

Examples of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity EDUCATION Projects from other Universities

“Does It Reflect Your World?: Middle School Students’ Reactions to Novels with Middle School Characters”

Kelly Pietsch, Laura Headrick, Dana Abel, and Tonya Miller—Curriculum and Instruction
Robin Umber—Faculty Mentor

In our research we wanted to determine if middle school students have positive reactions to current young adult literature in which children their age are the main characters, and reasons for the positive or negative reactions. We also wanted to better understand how middle school students can use information presented in novels to help them in their personal development. Finally, we wanted to determine what students find to be worthwhile activities after reading books that focus on the issues and experiences of the middle school years and what activities they find tedious or disengaging.

“Adventure Girls: An After School Program”

Hannah Jones and Anne Wilhelmy—Curriculum and Instruction
Deb Pattee—Faculty Mentor

Are you interested in starting an after school program for girls? Come and see how university students and faculty started Adventure Girls for 5th grade girls. Leadership, self-esteem, and teaming were the focus of our eight week program. Girls participated in scuba diving, a ropes course, horseback riding, beading, yoga, hip-hop, etc. Community resources such as speakers and the YMCA facilities were utilized. Healthy snacks were provided to promote wellness; journaling was encouraged to promote emotional well being. We will also share the girls’ reflections about the program.

“Lights, Action, Research: Learning About Diversity Through Media Production”

Jenna Birkrem and Megan Klaber—Foundations of Education
Cynthia Gray-Mash—Faculty Mentor

Using visual anthropology methods to collect data from a community based site, the students developed short documentaries about an organization, individual, or social justice issue. In their presentation, they will review the methodology, learning outcomes, and key principles regarding media development as a dynamic teaching tool for understanding culture. Portions of the students’ documentaries will be shown and students will give their perspectives on their individual projects and outcomes.

“Making It Real: Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaborative Assessment Practices in Preservice Preparation”

Jamie Hoffman, Holly Kennin, Lindsay Michalski, and Lauren vanDoorn—Special Education
Joe Morin—Faculty Mentor

This project describes an authentic experience where 4 preservice special educators participated in an interdisciplinary assessment clinic. Each student was assigned to a team with representation from six different disciplines. Integrated assessment findings were identified and recommendations were conveyed in a formal staffing. Positive anecdotal evidence reporting growth is shared.

“Teaching and Learning About the Hmong”

Kendra Congdon—Curriculum and Instruction
Deborah Pattee—Faculty Mentor

This research project examined resources available to teachers wanting to learn and teach about Hmong culture. Most resources that address aspects of Hmong culture are produced for advanced scholars, but very few are available for schoolaged children. Included in this project is a bibliography of the available books, videos, articles, and websites concerning the Hmong. After searching for curriculum that could be used to teach about the Hmong, and finding very little available for K-12 educators, further research was done to create an interdisciplinary thematic unit on Hmong culture. Subjects included in this unit are Music, Visual Arts, Social Studies, and Family and Consumer Education.

“Identifying the Needs of Student Teachers”

Kathryn Stevens—Foundations of Education
Jill Prushiek—Faculty Mentor

Jill and I decided to create a survey with which to identify the needs of student teachers. We used an online program called Zoomerang to create a survey based on the Ten Wisconsin Teaching Standards. Via an e-mail survey, students identified their level of confidence in applying each teaching standard to their lessons. Some of the standards were split up into more than one question, and there were several open-ended questions which allowed students to elaborate on their answers or make suggestions. The survey was introduced and e-mailed to all current student teachers on the day of the first seminar. Jill and I then analyzed all the results and looked for common themes. We were also able to sort the results by major, which allowed us to find more themes. We then met with volunteer student teachers in focus groups. We used the focus groups as a chance to hear students expand on their needs and what they think could be done to meet those needs. Jill plans to present the results of the survey at faculty meetings, and hopefully some changes will be made in order to better meet the needs of student teachers!

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