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A report of action research projects by teacher education candidates in the School of Education at Baylor University in collaboration with clinical instructors, mentor teachers, and Baylor faculty on PDS campuses in Waco ISD and Midway ISD as well as at partner schools throughout the area.

**A Research
Symposium**

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Virtual Action Research Presentations

Phonics and Fluency: Key to Comprehension?

Primary Researcher(s)

Vanessa Alfaro, Intern - Baylor University

Jennifer Garza, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Bell's Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Bianca Ochoa, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

After observing my third grade ESL students, I noticed that I had three students who struggle with spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension. Fluency is defined by accuracy, automaticity, and prosody and is crucial to making connections and comprehending text. Through oral reading, it is easy to see if the student has word recognition, appropriate phrasing, and intonation. After conducting a pre-assessment, I provided daily direct instruction for 20 minutes in a small group setting. The activities included sorts and mini lessons for the sounds of vowel digraphs, silent e, and short vowel sounds. The purpose of this research was to implement daily phonics instruction to see if it would increase the students' fluency and comprehension.

The Language of COVID-19

Primary Researcher(s)

Elizabeth Benton, Intern - Baylor University

Susan Butler, BA, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
Lee Anne Brannon, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Due to the effects of COVID-19 in school districts, I conducted interviews with multiple language teachers around WacoISD and MidwayISD to get their opinions and reactions about teaching during a pandemic. Mostly I am looking at the differences between Midway and Waco because Midway is a one-to-one district and Waco is not. There were a list of questions that I asked each teacher to answer about teaching in the pandemic compared to teaching before the pandemic.

The Effect of Technological Tools on Student Engagement

Primary Researcher(s)

Christian Box, Intern - Baylor University

Nancy Patel, MBA, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
Justina Ogado, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

With technology becoming more prevalent in the educational environment, I wanted to see if the use of technological tools has an effect on student engagement. Student engagement is an aspect of the learning environment that all educators try to improve and maintain. In this presentation, I analyze the data collected from engagement forms of lessons that vary in using and not using technology. Through this analysis, I hope to determine if technological tools show an obvious effect on engagement and see if there are specific kinds of technology that elicit such engagement. Parallels between lessons that use technological tools and traditional lessons will be explored.

Sight Word Shuffle

Primary Researcher(s)

Brittany Bryant, Intern - Baylor University

Michelle Beam, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Bell's Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Rick Strot, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Will administering hands-on, interactive sight word activities and games to my lower students opposed to just flash cards better improve their sight word fluency and reading level? After working with my two lowest students on targeted, intensive phonics instruction the entirety of last semester, my students hardly progressed in sight word recognition and reading fluency. Our intervention activities included primarily sight word flash cards. This semester, I am using multi-modal, hands-on sight word games and activities to see if their sight word automaticity and reading level will improve simultaneously. I believe that approaching phonics in this fun way will help with retention, eliminate the intimidation factor of phonics, and produce better results.

Social Trust vs. Technology and COVID-19

Primary Researcher(s)

Emma Burnside, Intern - Baylor University

Ronald Fox, MA, Mentor Teacher - University High School, Waco ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University
Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This presentation looks at how the classroom social trust contract has been impacted by COVID-19. The presentation will take a look at how teachers are approaching COVID in their classrooms, the changes in teacher-student interactions, the impact of technology-based independent learning, and the willingness of students to complete assignments where they do and do not feel supported. The goal of this research was to compare how students perform academically when they are in a more interactive COVID classroom class than a technology-dedicated COVID classroom. Finally, this presentation will show that 90% independent and technology-based instruction is detrimental to students' ability to learn as well as the implications of this instructional format.

Increasing Student Engagement

Primary Researcher(s)

Kathryn Carnell, Intern - Baylor University

Julie Ingham, JD, Mentor Teacher - Tennyson Middle School, Waco ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

For this project, my goal was to increase the engagement and buy-in of the class material with my students. On a daily basis, I found that my students were uninterested in learning ELAR skills. I began to wonder if I could slyly convince the students that the material was worth it by using their own interests in the lessons. I created an initial Google Survey asking about their favorite topics and sent it out to each class. Then, I designed my lessons to include their responses for our argumentative lessons. For four consecutive days, I recorded student engagement, focusing primarily on a few intentionally-selected students.

Providing Resources to the Active Student

Primary Researcher(s)

Brandon Clemons, Intern - Baylor University

Ferrah Horton, BS, Mentor Teacher - Robinson High School, Robinson ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University
Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Students who are active outside the classroom are tougher than most. However, they also are sometimes the ones that need the most help. This presentation will allow us to take a look at some real time data and interviews of students who are involved in heavy extra curricular or are employed outside of school. After going through the data, we will be able to see how we as educators can become their biggest advocates as they try to navigate the balance of school and life.

High Fives for High Frequency Words

Primary Researcher(s)

Kathleen Cornell, Intern - Baylor University

Laura Alford, BSEd, Mentor Teacher – Mountainview Elementary, Waco ISD
Brandy Crowley, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

How does additional practice improve second graders' high-frequency word knowledge? In order to find an answer to my research question, I utilized the sticky note method. The sticky note method was conducted by selecting five high-frequency words for my four chosen students and writing those five high-frequency words on a sticky note. At the beginning of each week, I would conference with each student. I introduced their five words on Monday. Throughout the week, I would encourage my students to practice their words. On Thursday, I would assess and determine how many of their words they learned. I found this intervention to be successful for all of my students.

3rd Grade Engagement Through Open Ended Art Assignments During Read Alouds

Primary Researcher(s)

Rachel Crutchfield , Intern - Baylor University

Susan Mathis, BSEd , Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Melissa Cates, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a third-grade classroom, it was observed that the majority of the students had difficulty paying attention during Interactive Read Alouds. This affected the way the students performed on reading assignments. Often, they could not comprehend the text. “According to theory, research, and author Jeffery Wilhelm, creating images and mental models of what one reads is essential to comprehension.” (Palmer, R. 2005) Research was conducted in a classroom of 21 students of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Baseline data was collected through student engagement forms, observation, and anecdotal records as well as effectiveness of interventions.

I Can Choose? Evaluating the Impact of Student Choice in the Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Emily Dickey, Intern - Baylor University

Lisa Czajkowski, MS, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University
Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Students were asked to choose the method of instruction for a set amount of days and then the content of instruction for a set amount of days. There are so many different types of learners in every class with different learner styles and interests. In my research, I aimed to discover if giving students agency in the classroom would impact their content retention as well as their interest in the larger topic. I hypothesized that increasing student choice would not only increase scores but increase student interest in the topic.

Does Music Move You?

Primary Researcher(s)

Taylor Drury, Intern - Baylor University

Sherry Rogers, BEd, Mentor Teacher - Woodgate Intermediate School, Midway ISD
Joseph Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Behavior management will look different for each teacher and their classes. In PE, we have to think about how to keep more students on task at the same time. This study looks at how music in our gym affected on-task behavior, specifically following lunch. With a base line of no music in class, we slowly added music during activities that were known for more off-task behavior. As we added the music, we kept in mind that the students were used to having it during days where they had a choice of activity, rather than a specific activity. The students, in general, remained on task longer when the music was present.

Tapping Away the Distractions

Primary Researcher(s)

Margaret Duke, Intern - Baylor University

Jackie Villarreal, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In the following action research, the intern examined the various impacts on a 7th grade student whose learning is impacted due to his physical and verbal outbursts in the classroom with the implementation of a touch sensory object. Physical and verbal outbursts significantly impact the efficiency of the students' learning and social interactions with his peers. Baseline data was collected targeting frequency to determine how often the undesired behavior is occurring. Then for four weeks, the student will be given a squeeze ball when it appeared that a physical or verbal outburst was beginning. The desired results for this intervention are that the sensory object will lessen the frequency of the physical and verbal outbursts.

The Impact of Structured Small Group Instruction on Student Reading Comprehension

Primary Researcher(s)

Miranda Duncan, Intern - Baylor University

Brittney Marek, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Cesar Chavez Middle School, Waco ISD
Joseph Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

“Reading comprehension is a critical skill essential for access to the broad curriculum and long-term academic success (McNamara & Magliano, 2009). In an 8th grade inclusion ELAR class at Cesar Chavez Middle School, it was observed that students struggled with comprehension of grade-level texts. The purpose of this research was to determine whether small-group instruction with structured questioning and checks for understanding would impact reading comprehension. Small group instruction is a well-supported Tier 2 method for inclusion SPED students. The small group read the grade-level book “The Compound” by S. A. Bodeen, and data was collected through observations and student-response comprehension questions.

Engaging the Unengaged

Primary Researcher(s)

Michael Edwards, Intern - Baylor University

Teresa Nors, BS, Mentor Teacher - University High School, Waco ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In each of my senior-level economics classes there is at least one student who regularly will not engage in the lesson. For my action research project, I set out to learn more about these students in hopes of using that information to engage them in future lessons. To do so, I had all in-person students fill out an extensive survey cataloguing their future plans, likes and dislikes in the classroom, and their views on education. Additionally, for several weeks I started each lesson with an “ice-breaker” activity in order to get these students talking in class about topics they are comfortable discussing. I found that starting lessons with these activities increased engagement from the target students by allowing them to start the class discussing themselves or their interests, which not only helps me learn more about the students, but also increased engagement afterwards during the day’s lesson.

Rule Following Royalty

Primary Researcher(s)

Margaret Hallock, Intern - Baylor University

Thelma Collinsworth, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Melissa Cates, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a second-grade classroom, it was observed that keeping 22 children on task and quiet throughout the school day was very challenging. The students are primarily eight years old, meaning they are highly reward driven but also impulsive. In order to combat excessive talking while also capitalizing on students' reward driven nature, research was conducted to see if giving out a daily reward for one student at the end of each day for being the most on task would increase overall behavior. Baseline data was collected through keeping track of the number of warnings given out for talking per day as well as the number of cards flipped for talking per day. Each time a student flips their card it is five minutes of walking laps at recess. Data was collected for three weeks after implementation and showed overall class improvement in behavior.

Analyzing Word Problems using WINK and WIK

Primary Researcher(s)

Natasha Handel, Intern - Baylor University

Jessica Recarte, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Bell's Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Bianca Ochoa, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

I am in a fourth-grade Gifted and Talented cluster class, and I noticed that although my students knew how to compute basic arithmetic, they struggled with two-step problems. There are many two-step word problems on the STAAR Mathematics test, so after observing the class, I chose four students I believed would benefit from the What I Need to Know (WINK) and What I Know (WIK) strategy. I conducted daily small group intervention by practicing identifying hidden questions, locating given information, and accurately solving word problems. This research aimed to provide selected students another strategy to use on any word problem and help organize their thinking.

Technology Review: Virtual Modes of Communication

Primary Researcher(s)

Madison Hatfield, Intern - Baylor University

Kim Landon, MA, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
LeeAnne Brannon, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The research will explore a 2 methods of virtual communication that we most commonly use in class (FlipGrid and schoology assignment), and the goal is to support communication through times of remote learning. After the method is used then the students will be provided with a feedback form. The form will include questions that ask about engagement, clarity, audio quality, functionality of the program, accessibility, and what all you could do with the method (present ideas, discuss, chat, etc).

Token to Greatness

Primary Researcher(s)

Cianka Haynes , Intern - Baylor University

Sydney Gutierrez, BEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary , Midway ISD
Kristen McBee, BEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary , Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Token economies have been found to increase student performance and motivation. It is a management strategy that rewards students when they display appropriate behavior. The use of reinforcing tokens, given when the desired behavior is presented, can later be turned in for a backup reinforcer (Robacker, Rivera, & Warren, 2016). The implementation of this token reward system was used to increase a 4th grade student’s engagement and work completion. For the system to be effective, the backup reinforcers needed to be desirable to my attention-motivated student. Her options included lunch with the teacher, working next to the teacher, or prizes. This intervention was successful for the student, improving the quality and completion of work as a result.

Discussion Vs. Debate in a Social Studies Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Alex Hill, Intern - Baylor University

Sarah Baranowski, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD

Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Discussions are used in social studies classrooms to assess a student's ability to think deeper about a topic and draw their own conclusions. But, it seems the more structured and graded discussions have turned into students speaking solely for the purpose of getting checked off the list for participation. However, when classes participate in debates, great points come up and students fight over who gets to talk next. This study will help teachers determine the engagement level of both discussion and debate in order to ensure that curriculum and teaching models are being utilized in the most engaging way possible.

Motivating Students in a Third-Grade Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Emily Hitt, Intern - Baylor University

Nicole Grygar, MEd, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD

Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a third-grade classroom, it was observed that five students were consistently beginning their assignments behind the rest of the class which resulted in unfinished, missing, or lackadaisical work. Research was conducted in the classroom with two girls and three boys, four Caucasian and one African American, of similar ages, socioeconomic status, and achievement levels by implementing a sticker chart so that students could earn rewards in exchange for timely, completed assignments. Data was collected through observation using tally marks to indicate off-task behavior, engagement forms, and sticker charts to quantify the days when students successfully met expectations.

Effects of Discussion Based Learning on Students Academically and Socially

Primary Researcher(s)

Kendall Hollo, Intern - Baylor University

Beth Williams, Liberal Arts, BSED, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

During my time at Baylor, I have heard a lot about using small group and class discussion in the classroom. Many strategies that were taught are based on this discussion-based learning. My research was aimed at answering the question: Does class discussion lead students to understand content better and be more confident in social settings? This question was examined through a pre-survey, a post-survey and teacher observations during a five-week period. The results showed that students feel more confident talking to their peers after participating in classroom discussions and that students have a better understanding of content after discussing it with their classmates.

Let's Get to Work!

Primary Researcher(s)

Delaney Jansen, Intern - Baylor University

Melissa Ellis, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD
Joe Alford, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This research covered the effectiveness of a token economy to increase work completion. The student that was studied has severe issues with refusal to work and constant redirection of attention. This student is diagnosed with ADHD and ID, along with a private doctor suggesting an ODD diagnosis as well. The baseline data, as well as all other data collected by teachers and other school personnel, was very inconsistent. As the token economy was implemented, there was a slow yet steady increase of work completion behavior as well as an increase in the student's confidence in the accuracy of the work that was being completed.

Positive Feedback and Extrinsic Motivation in an English II Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Rylee Jorges, Intern - Baylor University

Alisa Keen, BS, Mentor Teacher - Waco High School, Waco ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This project explores the effect of framing feedback in a positive way within a secondary English classroom. Instead of drawing attention to the students who are off task, it could be beneficial to redirect the class's attention to the students who are exhibiting the desired class behavior. Additionally, students may be more motivated to seek out positive praise.

The baseline assessment showed moderately high engagement with some high and low outliers. Class participation was moderate with a few high and low outliers. By the end of the study, both engagement and participation increased, and there was less variance in both areas.

Improving Engagement Among Low Performing Students in Literacy Stations

Primary Researcher(s)

Annie Lott, Intern - Baylor University

Amy Becker, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Melissa Cates, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In my first-grade classroom, I observed my Tier 2, Tier 3, and struggling students' engagement during literacy stations was lacking. This affected student performance on literacy assignments. According to Rosebush (DSRF - 2019), "Visuals allow time for language processing" (p. 4). Research was conducted with eight students – five girls and three boys. Six are on Tier 2 or Tier 3, and two are English Language Learners. Two students are Hispanic, one is African American, and the remainder are Anglo. Baseline data was collected on literacy station engagement, work completion, and work performance. Three weeks of data collection showed improvement in engagement for visual learners, although it did not improve engagement amongst auditory learners.

Is Words Their Way the Way to Go?

Primary Researcher(s)

Candace Martens, Intern - Baylor University

Tammy Johnston, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Phonemic awareness is the foundation to learning and a student's ability to read. Current research indicates that the acquisition of phonemic awareness leads to successful reading (Carnine et al., 2017). The purpose of this research project is to examine whether the research-based method described in Words Their Way (WTW) yields the same outcome. Initial observation of the subjects—2nd grade students in McLennan County, Texas—will establish a baseline for reading comprehension. This will be followed by six weeks of small group instruction implementing the Words Their Way curriculum. At the end of the six weeks, the subjects' reading comprehension will be observed and evaluated relative to the initial assessment.

Incentives to Increase Motivation

Primary Researcher(s)

Amanda Matyastik, Intern - Baylor University

Abby Batlle, MEd, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD
Nicole Grygar, MA, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a 3rd grade classroom, it was observed that one female student was having issues with completing tasks without asking multiple questions. When an assignment is given, she would automatically come to the teacher to ask what she needed to do. The goal of my research was to give incentives to this child to motivate her to try and complete work without immediately asking for help. The research I conducted was done through observations, meetings, anecdotal records, and sticker charts. Data was collected on the effectiveness of my intervention.

Closing Literacy Gaps in a Global Pandemic

Primary Researcher(s)

Keely McIlvoy, Intern - Baylor University

Morgan Mayeux, Mentor Teacher – Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Brandy Crowley, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The purpose of this research was to track the progress of a struggling kindergarten student returning to in-person learning after a semester of virtual learning. The student's assessment data showed concerning gaps by the end of the fall, so it was suggested he switch to in-person learning. The primary focus of intervention was alphabetic awareness. The study outlines data starting with the initial letter recognition/sounds assessment taken, and it ends with the most recent assessment taken. Through intervention and literacy exposure in the classroom, this student showed great progress in both areas. Coming to school for in-person learning was exactly what this student needed, as the research shows the effect of consistent and appropriate exposure.

Implementing Time Management Tools to Enhance the Quality of Student Assignments

Primary Researcher(s)

Abby Meyer, Intern - Baylor University

Hillaree Hogg, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Melissa Cates, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In my a kindergarten class, I have become aware of students' inability to manage their time well while working in the classroom. In both small and whole group instruction, students are not fully aware of their time limits during activities because they have not yet learned the units of time. To help my students best manage their time during activities, I added in time management tools such as a countdown clock, a sand timer, and verbal reminders during phonics and math rotations. These visual and audible aids served as a reminder to the students that they have an allotted amount of time to complete their work to the best of their ability.

Lack of Engagement and the Effect of Eemote Asynchronous Learning

Primary Researcher(s)

Brady Miner, Intern - Baylor University

Clark Nelson, BS, Mentor Teacher - University High School, Waco ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

For my presentation, I investigated the lack of engagement that is being seen not just in my classroom at University High School but across the nation. The effects of the pandemic as well as asynchronous learning have caused a sustained lack of engagement that could affect schools across the country for years. I conducted this research through conversations with students as well as data found on both canvas and teams!

Improving Students' Attitude Toward Reading

Primary Researcher(s)

Anna Noland, Intern - Baylor University

Amanda Phipps, BEd, Mentor Teacher - Waco High School, Waco ISD
Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Reading is a part of every students' life and education. Some students have developed a distaste or fear of reading that hinders their success in school and in the professional world. The goal of this project was to try to improve students' attitude toward reading through variation in the types of readings and questions. Through analyzing student reaction to the reading variations and success on the different question types, I found a few key ways to encourage students to evolve their feelings towards reading. Improving students' attitude toward reading is important to ensure their success when they leave the education system.

Importance of Self-Reflection

Primary Researcher(s)

Alex Robison, Intern - Baylor University

Angela Scarborough, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD
Joseph Alford, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This study examines the impact of having one student take responsibility for their personal reward system and determine the outcome of their engagement and on-task learning during small group. Behavior management and engagement are crucial to academic growth. Having my student take responsibility and reflect on their personal performance will encourage them to engage in positive on-task learning behavior. The study includes one fourth grade resource student who has Autism. The intervention involves using a sticker chart token economy with rewards targeted to my students individual preferences. This study has proven the positive effect of self-reflection when using a token economy reward system, tailored to the individual student, and successfully decreased the problem behavior.

Ed and His Three Sounds - Using Small Group Intervention to Teach the Inflectional Ending

Primary Researcher(s)

Sadie Rodriguez, Intern - Baylor University

Jennifer Johnson Tacón, MA, Mentor Teacher - Bell's Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Bianca Ochoa, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

After observing my third-grade bilingual students read in various settings, a number of students struggled reading the suffixes of words, especially those with the -ed ending. Due to the deep orthography of English, inflectional endings challenge English Language Learners. The students were not familiar with the three different sounds produced by the -ed ending and would benefit most from targeted intervention. Following pre-assessment and direct instruction of the three -ed sounds, I conducted daily small group activities including word lists, sorts and reading passages. The intent of this research was to engage students in targeted learning to gain familiarity with the three sounds in order to improve accuracy in reading words with the -ed ending.

The Impact of Socially Distanced Learning on High School Students

Primary Researcher(s)

Courtney Schuth, Intern - Baylor University

Susan Giddings, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Waco High School, Waco ISD
Shawn Dewett, BA, Mentor Teacher - Waco High School, Waco ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

COVID has greatly impacted schools this year. Some of the changes brought about by the pandemic have been positive such as new technology tools for classrooms and more access for students, however, the limitation of effective strategies in a classroom, decreased social learning, and an increased level of stress for students has negatively impacted student learning. A majority of students have elevated levels of stress, with most of those students citing school as their primary reason for stress. This elevated level of stress can be seen in the average rate of assignment completion and the average attendance of students. These impacts will affect their academic, personal, and professional lives outside of high school.

Effective Motivation for Students with Autism

Primary Researcher(s)

Hannah Smith, Intern - Baylor University

Marianne Anderson, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary School, Midway ISD
Joseph Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The purpose of this study is to determine what preferred activity motivates a student with autism to do more work in a single class period in a self-contained classroom. Research indicates that it is “important to identify what rewards are most effective” (Kingsley Pub.). Intervention data will be taken on the preferred activity the student chooses and how much work is completed after the activity is chosen. The desired results are that the student will complete 50% of his tasks, with minimal prompting, in one class period. The iPad will not be available as a preferred activity.

Fast Fact Frenzy

Primary Researcher(s)

Addison Spence, Intern - Baylor University

Marie Miller, Elementary Education, Mentor Teacher – Bell’s Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Rick Strot, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

My purpose is to expand my student’s ability to understand complex math problems by working 10 minutes daily on foundational fast fact skills. The data shown in this presentation is taken from bi-monthly assessments that were administered in a non-threatening and encouraging environment. Throughout this research, my classroom has been focusing on growth rather than perfection. This presentation is centered around the idea of fostering a positive work environment along with repetition and consistency. All students in my classroom, regardless of educational background, were able to grow throughout their time spent dedicated to fast fact foundational practice.

Engaging the Most Reluctant Learners

Primary Researcher(s)

Caroline Stockdale, Intern - Baylor University

Betsy Berry, BS, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

For my Action Research Project, I decided to assess the correlation between the implementation of artistic activities and engagement across the classroom. I gathered data from my two 9th grade Honors English I classes, and I observed their engagement over a month-long period. By incorporating kinesthetic activities depicting characterization, plot development, and vocabulary, the students possessed a higher engagement level during their class period. I will present students’ sample work, the increased percentage scores of formative assessments, and the overall outcome following my study. After increasing the amount of artistic activities in the 9th grade classroom, the reluctant learners were much more apt to collaborate and create.

Impact of a Behavior Contract on Student Engagement and On-Task Learning

Primary Researcher(s)

Taylor Sukys, Intern - Baylor University

Lisa Hughes, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Tennyson Middle School, Waco ISD
Joseph Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In the following action research study, the educator is examining the impact a behavior contract has on student's engagement and on-task learning. Behavior management is one of the most common issues teachers face in their classrooms. (Cook) With the implementation of a behavior contract, it is anticipated that undesired behaviors will decrease over a specific amount of time. (Arwood, Williams, Long, 1974) After collecting the preintervention data and observing the student's behaviors, a contract and weekly behavior chart were implemented for a total of 5 weeks. The findings of the research project have shown an improvement in student engagement and on-task learning.

The Efficiency of Various Student Submission Motivators

Primary Researcher(s)

Hollingsworth Tiblier, Intern - Baylor University

Riley Lohr, BS, Mentor Teacher – Tennyson Middle School, Waco ISD
Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

During my time working with teachers on various campuses, I have observed a variety of attempts to motivate students to submit their assignments. Some took the positive reinforcement/reward system route while others resorted to threats and speaking of various consequences. The research I have been conducting and the data I have gathered attempt to answer the question of how to best motivate students to turn in work. Over the course of two weeks, I created 4 different lessons/assignments of similar levels of difficulty. One assignment was set as the control, with no reminders to submit work. Following that, I employed strategies consisting of writing student's names on the board who were missing work, emailing students with direct reminders, and creating a competition between class periods with the reward of a snack party if submissions reach 100%. The latter eventually proved to be the most effective, despite not being very sustainable.

Brain Break Boost

Primary Researcher(s)

Haley Winkleman, Intern - Baylor University

Kristi Fajardo, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Melissa Cates, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a kindergarten classroom, it was observed that students were struggling to focus during the ELAR block. I noticed this impacted the work students were doing because they were wiggling and distracted. According to Terado (2018), “Students are easily distracted, but regular, short breaks can help them focus, increase their productivity, and reduce their stress.” Baseline data were collected by observations on five- and six-year-old students of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Data were collected through anecdotal notes, tallies of student engagement and behavior, and observation of specific students on the increase in focus with brain break interventions. It was found that the implementation of brain breaks showed gradual improvement in the students’ behavior, focus, and work.

Presented at
National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS)
Annual Conference

Self-Paced Desmos vs. Teacher-Led Desmos

Primary Researcher(s)

Ivy Beasley, Intern - Baylor University

Lisa Painter, BS, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Rachelle Rogers, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Desmos is a free graphing and teaching tool that was adopted as a curriculum for a large suburban middle school. The focus for this research was to examine how self-paced versus teacher-paced Desmos lessons impacted student learning. The study consisted of 34 algebra I students assigned to two different class periods. Data was gathered through quizzes, anecdotal notes, and student surveys. Analysis revealed students performed better on weekly quizzes with teacher-paced lessons; however, students indicated no preference. Students reported mixed feelings about both methods of teaching including greater confidence with teacher-paced, but enjoyed finishing lessons early with self-paced.

Melodies and Mathematics: Can Music Impact Transition and Academic Performance?

Primary Researcher(s)

Abigail Bristow, Intern - Baylor University

Clarisa Gallegos, BSEd, Mentor Teacher – Bell’s Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Bianca Ochoa, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This research entails analyzation and evaluation of how student performance and engagement can be improved in our mathematics class as students transition from their lunch period to mathematics. I conducted research in a 2nd grade, bilingual classroom timing how long it takes for “target students” to become “engaged” (seated at respective tables, math books ready, and voices off) for the lesson. I assessed engagement without music and then timed students again with music incorporated. I implemented such research over a couple of weeks. Assessing instructional time saved before/after the use of music as well as monitoring student grades in those subjects, I determined if this tool is truly useful and beneficial to the classroom.

Can Discomfort be a Good Thing?: Sensitive Topics in an 8th grade U.S. History Class

Primary Researcher(s)

Mary Cade, Intern - Baylor University

Laura Schmeltekopf, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD

Neil Shanks, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Tori Smith, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

8th grade U.S. History is filled with opportunities to discuss sensitive topics regarding racial equality. Studies have offered some attention to how educators might approach these topics, but every classroom is unique. Educators have the opportunity to make history content more relevant to students' lives, but they must plan carefully in order to make students care. Topics outside of the norm can cause cognitive dissonance. Planning curriculum in such a way that students are able to handle their discomfort because they know it is worthwhile is helpful. Therefore, in this action research project, I explore how 8th grade students in a U.S. History classroom describe their experiences learning about race during a Socratic seminar.

Change is Inevitable

Primary Researcher(s)

Charleigh Campbell, Intern - Baylor University

Melinda Akin, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD

Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This study examines the impact of using hands-on activities to teach students about coin recognition. Hands-on learning is effective for information retention because it engages both sides of the brain through interaction between the physiological and psychological. Using manipulatives provides “a bridge from the concrete to the abstract, which, in turn, promotes greater conceptual understandings” (Marley & Carbonneau, 2014, pg. 1). The study included a small group of four middle school students receiving special education. The intervention involves using Touch Point Math with coins daily across multiple weeks. Students will be assessed for progress at the end of each week. This study has demonstrated that hands-on learning is effective when implemented on a regular basis.

New Age Virtual Teaching: Effects of Online Incentives

Primary Researcher(s)

Claire Conradt, Intern - Baylor University

Valerie Taylor, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD
Dr. Barbra Purdum-Cassidy, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a fourth-grade virtual classroom, it was observed that the students struggle to attend class and turn their screens on. This affected their attitudes toward virtual learning, the students' subject comprehension, engagement, and lastly the teacher's ability to assess the students during classes. Oftentimes, the students were not listening, missing information, and not submitting work. Recent national data from the Office of Civil Rights indicate that almost seven million students in kindergarten through twelfth grade missed at least three weeks of school in 2013–14 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Layering incentives creates a culture of positivity and achievement where students celebrate milestones in their learning. Research was collected on the classroom of 11 girls and 9 boys, multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Baseline data was collected through taking record of the students with screens on and punctuality to live lessons and check in surveys. Data was collected on the effectiveness of incentives and encouragement for two weeks. After two weeks of incentives 20% of the students' screen time increased and students were timelines doubled.

The Art of HOW to Ask Questions

Primary Researcher(s)

Nicole Cross, Intern - Baylor University

Amanda Packard, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Rachelle Rogers, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Engaging students in mathematical discourse is a critical aspect to teaching. This study examined how questioning strategies might impact student engagement in mathematical discourse. Participants consisted of 28 seventh graders enrolled in two math classes at a large suburban middle school. In the research students were questioned using three strategies: random calling, paired discussion, and whiteboards. Data was gathered from an open-response survey, journal notes, and engagement forms. This data was analyzed and categorized over a month with participating teachers. The emerging themes proved that the implementation of purposeful questioning takes planning and is critical at the middle school level to support student understanding.

Learning for Mastery During COVID-19

Primary Researcher(s)

Hallie Evans, Intern - Baylor University

Anand Salodkar, MS, Mentor Teacher - University High School, Waco ISD
Justina Ogado, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a tenth-grade chemistry classroom, students struggled with learning chemistry during the COVID-19 pandemic while attending school either in-person or online asynchronously. This study examined how utilizing technology to personalize instruction could increase students' confidence and content mastery following Bloom's (1968) "Learning for Mastery" instructional model. Participants of this study included 43 in-person students and 52 asynchronous students who are mostly (>75%) Hispanic and economically disadvantaged. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected over a three-week period. The results indicate that personalized learning does not make a significant difference for in-person students, however virtual students who received personalized instruction improved an additional ten percent over their control-group counterparts in the second and third instructional units.

Promoting Independence with Picture Task Cards

Primary Researcher(s)

Kailey Farris, Intern - Baylor University

Andrea Anderson, BS, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary School, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Picture task cards have been found to "increase...[students'] independent completion of tasks...while also reducing the need for teacher prompting" (Watson & DiCarlo, 2016, p. 94). The purpose of this action research study is to determine in what ways individually differentiated picture task cards impact students' ability to independently complete English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) station activities. The subjects of this study are two Kindergarten students who have difficulty working independently. To address the needs of these two students, individually differentiated picture task cards replaced ELAR station activities. As a result of this intervention, both students developed independence as demonstrated by an increase in the quantity and quality of picture task cards completed.

Minimizing Student Interruptions Using Nonverbal Cues

Primary Researcher(s)

Julia Gates, Intern - Baylor University

Staci Morgan, MSED, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD

Melissa Cates, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a second grade classroom, it was observed that an abundance of students interrupted the classroom during whole group and small group teaching. These interruptions occurred through blurting or talking during inappropriate times. Regardless of the form of interruption, "students who call out can get you and the class off track", hindering others from learning (Shore, Kenneth). Baseline data was conducted in the classroom with 21 students of various ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and abilities. Interventions included a mini lesson on appropriate times to interrupt, a light at the teacher table during small groups, and a ten frame on students' desks to track interruptions. Research indicates that these nonverbal cues were effective in minimizing student interruptions.

Improving Reading Fluency for a Legally Blind Student

Primary Researcher(s)

Sage Gonzalez, Intern - Baylor University

Jessica Hogg, BSED, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD

Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a first-grade classroom, it was observed that a first-grade student who is legally blind was struggling to read various texts fluently. Research was conducted with one Caucasian male who is academically at risk living within a low socioeconomic bracket to see if using the intervention strategy, Incremental Rehearsal, popularized by Aldawish (2017), would promote independence and sight word recognition even with a visual impairment. Baseline data was collected through a running record, sight word exam, and anecdotal records.

Music as a Means: Attention-Getters to Increase Second-Grade Student Engagement with Independent Work

Primary Researcher(s)

Camryn Grider, Intern - Baylor University

Jill Williams, MEd, Mentor Teacher - South Bosque Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a second-grade classroom of 21 students with multiple learning accommodations, observations have been made that students become off-task during individual work time in ELA and Math stations. The teacher pauses her small group instruction to redirect students who are not in the small group toward their independent work. According to a research team from Stanford University, “Music moves [the] brain to pay attention” (Baker). To gain students’ attention, redirect them toward work, and improve engagement, the teacher utilized musical attention-getters during station time. Students’ exposure to music, interest in music, and musical practice were collected as baseline data.

All Together Now: Implementing Whole Class Behavior Interventions to Decrease Individual’s Problem Behaviors

Primary Researcher(s)

Katherine Grochan, Intern - Baylor University

Andra Speerbrecher, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - River Valley Intermediate School, Midway ISD
Joseph Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Instances of violent and disruptive behaviors in the classroom need to be reduced immediately to create an effective learning environment. I implemented an interval rewarding system, in which every 5 minutes students who follow personalized expectations receive a token. I took interval data on one student who bit and scratched. I chose to do a fixed interval that will increase as behavior improves because “DRO is more effective when the interval is initially small and gradually increased than when it is initially large” (Repp, et al., 1991). The research shows that this intervention was effective at reducing problem behaviors and improving the classroom environment.

Scaffolding Close Reading Strategies for Kindergarteners' Reading Comprehension

Primary Researcher(s)

Donna Hoang, Intern - Baylor University

Courtney Taylor, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD
Barbara Purdum-Cassidy, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

I became aware of my Kindergarten students' short responses when I asked them comprehension questions while reading aloud. Students often responded with incomplete sentences or one-worded answers, not allowing me to fully understand what they knew about the text. According to Stewart (2019), "When provided with authentic opportunities for close reading that transfers to their real reading lives, students want to keep reading, learning, and thinking as their understanding takes shape" (p. 14). Research was conducted in the classroom with ten girls and eight boys of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Students had daily interventions for three weeks through the practice of close reading strategies. After the interventions, students were able to provide more detailed responses.

Leaning on Letter Learning

Primary Researcher(s)

Sidney Holman Mansell, Intern - Baylor University

Barry Horst, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Bell's Hill Elementary, Waco ISD
Bianca Ochoa, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a second-grade classroom at Bell's Hill Elementary, I have had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students. One male student with dyslexia struggled with letter-sound recognition, especially when decoding. In order to address the lack of recognition, I planned two weeks of daily hands-on and explicit letter-sound knowledge intervention.

How Reviews Can Help Students' Content Retention

Primary Researcher(s)

Krysta Kenney, Intern - Baylor University

Jeanette Alexander, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Justina Ogado, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Reviews are typically given at the end of a unit to prepare students for a test. How well do they remember the content given to them at the beginning of the unit? I believe that if a student was given a review at the beginning of a unit to look and fill in throughout, it could help them to retain the knowledge better. Allowing students time each day to go through their review and find questions that they are able to answer would give them a singular place for all the material ready to study come test time.

From Math to Lunch- The Stories Unfold

Primary Researcher(s)

Olivia Lazar, Intern - Baylor University

Adriana Prunte, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

For some students impulse control in the classroom can be an issue, especially when they desire a positive relationship with their teacher. In a 4th-grade math resource group, there is a student who has a difficult time staying focused for 30 minutes of instruction. During the small group time, he often interrupts to tell anecdotes. My goal was to implement an intervention that would help him control his interrupting while continuing to build a personal relationship with the student. My research question is “How does one-to-one time, as a reward, affect the student's ability to stay focused during group instead of interrupting with anecdotes?” In my presentation, I explain how the student was impacted by the intervention.

From Calls to Bells

Primary Researcher(s)

Rebeca Nelson, Intern - Baylor University

Abby Neal, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD

April Baker, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD

Barbara Purdum-Cassidy, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

It was noticed in a fourth-grade classroom that students were inconsistent in their ability to stay quiet during a call-and-response attention-getter. This caused them to not know what was expected of them for their next task. According to Alber (2015), “Raising our voice to get students’ attention is not the best approach, and the stress it causes...just isn’t worth it” (p.1). Research was conducted in the classroom with 2 girls and 2 boys of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Students were introduced to a bell and were expected to get quiet and focus on the teacher. After 3 weeks of this practice, the students increased their ability to focus their attention and follow the assignment directions.

Practice Makes Perfect! A Study on Closing the Reading Gap Through Systematic Fluency Instruction

Primary Researcher(s)

Jordan Ng, Intern - Baylor University

Nicole Fanning, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary School, Midway ISD

Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of implementing systematic fluency instruction with four second-grade students who read below the goal of 90 words correct per minute (WCPM). Researchers have noted a bidirectional relationship between fluency and comprehension, with fluency being the critical bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Kasperski et al., 2016). The Fluency Development Lessons (FDL; Rasinski, 2003) sequence modeled fluent reading, assisted reading, and repeated oral readings of authentic texts, integrated with word study and family involvement. Students were assessed through weekly timed readings to track progress. At the conclusion of the intervention, all students made gains in accuracy, speed, and prosody, with the average rate of growth being 19 WCPM.

Beyond the Screen: The Impact of Building Relationships in a Virtual Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Claire Polasek, Intern - Baylor University

Sydney Gutierrez, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

When a student with behavioral issues switches to online instruction, participation and effort can be difficult to manage. Researchers believe the relationship between a teacher and student is the cornerstone of student engagement (Zee & Koomen, 2020). This inspired the question: How does increasing positive attention and interest-based awards positively affect a child's engagement and quality of work? This study will focus on one virtual fourth-grade student, who has struggled with engagement and work completion. With no adjustments to ELAR instruction, both synchronous participation and asynchronous assignments will be monitored, in hopes of increasing student involvement.

Positivity Leads To Progress

Primary Researcher(s)

Danielle Sanders, Intern - Baylor University

GayAnna Wagner, MAEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary School, Robinson ISD
Joe Alford, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This Action Research Project aims to target negative behaviors in an Early Childhood Special Education classroom. Researchers have found that positive reinforcement has proven to decrease negative behaviors. The subject of the study is a five-year-old student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Baseline data will be collected on the number of positive responses to teacher requests. The student will be given a choice of reinforcer, and will be rewarded when positively responding to teachers' requests. Towards the beginning of the study, the reward will be immediate, but the interval between behavior and reward will increase as positive trends are observed.

It's Time to be... Quiet

Primary Researcher(s)

Samantha Schwartz, Intern - Baylor University

Elena Leon, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In the following action research, the educator examined the impact of verbal outbursts in the classroom as a distraction. Verbal outbursts impact the student's ability to focus and causes a hinderance to the learning of other students in the classroom. The subject was that of a 7th grade student in a self-contained classroom in Hewitt, TX. The pre-assessment includes frequency data on the number of outbursts in a single class period. The intervention is response interruption and redirection (RIRD) and is used during every verbal outburst. The RIRD decreased the amount of verbal outbursts from the student.

Virtual Chaos: Finding Order in a Classroom Gone Digital

Primary Researcher(s)

Al Shaffer, Intern - Baylor University

Ryan Armstrong, EdS, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway
Rachelle Rogers, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The virtual classroom has become essential as a result of COVID-19; therefore, this study examined student performance based on participation in one of two delivery formats: virtual synchronous lessons through google meets or asynchronous pre-recorded lessons on Schoology. Sixty-four seventh grade mathematics students self-selected the delivery format. Data included frequency in participating in synchronous and asynchronous learning, daily, project, and unit grades. Results revealed there were minor differences in grades for students who selected asynchronous versus synchronous learning. This study demonstrated both delivery formats can be effective for learning mathematics.

Building Students' Confidence in Mathematics

Primary Researcher(s)

Emily Sims, Intern - Baylor University

Michelle Ruddell, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson High School, Robinson ISD
Rachelle Rogers, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Past research studies reveal many students have low confidence levels in mathematics. This study examined how the use of celebration word walls versus private encouraging notes would impact students' confidence in mathematics. Participants consisted of 35 algebra II students. Data was gathered over four weeks and consisted of pre/post-surveys, anecdotal notes, and unit grades. After implementing a celebration wall for one class and positive written notes for another class, results showed no significant increase in mathematical confidence. In both classes, students' confidence and performance in mathematics stayed relatively the same.

Additional research is needed for an extended amount of time.

Combatting the Issue of Interruptions during Small Groups

Primary Researcher

Claire Stanko, Intern - Baylor University

Taylor Lange, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MS Ed, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Description of presentation

In a Kindergarten classroom, it was observed that small groups were commonly interrupted by students. The interruptions would cause a disruption to not only the teacher but the students in the small group. According to Laura Brown (guest blogger on Teaching Made Practical), "I wanted to find a way for students to still be able to ask a question without coming up to my table while I or another student is talking. I implemented this new strategy, and it has worked like a charm!" (p.6) Research was conducted in the classroom with 12 boys and 10 girls of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Data was collected on the effectiveness of the strategies "three before me" and "X marks the spot."

Repeated Reading for Fluency Intervention: Fluency Development Lesson vs. Reader's Theatre

Primary Researcher(s)

Cole Sussman, Intern - Baylor University

Kelly Capron, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Spring Valley Elementary, Midway ISD
Maryann Hebda, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In this study, I analyzed student data to determine how fluency interventions affect students' reading rate. After the National Reading Panel's report in 2000, reading fluency has become a critical goal. Fluency, and its tripartite structure, is intertwined with reading comprehension in inseparable ways (Young & Rasinski, 2009, p. 4). Therefore, I provided intervention for on- and above-level fourth-grade readers in reading fluency while assessing reading level, rate, and prosody over 6 weeks. Using Reader's Theatre with one group and Fluency Development Lessons with the other, I evaluated which engaging, repeated reading strategy impacted students' reading most and in which areas.

Face-to-Face vs. Virtual Learning

Primary Researcher(s)

Angela Tallent, Intern - Baylor University

Joshua Dietert, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway High School, Midway ISD
Rachelle Rogers, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This study examined the mathematical performance of face-to-face versus virtual students. Participants included 20 face-to-face and 21 virtual algebra II students. Data consisted of questionnaires, pre/post-assessments, and daily grades from a two-week unit of study. Written responses were analyzed by finding an emerging theme and comparing which learning environment resulted in students' higher grade averages. Findings revealed face-to-face students had a slightly higher increase in gains on the pre/post-assessment, while virtual students had higher daily grade averages. The majority of students preferred a face-to-face learning environment. Additional extended research is needed in order to have more conclusive results.

Can Weekly Conferences Make a Difference in Students' Writing Interest?

Primary Researcher(s)

Emily Jane Voelkel, Intern - Baylor University

Kristen Holland, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway
Barbara Purdum-Cassidy, EdD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a fourth-grade classroom, teachers only conferred with students who needed writing support. They monitored the work of the whole class, but never spent academic one-on-one time with every student. Baseline data was conducted through a writing attitude survey in a class with ten boys and eight girls of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Analysis revealed that many students did not enjoy writing. According to Shubitz & Dorfman (2019), If a teacher and student engage in a writing conference once a week students will “forge new attitudes about writing as they become more courageous and more willing to access new pathways” (p. 3). Students engaged in individual writing conferences with the researcher for six weeks. After six weeks of conferences, the overall enjoyment of writing slightly increased.

Moving Music

Primary Researcher(s)

Will White, Intern - Baylor University

Debbie Strouse, Mentor Teacher - Hewitt Elementary, Midway ISD
Joseph Alford, MSED, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This presentation is about the effects of music on the activity level of students. It will show the results from my action research into playing music in physical education and how that affects students activity level. This research was done in a fourth grade PE classroom at Hewitt elementary for a period of two weeks.

Campus Presentations

Abstract Conversations for Gifted Students

Primary Researcher(s)

Haley Allen, Intern - Baylor University

Liz Hagins, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

This research explores the relationship between abstract and straightforward thinking in Gifted and Talented (GT) students within the classroom. While GT students bring lively and meaningful conversations to the class, many times their thinking becomes too theoretical and sets the entire class off track. By providing students with an appealing discussion opportunity once a week, the students may have better focus when working on more concrete tasks throughout the week. This research will be conducted in four class periods of eighth grade GT students and measured through a running tally of tangent discussions both before and after implementing the strategy.

Handwriting vs Typing

Primary Researcher(s)

Natalie Boutot, Intern - Baylor University

Raygan Douglas, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Intermediate School, Robinson ISD
Stacy Farris, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Intermediate School, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

During my time at Robinson Intermediate, the widespread use of technology has been very apparent; my students use Chromebooks for nearly everything. However, they always use paper for writing. The issue is that this year, students are required to take the STAAR test online. I became curious as to how their understanding of the writing process would transfer to the virtual format. The three ways that I collected data were: a student preference survey, engagement forms (during online and paper/pencil writing), and a comparison of students' writing grades. The research suggests that, regardless of their preference or engagement, students tend to perform better on writing assignments when they are handwriting rather than typing.

How Incentives in Math Small Group Improved Student's Work Habits

Primary Researcher(s)

Catherine Grace Catechis, Intern - Baylor University

Amanda Foster, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Elementary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

During math, the second grade students in Mrs. Foster's class have to complete stations in order to practice and review new topics they have learned. I noticed that there were many times students were off task and not completing their work which means they were not getting enough practice on these math concepts. Because of this, I wondered in what ways would putting a reward system in place during stations allow students to learn more fully and complete their work in a timely manner. After putting the reward system in place and analyzing my data, I discovered that my students work habits improved greatly by putting a reward system in place.

Fasten your Learning Seatbelt

Primary Researcher(s)

Kenzie Cates, Intern - Baylor University

Tammy Freedman, BA, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Suzy Cox, BA, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Throughout the semester, I noticed that most students in the class struggle with staying engaged and remaining in his/her seats during instruction. With recent observations, I noticed that students wait until instruction to move around the room for various reasons. Most of these students that are struggling with engagement are struggling and/or average academically. I wanted to see if providing a signal would help these students stay in their seats, which would increase engagement and performance. As stated previously, these students are struggling and/or average performing. The research indicates that, with extra intervention, these students could be above grade level performers.

Clocking and Editing

Primary Researcher(s)

Lauren Claassen, Intern - Baylor University

Gary Woodard, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

My project focuses on the implementation of clocking in the 7th grade ELAR classroom. While my students understand the basic mechanics of editing, they often struggle with the actual practice of it. The current COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the way we have asked students to edit their essays. My students usually edit their own essays, rather than peer editing, to reduce the spread of germs. Because of this, I specifically wanted to see if clocking would improve my students' abilities to edit their own writing in a classroom that has social distancing constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic. My students edited both their own writing and a peer's using the clocking method.

The Effects of Background Music on 3rd Grade Students' Productivity and Engagement

Primary Researcher(s)

Caroline Dailey, Intern - Baylor University

Abbi Gorman, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary School, Midway ISD
Sydney Dietert, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary School, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In my 3rd grade classroom, students were unable to stay focused during stations and work well independently due to noise and distractions. In order to improve performance, we started playing different genres of music during stations. According to DiDomenico (2017), "using Musical activities that focus on patterns, rhythms, tempo, and beats help to foster mathematical thinking in elementary-aged children." Research was conducted in the classroom with twelve boys and ten girls of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Baseline data were collected through engagement forms and grades on assignments during that time without music. Data was collected on the effectiveness of intervention.

Improving Engagement for a First Grade Boy

Primary Researcher(s)

Kara Danford, Intern - Baylor University

Ruthanne Morris, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a first-grade classroom, I observed that a boy with ADHD had a difficult time focusing throughout the day. He caused many distractions from learning for other students, and his inability to focus impacted how he was performing on his work, particularly his reading responses. According to Ferlazzo (2017), “encouraging students to set their own goals can assist academic achievement and student engagement” (p. 1). I conducted research in the classroom with one six-year-old boy. Baseline data was collected through engagement forms, anecdotal notes, and assessment of reader’s response. Data was collected on the effectiveness of goal setting.

Increase Engagement by Self-Paced Movement in the Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Savannah DeHondt, Intern - Baylor University

Stefanie DeLeon, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Jess Smith, PhD, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

My action research project is about the effects of implementing self-paced, independent work in the classroom. My goal was to keep the students engaged by incorporating movement into the lesson. While I strongly believe in the power of collaboration, I noticed my students often became distracted when asked to work in groups/partners. For a revising lesson, I created self-paced, independent stations that required the students to move around the classroom, following clues to help them find the stations. Typically, I would have the students peer-edit their essays, but because of COVID, I had to make the lesson independent and self-paced. I hoped that this type of independent movement in the classroom would increase engagement and effectiveness of revising.

Moving All Online... Is This Manipulative?

Primary Researcher(s)

Louise Griffin, Intern - Baylor University

Amanda Turman, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Intermediate, Robinson ISD

Mary Hockaday, BA, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Intermediate, Robinson ISD

Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Education is moving towards a virtual world fast. Throughout the year I noticed my students were struggling grasping new math concepts. Struggles were found when students were transferring information taught in whole group to independent work. Could technology be the main cause? I had six special education students work in a small group with me to track data for my wondering. A pre-assessment was given after whole group/technology instruction and a post-assessment was given after small group work with manipulatives relating to the new math concept. I also interviewed students and tracked student engagement. The results of this research show that using a few simple manipulatives to introduce a new math concept increases student understanding.

Focus on the Goal!

Primary Researcher(s)

Brittany Griffith, Intern - Baylor University

Ashley Toscano, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Hillcrest PDS, Waco ISD

Darlene Bolfing, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Throughout the first semester of my internship, I noticed that student struggled more than the rest to focus during instruction and independent work during math. I began wondering how I could help redirect his attention and build a habit of stronger focus. For my research, I decided to create a goal chart with four different components in which the student would aim to achieve throughout each math lesson. The daily goals I created were: Stay on Task, Complete Independent Work, Listen to Directions, and Be Respectful. The end result of my research didn't present much improvement with classroom focus, however the student has become more aware of his actions.

Student Engagement in the Virtual Classroom

Primary Researcher(s)

Ashlyn Haddock, Intern - Baylor University

Carolyn Yose, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In a virtual second-grade classroom, I noticed many high-leveled students were disengaged during Google Meets. This affected performance levels on assignments. I began to think about ways I could engage my students using virtual games. According to “The Tech Advocate,” “...more time is spent learning when educational games are used than when they are not.” Research was conducted in small groups with five boys and two girls of multiple ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. Baseline data was collected through giving entrance and exit tickets and tracking engagement without a virtual game. Data was collected on the effectiveness of virtual games, through giving entrance and exit tickets and tracking engagement.

Stop Sign Procedure

Primary Researcher(s)

Morgan Hicks, Intern - Baylor University

Stephanie Bailey, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In my classroom, the students often interrupt instructional time by getting out of their seats to ask a question or say something that does not pertain to the lesson. I decided to implement a stop sign procedure so that the students will stay in their seats and the lesson can go uninterrupted. When the stop sign is up during math instruction, the students are to stay in their seats. If it is down, the students can freely move about to their centers. I implemented the procedure for a 4-week period and took engagement data. The research indicates that this procedure had an increase in uninterrupted instructional time.

Bursting the Blurting

Primary Researcher(s)

Vanessa Jessurun, Intern - Baylor University

Rachel Boles, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hillcrest PDS, Waco ISD
Darlene Bolfig, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

While observing my class throughout the year, I noticed a student struggling with raising his hand and blurting out answers during instruction. I recognized his unwarranted remarks resulted in negative effects that took away learning opportunities from others. Thus, I decided to investigate positive, constructive techniques to equip him with tools necessary to control this disruptive behavior. To visualize progress, we agreed to recording his blurts on a “blurt chart.” Instead of calling out his answer, he would write his ideas on a white board. The successful results demonstrate the importance of consistency and comprehension of consequences in proposing a new goal. The research proves the strategy promotes student responsibility while increasing other students’ opportunities to respond.

Sharing the Load: Why Every Teacher Should Create Classroom Jobs

Primary Researcher(s)

Daniella Karant, Intern - Baylor University

Ashley Becknauld, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Elementary, Robinson ISD
Anne-Marie Gladden, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Elementary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

During my time in the classroom, I noticed that the transition from the afternoon to the following morning wasn’t efficient or smooth. Because of this, I wondered in what ways would assigning classroom jobs at the end of the day improve clean up procedures and in turn, result in a smoother transition for the beginning of the next day? After discussing with my mentor teachers, we created and implemented five classroom jobs. Based on observational data and student surveys, the creation of specific jobs resulted in a quicker and more organized cleanup, thus creating a smoother transition into the following morning. Most importantly, students felt needed when they had a specific task to complete.

Mystery Reader: Student Engagement During Read-to-Self

Primary Researcher(s)

Emily Lewis, Intern - Baylor University

Katherine Midgett, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

In my Kindergarten classroom, students often have a hard time staying engaged during the entirety of our read-to-self time. I wondered about implementing a “Mystery Reader,” where I would randomly choose a student’s name out of a cup and tell students that if the Mystery Reader was reading and engaged the whole time during read-to-self time, that student would get to wear the Mystery Reader necklace for the remainder of the day. I implemented the Mystery Reader for three weeks. I collected engagement data, took tallies for redirections made, and conducted student surveys on six students. The results of my research suggest that implementing a Mystery Reader increased the engagement of students during read-to-self time.

Impact of Small Motivational Goals on Instructional Time

Primary Researcher(s)

Kendall Lockwood, Intern - Baylor University

Lisa Cesmat, MAEd, Mentor Teacher - Hillcrest PDS, Waco ISD
Darlene Bolfig, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Throughout the year, Ms. Cesmat and I noticed that we had three extroverted students that were having trouble fighting the urge to blurt out during whole group instruction. We initiated the use of a small motivational goal to discover in what ways it would increase productive whole group instructional time. The small motivational goal we used was a personal student “Blurt Chart.” Each student had a visual of the three blurts they were given. The students received class points for each blurt that they kept at the end of the day. The research indicates that the use of a small motivational goal will increase instructional time and will encourage student practice of self-reflection and responsibility.

¡Escuchemos!: The Effect of Target Language Music on Beginning Language Development

Primary Researcher(s)

Kylee McLaughlin, Intern - Baylor University

Tinsley Meyers, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Midway Middle School, Midway ISD
Lee Anne Brannon, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

The research will highlight linguistic and vocabulary benefits of students listening to music in the target language in a beginning Spanish language class. The students will listen to a song in the target language to enhance their developmental vocabulary. This topic addresses beginner language development for students with limited exposure to music in the target language and have limited vocabulary proficiency. Data analysis will target the effect listening to music in Spanish can have on students' vocabulary development and target language understanding.

Reteaching One-to-One Correspondence to First Graders

Primary Researcher(s)

Caroline Ratley, Intern - Baylor University

Raven Richard, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Nikki Bailey, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Robinson Primary, Robinson ISD
Cindy Barrier, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

Throughout the year I noticed two low-performing math students were able to count up to one hundred but were unable to count manipulatives, know when to stop counting, and the value of a number. Could reteaching one-to-one correspondence with counters improve their ability to count and help them be able to add numbers? I began meeting with these students twice a week to practice counting with counters and administered a pre and post assessment for addition. We practiced dragging counters across the table and pointing at the counters while counting aloud. The research indicates the practice of counting with counters increased the student's ability to count, as well as their ability to correctly add numbers.

Turning The Tables For Teamwork

Primary Researcher(s)

Alexandra Ronnenberg, Intern - Baylor University

Tamara Holey, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hillcrest PDS, Waco ISD
Darlene Bolfig, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

My mentor, Mrs. Holey, and I noticed that our first-grade students were very chatty and loud during the English Language Arts station activities. As part of my research project, a table group reward system was introduced to promote teamwork and accountability among our students. Students were able to earn points by working quietly and giving their best work, but could also have points deducted for off-task behaviors. This system proved to be a great motivator and my research data showed that students stayed on task and worked hard during ELAR station activities. I plan on continuing this system throughout the remainder of the year and into my teaching career.

Is Music the Key for Learning?

Primary Researcher(s)

Caroline Talley, Intern - Baylor University

Sue Garth, BSEd, Mentor Teacher - Hillcrest PDS, Waco ISD
Darlene Bolfig, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

For the course of three weeks, I collected data on four students who were having difficulty with focusing during our 10-minute independent reading station work. Upon completion of the initial engagement data, I began to play piano music of Disney songs which created a soothing and calm environment throughout the class and gathered additional data on the four students' focus. Overall, I saw an incredible increase of time on task for the four students. I plan to continue to use music to create a quiet and calming learning environment to foster success.

The Impact of Small Group Intervention on Participation During Math Fluency Exercises

Primary Researcher(s)

Liza Townsend, Intern - Baylor University

Laura Christian, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Genna McMillin, MEd, Mentor Teacher - Castleman Creek Elementary, Midway ISD
Gae Connally, MEd, Intern Supervisor - School of Education, Baylor University

“Math fluency is a critical skill needed to acquire higher-order math skills.” (Hartnedy, Mozzoni, & Fahoum, 2005). In a fourth-grade classroom, it was observed that students were not actively engaged in whole-group fluency instruction. This affected the way students used and integrated their problem-solving skills in daily instruction. To observe the impact of interventional instruction, research was conducted in the classroom with a group of students in small groups to encourage participation in fluency instruction. Data was collected on the effectiveness of interventional practice in small groups and how it affected participation in a whole group setting.