashboard available to a variety of personnel across campus departments contributed to Wayne State's effectiveness in improving graduation rates of students facing academic and financial challenges, leading to an increase in its graduation rate from a low of 26% to 47%.

Building Institutional Research Knowledge and Skills Through Communities of Practice Networks by Rebecca S. Sheppard of Camden Community College and Monica Kerrigan of Rowan University explore the impact of participating in an Institutional Research (IR) affinity group by a group of community college personnel. They suggest that communities of practice,

such as the IR affinity group, can aid the development and maintenance of some of the skills and knowledge related to the three tiers of organizational intelligence in the field of IR, and highlight how social network analysis can be used to explore communities of practice and approaches for professional development.

Commentary

With her commentary *Re-Thinking the Teacher-Student Relationship from a Soka Perspective*, Nozomi Inukai of DePaul University is likely to introduce many readers to the Japanese theory of *soka*, or value-creating education. Soka not only re-conceptualizes “good teaching” as guiding students to apply learned knowledge to create meaning, or valuable outcomes, but also identifies a key characteristic of “good teachers” as the attitude of mutual growth between teachers and students. Inukai provides educators with a new framework for reflection on the teacher’s role in relation to students.

Book Review

Daniel J. Quinn, an independent scholar, reviews *Beyond Testing: 7 Assessments of Students & Schools More Effective Than Standardized Tests* by Deborah Meier and Matthew Knoester. He finds that they provide well-defined alternatives for assessing student learning at the school level while making the case that standardized testing has been misused. The book provides concise and useful descriptions of seven possible alternative assessments, and particularly argues the need for a flipped model, a more democratic (bottom-up) approach, to school reform, which could enable communities to have more informed conversations about the type of learning taking place in schools.

Reviewer Acknowledgements 2018

The editors of the *Mid-Western Educational Researcher* would like to thank those who reviewed manuscripts between January 2018 and December 2018.

Opportunities with *MWER*

As always, we continue to look for strong scholarship, both quantitative and qualitative, and extend an invitation to you to submit your work for publication, to serve as a reviewer for the journal, or to do both. We do our best to continue to offer a timely review and publication process. Please see our [information for authors](#) and [information for reviewers](#). Let us know if you have any questions.

MWER Editors

Debra Miretzky, Co-Managing Editor
 Sharon Stevens, Co-Managing Editor
 Chase Catalano, Editor
 Krista Bowers-Sharpe, Editor
 Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL
 Mahrya Carncross, Editor
 University of Iowa



MWER1316@gmail.com