Peter **KIRIAKIDIS** (Editor)

RESEARCH IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL EDUCATION

nou media LUMEN
www.EdituraLumen.ro

Peter KIRIAKIDIS (Editor)
Paul BARBER, James William DECOSTA,
Antonio SANDU, Jennifer SCHWARDT,
Ethel HASTY, Joseph Chris MOOS

Research in multidimensional education

Lumen

Iaşi, 2011

Editor Pd.D. Peter KIRIAKIDIS
Paul Barber, James William Decosta, Antonio Sandu, Jennifer SCHWARDT, Ethel HASTY, Joseph Chris MOOS

Research in multidimensional education

Editura Lumen este acreditată CNCSIS sub nr. 003.
www.edituralumen.ro, **www.librariavirtuala.com**

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naţionale:
Research in multidimensional education / Peter Kiriakidis (ed.),
Paul Barber, James William Decosta, ... - Iaşi : Lumen, 2011

ISBN 978-973-166-278-7

I. Kiriakidis, Peter (ed.)
II. Barber, Paul
III. Decosta, James William

371

Peter KIRIAKIDIS (Editor)
Paul BARBER, James William DECOSTA,
Antonio SANDU, Jennifer SCHWARDT,
Ethel HASTY, Joseph Chris MOOS

Research in multidimensional education

Lumen

Iaşi, 2011

Pagină lăsată
goală intenţionat

Contents:

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

Why do ECE Teachers Need To Be Mentored by ECE Administrators?

Peter KIRIAKIDIS[1]

Abstract:

Why do ECE teachers need to be mentored by ECE administrators? At the data site, the research problem was that students are not meeting the required standards of proficiency in state testing and schools are failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) as mandated by the No Child Left Behind of 2001. In an effort to comply with the NCLB Act (2001) mandates, the local school district supported ECE teachers through a mentoring program to address student achievement. School leaders at the data site needed research-based findings on the evaluation of the ECE mentoring program. A sample of n = 66 participants was purposefully selected and interviewed. The findings revealed that mentoring helps ECE teachers. Institutes of higher education, professional development providers, administrators' associations, school districts, and school leaders may benefit from having an awareness of how mentoring helps ECE teachers to improve their instructional practices. Effectiveness of teachers can be increased through

[1] Pd.D Peter KIRIAKIDIS - Founder and CEO of Higher Education Research and Consulting Company; has expertise in higher education educational leadership: (a) chairing comprehensive examinations and dissertation committees; (b) developing curriculum and academic programs; and (c) teaching graduate courses in research, educational leadership in higher education, educational and information technology, online technology, e-commerce, software development, and information systems. Peter is a reviewer of academic journals. He has presented a plethora of research studies nationally and internationally. Email: KiriakidisPeter@yahoo.com

Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011). Research in multidimensional education. Iaşi, România: Lumen.

opportunities for ongoing, systemic, and systematic mentoring; however, mentoring needs to be intentional, ongoing, and both systemic and systematic.

Keywords:
ECE Teachers, ECE Mentors, Professional Development, Mentoring, and K-12 Administrators

Introduction

The data site is a public school district located in the eastern United States of America. The school district increased ECE teacher collaboration and professional learning in order to improve teachers' instructional practices and student academic achievement. Research studies have explored teaching practices and student academic achievement; however, no scholars at the data site have conducted research to examine why ECE teachers need to be mentored by ECE administrators.

Statement of the Problem

At the data site, the research problem remains that students are not meeting the required standards of proficiency in state testing and schools are failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) as mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). In an effort to comply with the NCLB Act (2001) mandates, the local school district must provide students with an equal opportunity for a quality education. An even more pressing issue is the need to support ECE teachers to address student achievement. School leaders at the data site needed research-based findings on the evaluation of the ECE mentoring program.

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study sought to evaluate the ECE mentoring program through a case study. Data were collected through interviews with the participants who were two ECE mentors and 66 ECE teachers.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was: Why do ECE teachers need to be mentored ECE administrators?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to evaluate the ECE mentoring program, which was implemented in order to prepare ECE teachers to assist students in raising the level of academic proficiency. The vision of the school district emphasizes teaching practices with the main focus being on lifting the academic achievement to a level that demonstrates a narrowing of the academic achievement gap of all schools within the school district.

Conceptual Framework

This qualitative case study was grounded in the educational theory of John Dewey (1916) and in Vygotsky's learning theory (1978), which states that when teachers are engaged in activities within a supportive learning environment and when they are receiving appropriate guidance, then learning could occur. Thus, by applying the multiplicity of these learning theories, ECE mentors are able to help ECE teachers improve learning.

Definition of Terms

ECE Mentors: ECE mentors are master ECE teachers who provide ECE teachers with meaningful feedback on instructional practices and support with the ECE program.

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

Instructional practices: Instructional practices refer to changes in classroom organization with regards to sharing expertise, ideas, and opinions in order to maximize student learning.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

This case study was limited to the participants. Each participant was an employee of the school district at the time of the study. Because participants were selected from predetermined criteria, they were considered suitable participants for this study. The predetermined criteria for each participant were: (a) ECE teaching or ECE administration; (b) ECE certified, and (c) agreed to participate in the study. The study was limited to the participants from all schools within one school district, which does not allow for the generalization of the findings to all ECE teachers and administrators. The study was bounded by all schools available for inclusion in this study within one school district.

The participants were considered representative of the total population of ECE teachers and mentors at the data site. Participants' responses to the interview questions were assumed to accurately represent their true perceptions, attitudes, ideas, and feelings.

The participants were made aware of the confidentiality of the data collected. Participants were advised of their confidentiality rights and were assured that real names would not appear in any forum. The researcher informed the participants that no risks would occur from being a participant in the study.

In order to aid in controlling investigative bias, the researcher reviewed all transcriptions with experts in the fields of the ECE program. Member checking was applied to minimize investigative bias. Responses that were interpreted by the researcher were presented to the participants holding positions of responsibility for review and analysis. This process ensured that

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

the responses interpreted were indeed the participant's true feelings, expressions, thoughts, and ideas.

Significance of the Study

This study was one of the first to evaluate the aforementioned ECE program at the data site. The findings should provide valuable insight about the significance of the facilitation of a mentoring ECE program. The professional application of this qualitative case study may be of interest to researchers, educators, and administrators.

The findings of this qualitative study may assist school and district administrators, ECE teachers, and board members to make district-wide wise decisions relative to ECE programs and their impact on raising the level of academic proficiency of students as measured by district and state assessments. The findings of this study may assist district administrators with the allocation of human and capital resources on programs that make significant contributions to student achievement.

Literature Review

Learning is an individualized process and rarely is there a *one-size-fits-all* concept. Research has also indicated that students and educators have different techniques with the way they learn (Diaz, & Cartnal, 1999; Knight, 2010; Shin, 2009).

Students who struggle academically have difficulty catching up with good readers (Rapp, van den Broek, McMaster, Kendeou, & Espin, 2007; Rasinski & Padak, 2000; Stein et al., 2008; Strickland et al., 2002) and are unable to graduate from high school, enter college, or find jobs that support them (Lenters, 2006). However, teachers continue to use the one-size-fits-all instructional approach (Allington, 2002; Gaskins, 2005).

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

Since the inception of the NCLB Act (2002), teachers, administrators, and school districts have been concerned with identifying the best practices to narrow the academic achievement gap. Students with academic difficulties are less likely to achieve in every area of the curriculum (Dryer, Ehri, Flugman, & Gross, 2007; Lo, Wang, & Haskell, 2009). Effective teachers understand the developmental changes of learners (Ippolito, Steele, & Samson, 2008; Lacina & Watson, 2008; Wallace et al., 2007). Hansen (2009) posited that school programs are successful in helping students school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members support these programs enthusiastically.

Effective teachers: (a) use strategies to identify the needs of students and to create effective programs for students (Kame'enui et al., 2006); (b) support educational programs (Strickland et al., 2002); (c) use professional development knowledge to provide high quality instruction (Duffy, 2003); and (d) are highly skilled in understanding of good teaching and instructional strategies (Gambrell et al., 2007). Teachers' decisions affect students (Brownell & Pajares, 1996; Graham & Pajares, 1997). Teachers need to use evidence-based practices to guide their decisions in the creation of instruction (Allington, 2005; Torgesen, et al., 2007). Instructional practices should include a plethora of strategies that support students (Access Center, 2004). Exemplary instruction should result in proficient outcomes for all learners (Croninger & Valli, 2009).

Mentoring helps teachers to develop positive behaviors and attitudes toward teaching. Through professional development, teachers can identify the specific skills needed to teach. Effective instruction requires specific professional development that targets the skill and knowledge related to specific teaching and learning objectives (Strickland, Kamil, Walberg, & Manning, 2003). Mentoring can be aligned with the needs of the students and may take place through informal and formal means. Informal methods

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

include after-school seminars, teachers' meetings to share ideas, professional journals and books (Van Horn, 2003). Formal methods include pre-service courses, internships in graduate schools of education, and literacy coaches (Theriot & Tice, 2009). Teachers receive support in learning (Ganser, 2000) how to improve student achievement through mentoring to respond to current mandates of NCLB through mentoring, which is about teacher learning (Fitzharris, Jones, & Crawford, 2008; Gasner, 2000). Teachers who engage in professional development do so with the learning needs of their students in mind (Lambert, 2002).

Mentoring programs are beneficial to teachers (Burns & Stechuk, 2003). Teachers who participate in ongoing professional development become able to integrate and manage all the components of instruction (Duffy, 2003). Effective mentoring programs help teachers to become confident learners of instructional practices (Morrow, 2003).

There is a strong relationship between teaching practices and participation in professional development (Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Soloman, & Rowe, 2003). Motivation is intrinsic and internal (Thompkins, 2003) and extrinsic (Baker, 2003). Teachers need to understand the importance of providing an environment in which students choose to be motivated (Hall, 2006; Lacina & Watson, 2008).

Teachers in schools with high achieving test scores are using a variety of research-based teaching strategies (Klecker & Pollock, 2006). Lifelong learning imposes training (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006) because learning is continuous.

Research-based strategies and differentiated instruction should be provided to teachers, when teachers are engaged in mentoring then learning can occur (Kearsley, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers need research-based instructional practices (Ferrero, 2005). The practices of teachers may successfully engage

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

students (Ancess & Wichterle, 2002; Cline & Nocochea, 2006; Kannapel & Clements, 2006; Kariuki & Wilson, 2002).

Co-teaching refers to educators working together with equal standing (Bouck, 2007a; Gordon, 2006; Murawski & Dieker, 2008; Rea et al., 2002). Teachers must be willing to compensate for weaknesses by working together (Murawski & Dieker, 2008).

Professional learning communities (PLC) encourage collective learning and application of that learning (Hord, 2004). Educators who operate within a culture of continuous learning question, investigate, and seek solutions for school improvement and increased student achievement (Fullan, 2006) and for learning from each other to improve teaching and learning (Kose, 2009). Teachers assume responsibility for their students and their own learning (Rooney, 2007). Teachers of professional learning communities solve their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise (Hirsh & Killion, 2009) and develop and implement more effective instructional practices (Jacobson, 2010). Teachers should work together (Chenoweth, 2009). Job embedded professional learning can improve teacher practice and student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Professional learning communities can offer teachers ongoing opportunities to learn together, apply learning to the classroom, and reflect on what works and why (Chappuis, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2009). Teachers can learn from their peers (Wallis, 2008). Effective professional development must be results driven, standards based, and job-embedded (Greene, 2003) in teachers' daily work to improve student learning (Kelleher, 2003). Successful schools take professional development seriously (Danielson, 2002). Professional knowledge should be coupled with application of skills combined with reflection-on-action and enabled by critical feedback (Wassermann, 2009).

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

Teachers who reflected on their instructional practice become better at their instructional practices (Stockero, 2008). Teachers trained by constructivist teachers have a more positive effect on student achievement (Alsup, 2004). Peer coaching is a professional development program for teacher growth (Zwart et al., 2007). Jordan, Ory, and Sher (2005) asserted that coaching is the bridge between theory and practice of the peer coach researching a problem and translating the research to useful practice for teachers. Hjalmarson (2008) explained that a teacher is the most important person in implementation of curriculum and understanding of students.

There is a relationship between high student achievement and mentoring programs (Lewis, 2008). Mentoring helps teachers to change their instructional practices (Reeves, 2007) and to solve problems by helping teachers listen to their own thoughts, reflections, and instincts (Garbriel, 2005). More training in instructional practices helps teachers to provide better instruction (Harris & Dwyer, 2008).

**Extras din volumul: Kiriakidis, P. (Coord.). (2011).
Research in multidimensional education.
Iaşi, România: Lumen.**

ISBN 973-1666-2782-2

Publicat cu finanțarea:

media LUMEN
www.EdituraLumen.com