# A Conspiracy of Ravens: Reimagining the Role of Educators in Dismantling Oppressive Systems within Career and Technical Education

Andrea Kulas

Abstract: To move beyond performative allyship and become true accomplices, we must challenge the systems of slavery, assimilation, and capitalism that shape education. Programs for Indigenous communities and historically marginalized communities often prioritize productivity, reinforcing the link between citizenship and economic participation. Career and skills programs, designed to integrate marginalized groups, often perpetuate capitalist structures. True change requires dismantling these systems, focusing on Indigenous sovereignty, Black liberation, and the liberation of historically marginalized communities, and working toward autonomy and freedom rather than inclusion in oppressive systems. Liberatory unit planning, inspired by abolitionist principles, centers student- driven learning, valuing their experiences and interests. It breaks down disciplinary boundaries, incorporates culturally responsive pedagogy, and adapts to students' needs. This approach fosters critical thinking and problem-solving through inquiry- based learning. Authentic assessments, like portfolios and real- world projects, allow students to demonstrate meaningful learning. Teachers collaborate with students, integrate diverse perspectives, and design curricula that reflect values of autonomy and liberation. This approach goes beyond reform, aiming to transform educational systems and society by challenging the structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. True transformation requires shifting from simply reforming existing systems to dismantling them in pursuit of liberation, particularly for Indigenous communities and historically marginalized communities.

# Adapting a Family Based Nutrition Curriculum for African American Communities

Divya Patel & Ajita Nair

Abstract: In the US, obesity affects almost half the population. Often, the disease is attributed to a lack of dietary health education available for the community. This study aims to utilize a family-based nutrition education workshop, called Abriendo Caminos, to improve the lifestyle habits of members of the DREAAM Center, an organization for boys and young men aged 3 to 24. An additional goal is to enhance premedical and medical trainees’ efficacy at delivering nutrition education. Medical trainees will engage with focus groups to discuss lifestyle and barriers that Black/African/African- American families may experience. Based on these responses, adaptations will be made to the evidence-based Abriendo Caminos program. Then, the workshop will be led by medical trainees for families at the DREAAM Center who are interested in participating. Community participants and medical trainees will be assessed before and after programming to understand the efficacy of the workshop and their knowledge and attitudes regarding nutrition education. The implications of this research are better health outcomes in a community and a cohort of premedical and medical trainees capable of counseling patients on dietary health. We expect to make an impact in improving the health of Black/African/African- American families in the community.

# Amasando y Enseñando: Exploring Families’ Interconnected Ways of Knowing & Teaching

Alejandra Frausto Aceves

Abstract: Climate crisis and broadened global migration call for non-fragmenting culturally sustaining education with migrant populations. THis student posits that reorienting to breathing in with families affords breathing out disciplinary learning that does not fragment, but instead heals. To that end, this project pursues forms of teaching and learning with Central American diaspora families through investigating familial pedagogies and epistemologies in tortilla-making towards transforming science education. This participatory design research study dignifies the interpretive power of families and the professional vision of science teachers utilizing multimodal interaction analysis of families tortilla-making repertoires. Building from a pilot study, this project engages families with tortilla-making expertise with roots in Central America, and containing one science teacher. Supported by individual semi-structured interviews, participants will interact in tortilla making, interpreting the practice, and co-designing curricular and pedagogical applications for science classrooms. These data sources will be analyzed using an intuitive coding process, coding for themes in stories, materiality, pedagogies, embodiment, and science learning. Working at the edges of justice-oriented science education, this study hopes to also contribute a dynamic view of diasporic cultures and family pedagogies and knowledge to advance interconnected ways of knowing with family-driven ways of teaching, learning and interpreting to transform science education.

# APAMSA Diversity Efforts: The Importance of Discussion Panels to Enhance Our Patient Care in Medical Education

Hannah Jung

Abstract: Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) at Carle Illinois College of Medicine is a chapter of the larger national organization dedicated to addressing health challenges faced by Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. APAMSA aims to provides opportunities for students to develop initiatives and to promote culturally sensitive care that improve the health and overall well- being of these populations. At Carle Illinois, we support medical students through cultural events and organizing a series of discussion panels, which enhance cultural awareness in medicine. These panels are developed with the help of AANHPI physicians across various specialties to cover key topics such as health disparities in AANHPI communities, mental health issues, and the challenges of navigating medical careers as Asian Americans. The panel series has shown the importance of cultural sensitivity and professional growth within medicine. Our chapter plans to continue to include even more aspects of healthcare disparities and extend outreach to other patient populations. This work highlights the need to address the diverse perspectives and challenges that exist within the healthcare system in all cultures.

# At-Hope Youth’s Grief and the Need for Healing Centered Education

Kenia Rodriguex

Abstract: The role of teachers and school youth workers in addressing loss and grief in the classroom is evolving, with research indicating that educators often feel inadequately prepared to support grieving students (Densen et al., 2012; Collins, 2022). Notably, there is a lack of student perspective on this issue. This study aims to explore the experiences of at- hope youth—those facing challenges like homelessness or violence—in processing grief in school settings. The research will amplify the marginalized voices of Black and Brown at-hope youth, through four Culturally Relevant Focus Groups, including one conducted in Spanish for newcomer students. It is anticipated that findings will reveal a variety of emotional and behavioral responses, such as sadness, anger, and withdrawal, highlighting feelings of being misunderstood. Importantly, the results may emphasize the need for tailored interventions to meet the unique needs of grieving at-hope students, advocating for a shift towards a healing-centered model of education. Given the losses experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing violence, it is crucial for educators to become more attuned to how grief manifests in their classrooms and to adopt practices that support grieving students effectively.

# Campaña de Salud: Providing Health Services and Education to Champaign-Urbana

Aaron Shulkin

Abstract: Health fairs provide the public with free health education and preventative screenings. This study evaluated the efficacy of two Campaña de Salud health fairs, Feria de Salud and Dia de Los Muertos, in the Champaign- Urbana community. Surveys using the Likert scale were collected at both health fairs to assess participants’ level of previous health knowledge and gauge the health fairs’ efficacy. Data was collated by age, gender, primary language, and ethnicity. Averages and standard deviations were calculated for each question and stratified based on ethnicity. The Feria de Salud survey results demonstrated the utility of the health fair and provided insight into the racial groups that attended. We expect similar results from Dia; however, given differences in attendee demographics, specific analyses may vary. We hope to continue growing our community impact by hosting more health fairs through Campaña de Salud. We plan to use the survey results we accumulate to improve how we distribute health information and best bridge healthcare gaps in Champaign-Urbana.

# Designing Feedback Loops for 21st Century Education

Justine Rovin

Abstract: This proposed study explores the development of meaningful teacher feedback loops within a student-driven, interdisciplinary secondary education program. The research will examine how feedback, framed as a multimodal and collaborative process, can enhance student engagement, self-regulation, and academic growth. Grounded in socio-constructivist theories and multimodal meaning grammar, this study aims to redefine feedback as a dynamic, reciprocal interaction between students and teachers. The research seeks to answer: What makes feedback meaningful in contemporary education? How can feedback loops improve student learning and autonomy? The methodology will include surveys to understand student preferences, reflective journaling by educators, and iterative feedback practices using digital tools and rubrics. The anticipated findings suggest that multimodal feedback—combining written, verbal, and digital formats—can make feedback more actionable and personalized. Feedback loops, which allow students to respond and reflect on feedback, are expected to foster a culture of continuous learning and growth. Aligned with the theme “Education in the 21st Century: Designing a More Inclusive Future,” this proposal highlights feedback as a collaborative and inclusive practice. By addressing common challenges in feedback delivery, the study aims to provide educators with strategies to create equitable and adaptive learning environments.

# Emotional Resilience, Academic Engagement, and GPA: A Moderation Analysis

Avery Bandstra

Abstract: In an era where academic success is increasingly linked to long-term life outcomes,understanding the interplay between students' emotional resilience and academic engagement is crucial. This study delves into the moderating role of emotional resilience in the relationship between academic engagement and GPAamong adolescents aged 13-18.Grounded in self-determination theory and utilizing a social,emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills framework, theresearch aims toexplore howemotional resilienceinfluences theassociation betweenbehavioral andemotionaldimensions ofacademicengagement andacademicachievement. While Previous research has established links between academic engagement and achievement, as well as the impact of emotional intelligence on academic performance, there is limited investigation into how emotional resilience, as conceptualized within an SEB framework, moderates the engagement-achievement relationship, particularly in adolescent populations. The study hypothesizes that emotional resilience will moderate this relationship, with highly resilient students demonstrating better academic outcomes at both low and high levels of engagement. By contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing academic success, this research aims to inform the development of more effective and equitable educational strategies for adolescents, potentially reshaping how we approach student support and intervention in secondary education.

# Empathy: A Hidden Gem to Inclusive Academic Success

Jennie Lee

Abstract: Personalized education is increasingly critical in the 21st century as classrooms grow more diverse, emphasizing the need for inclusive learning environments. Empathy, a key

social-emotional skill, may play a pivotal role in fostering inclusivity. Widely defined in two components— cognitive empathy and affective empathy —empathy is linked to positive academic outcomes such as improved engagement and stronger peer relationships. This study investigates the relationships between empathy, friendship quality, academic engagement, and GPA among 499 high school students from suburban and urban U.S. settings. Using validated measures like the Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI), Friendship Qualities Scale (FQS), and Engagement versus Disaffection with Learning (EDL), the research addresses three objectives: 1. Examine the relationships between empathy, friendship quality, engagement, and achievement. 2. Assess differences between cognitive and affective empathy in these relationships. 3. Explore empathy variations by gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level. Correlational and exploratory factor analyses will determine empathy’s distinct roles in learning. Both cognitive and affective empathy are expected to positively impact engagement and achievement, albeit differently. The findings aim to advance empathy-based educational strategies, supporting inclusive and effective learning environments.

# Expanding What Counts as Sciences: Professional Learning Efforts to Develop Innovative Curriculum Materials

Nicholas Leonardi & Julia Poel

Abstract: This poster describes the iterative design process of two Professional Learning (PL) institutes held to support teachers in learning to create curricula that expand what counts as science. Specifically, this poster will describe the year 1 (summer 2023) PL interventions and key findings and how these were used to inform the year 2 (summer 2024) activities. When analyzing the year 1 data sources, we noticed participants were confronted with a series of dilemmas, mainly when working to integrate Multiple Ways of Knowing (MWK) and sustainability, and these were primarily left unresolved. Since dilemmas can create space for learning opportunities (Horn & Little, 2010), we worked to design case studies for the year 2 PL for participants to grapple with the dilemmas. The poster will describe additional design challenges and how these were planned for and addressed in the year 2 institute. The poster will also address the conference theme by describing the affordances and constraints of PL interventions intended to support teachers in creating equitable instructional materials.

# Exploring Culturally Relevant Digital Content in Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes in Public Universities in Tanzania

Maiga Muga

Abstract: This study examines the impact of culturally relevant digital content on student engagement and learning outcomes in Tanzanian higher education. Grounded in Ladson-Billings’ (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy framework, it focuses on two leading public universities: the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and the University of Dodoma (UDOM).The study explores faculty and student experiences with culturally aligned digital tools and evaluates the role of institutional policies in supporting or hindering their integration. Using a qualitative case study methodology (Yin, 2014), the research involves semi- structured interviews with 100 participants and policy document analysis. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) highlights the positive impact of culturally tailored digital tools in fostering inclusivity and engagement while identifying persistent challenges such as limited digital infrastructure and inadequate localized content. This research underscores the need for institutional reforms and policy interventions to prioritize culturally relevant digital tools. By integrating local cultural knowledge into digital platforms, the study advances discussions on bridging the digital and cultural divide in education, contributing to inclusive and equitable digital transformation in Tanzanian higher education.

# Exploring Parental Perspective on Parenting Education in High School: A Suggested Solution to Enhance Future Children’s Literacy Development in Rural Indonesia

Oktaria Kolnel

Abstract: This study explores the views of parents in rural Indonesia on the importance of parenting education in high schools as a solution to improve children's literacy. It will also assess the benefits parents gain from parenting education and identify the main barriers to its promotion. Parenting education in secondary schools is strategic as students form cognitions and behaviors that influence how they will later educate their children. In addition to preparing students to be more effective parents, the program has the potential to make them more aware of literacy, particularly in rural areas with limited educational resources. Parents play a crucial role in children's literacy development, as the home environment is where children gain early experiences in reading and communication. Positive social interactions between parents and children help build critical thinking and literacy skills. The research questions are: 1) What does the rural parent population believe about core parenting aspects, particularly those supporting early literacy? 2) How do parents in rural Indonesia view parenting education in high schools as a solution to support literacy? 3) What barriers exist in promoting parenting education in high schools in rural areas? This study will use sequential explanatory mixed methods, surveying 200 rural parents and conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Results will inform recommendations for integrating parenting education into high school curricula, tailored to local values, to foster literacy-conscious parents.

# Impact of International Short-Term Faculty-Led Programs on Pedagogical Techniques in Engineering

Joshua Katz & Joie Gindorf

Abstract: There has been a growing demand for short-term faculty-led programs and global classrooms to develop students’ global learning experiences. While these programs have gained significant traction, few studies focus on faculty outcomes from leading them. This study evaluates faculty member recruitment and changes in perspectives from participating in these programs. At this university, two strategies enable students to engage in global learning beyond traditional exchange programs. The first is through short-term faculty-led programming (7-14 travel program post-course), and the second is through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), which allows global engagement without international travel. The university has expanded COIL by offering full-semester or part-of-term courses called global classrooms, combined with an optional or required post-course short-term faculty-led program. The Engineering College refers to these programs as COIL+. This study qualitatively analyzes the impact of recruitment and program experiences on faculty and instructors running short-term faculty-led programs. Using a post-travel nineteen-question faculty survey, we gain insight into instructor experiences and how these programs impact their pedagogical practices. The survey includes Likert-scale and open-ended questions on teaching strategies, technology, global classrooms, and student learning perceptions. Questions will be analyzed using an inductive approach to coding the data to uncover common themes. Preliminary results suggest that faculty gain valuable insights into integrating cultural and technological elements into their teaching practices beyond short-term courses.

# Implementation of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Healthcare Practice: An Umbrella Review of Systematic Reviews

Adam Andersen

Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative technology with significant potential to enhance learning and teaching in higher education, as well as improve performance across industries. In health professions education (HPE) and healthcare practice, the integration of AI tools is advancing rapidly. In HPE, AI is being used for applications such as simulating history-taking. In healthcare practice, AI tools assist with clinical decision-making, including radiological diagnosis, early detection of sepsis, and clinical documentation. Additionally, emerging research suggests AI’s role in advancing health equity. The evolution of AI tools in healthcare practice holds important implications for how health professions students are educated and trained. A critical first step in incorporating AI into HPE is understanding the range of AI tools currently implemented in healthcare practice. This research aims to conduct a systematic review of AI tools in healthcare practice. Due to the extensive research on this topic, an umbrella review of systematic reviews will be performed. The findings will guide the incorporation of AI into HPE curriculums and promote AI literacy among HPE faculty and students. Thoughtful integration of AI into curriculums can enhance alignment with current healthcare practices, improving both student and patient outcomes.

# Increasing Astronomy Education Opportunities and AI Access in Rural, IL Schools

Spencer Hulsey

Abstract: Astronomy holds unique potential to inspire interest in science through its ability to engage students with accessible questions about the universe. Through semi- structured interviews with rural high school science teachers in Illinois, this ethnographic study documents existing astronomy teaching practices, resource use, and barriers to curriculum implementation. The data revealed two themes: the variability of astronomy instruction due to teacher discretion, and its potential as a gateway science for students less inclined toward math-heavy subjects. These findings will inform the development of a modern, adaptable curriculum and a partnering AI teaching assistant tool. This research highlights the importance of supporting rural educators with flexible, accurate resources that address specific challenges in their classrooms. This study ultimately aims to inform district and state policy on equitable STEM education and the role astronomy might play in rural settings. Additionally, the findings will contribute to a broader understanding of how astronomy education can serve as a "gateway" into science across diverse educational settings.

# Intentional Technologies for Diverse Futures in Medical Training: An Augmented Reality-based Endotracheal Intubation Simulator

Emre Eraslan

Abstract: Intentional technologies enhance learning and ensure equal access, with XR components—virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR)—playing a key role in medical training. This project focuses on developing an AR-based simulator for endotracheal intubation (ETI), a critical procedure for airway emergencies, to provide quantitative feedback for medical students. The XR approach addresses training access inequities, especially in healthcare-related STEAM fields. The research will address several key questions: 1) How does real-time feedback from the simulator impact novice practitioners' proficiency compared to traditional methods? 2) What differences in force application and movement patterns can the simulator detect between novice and experienced practitioners? 3) Can simulator training reduce common errors and minimize patient injury risk? 4) How does an AR-based simulator influence learning curves and confidence development for medical students performing ETI? The AR-based ETI simulator captures detailed data through force sensors and inertial units, providing real-time feedback via AR visualization. Its effectiveness will be validated with medical students and the Peoria Pediatric Research Team. The simulator aims to accelerate skill acquisition, improve accuracy, and foster equitable training outcomes, ensuring equal opportunities for diverse learners.

# Legacies of Exclusion in Education and Contemporary Dynamics in South Carolina

Itrat Sultan

Abstract: In the 1960s, families, and communities used community autonomy, heritage protection, religious and moral framing, protection of livelihood, and democratic rights to oppose integration efforts leading to legacies of exclusion (Bartley, 1999; Lassiter & Lewis, 1998). Such defensive activism continues to resonate in contemporary debates around parental control over school curricula and governance (DeGroff, 2009; Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). Guided by the frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Rogers, 2011; Yosso, 2005) and Framing Theory (Goffman, 1974), I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010; Gee, 2014) to analyze contemporary family and community- driven resistance against inclusive education initiatives in South Carolina. I argue that resistance against integration based on moral, religious, cultural, and economic influences in both the 1960s and today is rooted in upholding segregation in education via varying strategies. However, the challenges today are better recognized as existing at the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability simultaneously mirroring and diverging from the past. I propose pathways that utilize community engagement and awareness to prevent exclusionary practices. In addition, I offer policy recommendations to educators, policymakers, and community representatives to promote equity- based education.

# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Students in Public Education - How Can We Help?

Sarah Langley

Abstract: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) students in K-12 education have been a hot-button issue for decades. What are staff and teachers allowed to say? What are we allowed to do for students? As a school social worker in a large, urban school district, the questions of policies surrounding how to handle students who ‘come out’ to staff or other students. Is it the place of staff to intervene with these issues or to include families of students in the larger conversation? Current research illustrates the extreme disparities between LGBTQ students and their cisgender, heterosexual peers. These disparities include social health issues, mental health issues, and physical health issues. This poster presentation will explore questions of best practice relating to school policies, students’ right to privacy, and how social workers fit into the system.

# Motivational Profiles in STEM Education: Predicting Engagement, Disaffection, and Persistence Across Diverse Undergraduate Students

Qingqing Zhou

Abstract: This study investigates motivational profiles in STEM education by using latent profile analysis to understand how these profiles influence student engagement, disaffection, and persistence rooted in Situated Expectancy Value Theory (SEVT). Furthermore, it aims to determine whether motivational profile membership differs based on students’ sex, ethnicity, and first generation status. We collected data in introductory undergraduate math and science courses at two time points during the semester at a mid-Atlantic university (Time 1 = week five, N = 458; Time 2 = week ten, post-midterms, N = 495). We anticipate identifying three profiles, with those demonstrating very high competence beliefs and task values with low perceived costs exhibiting greater engagement and persistence in STEM fields compared to the other two profiles, high competence beliefs and task values with moderately low perceived costs and moderate all constructs. Additionally, demographic analyses aim to uncover disparities in motivational profiles, highlighting potential challenges faced by women, first-generation students, and underrepresented minorities. This research contributes to advancing inclusivity in STEM education and aligns with broader efforts to create a diverse and supportive learning environment for all students.

# R.E.A.C.T (Relationship Efficacy and Complex Trauma)

Mandilyn Graham

Abstract: Research on complex trauma has expanded our understanding of the impact of repeated exposure to maltreatment and adversity in childhood or adolescence on adult mental health outcomes. Despite this expansion of knowledge, there is still much to explore on the impact of complex trauma throughout the lifespan as researchers and clinicians work to craft interventions that address the impacts of complex trauma. Given the notable and heightened impact of childhood exposure to adversity among African Americans, this population may be especially prone to experience relational difficulties later in life. The proposed phenomenological study seeks to further explore the impact of complex trauma on self-efficacy beliefs in romantic relationships. The potential findings may increase the understanding of how emerging adults cope with complex trauma and how this coping influences relational well-being. Further, given the expansion of our knowledge of how adverse life experiences impact academic engagement and success, increased awareness of the impact of trauma on traditional college- age individuals‘ relational self-efficacy may have direct implications for interventions in academic settings.

# The Impact of Emotions on Graduate Teaching Assistants’ In-Role performance: The Mediating Role of Informal Workplace Learning

Hyeyoon Jeong

Abstract: This study examines how Graduate Teaching Assistants’ (GTAs) emotions influence their informal workplace learning and, in turn, affect their in-role performance. While workplace learning, particularly informal learning, is essential for developing professional skills and attitudes, existing research on GTAs has focused mainly on pre-training programs and skill-based activities, neglecting the complexities of workplace learning. Furthermore, few studies have explored the relationship between emotions and workplace learning, and those that do primarily rely on qualitative methods, leaving a significant gap in the literature. This study addresses this gap by statistically investigating the relationship between GTAs’ emotional experiences, informal learning activities, and in-role performance. Drawing on Nikolova et al.’s (2014) conceptualization of informal learning and Pekrun’s (2006) control-value theory of emotions, it examines how positive and negative emotions relate to task-based and interactional learning. The study employs a quantitative approach with STEM GTAs at a top-ranked R1 university. Data will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling to explore associations and mediating effects of informal learning. Findings will contribute to understanding the role of emotions in workplace learning and inform institutions on designing inclusive support systems that enhance GTAs’ development and teaching performance, aligning with the conference theme of fostering innovation in education.

# The Impact of Organizational Learning Culture on Knowledge Workers’ Perceptions of Meaningful Work: The Moderating Effect of Psychological Safety

Hyena Cho

Abstract: This study explores how organizational learning culture (OLC) influences knowledge workers' perceptions of meaningful work (MW), with psychological safety (PS) as a moderating factor. Work holds value beyond livelihood, contributing to personal development and encompassing multiple meanings (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019). From an educational perspective, work is closely linked to learning (Fitzgerald et al., 2022), as we learn for, through, and from work. The study focuses on how OLC shapes MW, which is related to organizational learning (OL)—a continuous process where employees share knowledge and experiences to enhance performance (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Theories like Argyris and Schön’s (1978) single- and double-loop learning models highlight OL’s evolution from action modification to reevaluating assumptions. Elkjaer (2021) introduced triple-loop learning, emphasizing power dynamics in problem-solving (Kwon & Nicolaides, 2017). Safe environments are essential for sustained OL (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Drawing on the multidimensional MW concept (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2016; Lysova et al., 2019), this research asks: 1) How does OLC influence knowledge workers' perception of MW? 2) How does the level of PS perceived by knowledge workers alter the effects of OLC on MW? Preliminary findings suggest that a strong OLC fosters greater MW perceptions, especially in high-PS environments. This implications of this research informs the design of organizational policies and practices aimed at fostering inclusive workspaces.

# Trauma and purpose: A systematic literature review and meta-analysis

Lillian Dine Young

Abstract: Feelings of purpose guide us through our lives. Knowing our aim in life can help us make decisions, form relationships and choose our careers. Recent literature on purpose shows the importance of feeling purposeful for predicting mental health and satisfaction. However, traumatic experiences in childhood and adolescence may impact purpose development by altering an individual’s psychological well-being, sense of identity, and level of motivation. The relationship between childhood and adolescent trauma and purpose development has only recently begun to be studied, and current research presents mixed findings. The aim of this research is to do a systematic literature review and subsequent meta-analysis on the association between early trauma and purpose development outcomes. Due to systemic racism, classism, and other systematic inequalities, trauma disproportionately affects low-income and minority students. Clarifying the association between trauma and purpose development can guide the creation of more equitable and trauma-informed career counseling programs and initiatives. It can help counselors and teachers better understand how to support long-term goal formation for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and highlight the diverse pathways through which purpose can develop across different student populations.

# Understanding the Impact of Perceived Validation on Sense of Belonging Among Nontraditional Students at Four-Year Institutions

Jeongsan Hwang

Abstract: Nontraditional students, comprising a significant portion of the undergraduate population, face systemic barriers within institutions primarily designed for traditional students. These barriers often lead to feelings of marginalization, disconnection, and increased attrition. Despite their strengths, such as intrinsic motivation and academic self-efficacy, non-traditional students frequently report lower levels of belonging and persistence due to limited institutional support. Validation, characterized by affirming interactions with faculty, staff, and peers, plays a critical role in fostering a sense of belonging enhancing both academic and social integration. This study investigates the relationship between perceived validation and sense of belonging among nontraditional students aged 25-34 at a four year public and private nonprofit institutions in Illinois. Using a quantitative approach, the study employs surveys to gather data, which will be analyzed through descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analyses, and multiple regression. Anticipated findings suggest that validation significantly enhances belonging, with faculty, stuff, and peer engagement emerging as key factors. The study underscores the need for tailored institutional strategies to create inclusive environments, promoting persistence and success among nontraditional students, and aligns with the theme “Education in the 21st Century: Designing a More Inclusive Future”

# Women High School Principals: Perspectives on Navigating and Negotiating their Gendered Role

Anne Allegretti

Abstract: This phenomenological study investigates how women high school principals navigate work-life barriers and negotiate their gendered leadership roles in education. Despite women forming the majority of K-12 educators, they remain underrepresented in high school principalships. Using Joan Acker's Ideal Worker Theory as a framework, this research examines how traditional workplace structures and expectations impact women administrators through in-depth interviews with women high school principals in Illinois. Initial findings reveal significant challenges including extensive work hours, constant availability expectations, and gender-specific barriers such as "role incredulity" and heightened scrutiny of professional appearance. Participants report various strategies for managing these challenges, including establishing communication boundaries and relying on support networks. The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of women principals' experiences and identify effective support strategies for addressing systemic barriers in educational leadership. Recommendations include developing administrative support teams, implementing mentoring programs, and reconsidering traditional leadership expectations. This research has important implications for creating more equitable leadership opportunities in education and fostering inclusive school environments that benefit from diverse leadership perspectives.