**Description of Research Partnerships**

**Instructional Leadership**

Below are a few select examples of how faculty in Instructional Leadership engage in research with local partners and stakeholders to strengthen the P-20 education system and reduce disparities in educational outcomes (AAQEP, Standard 4).

**Teaching Diverse Youth Project**

**Co-PIs:** Alyson L. Lavigne, Ph.D. & Lotte Henrichs, Ph.D. (Utrecht University, Netherlands)

**Funding:** $ 80,000 ~ Jacobs Foundation

**Project Description:** Across the globe, schools are becoming more diverse than ever before. Recently, a record 65.3 million people have been forced from their homes—21.3 million of these are refugees and nearly half are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2015). In the Netherlands, many elementary school classrooms – especially in urban areas – have a highly diverse student population as a result of recent migration and of migration streams of the 1970’s (CBS [Statistics Netherlands], 2015). And in the United States, there are 43.2 million immigrants—a fourfold increase since the 1960’s (López & Radford, 2017), and minority students are now the majority in K-12 enrollment (NCES, 2017).

Emerging research (e.g., Gutiérrez, 2002; Loeb, Soland, & Fox, 2014) and theory (e.g., Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006) suggest that diverse youth may benefit from teachers who possess a specialized set of skills, experiences, and practices. However, teacher education programs have struggled to transform this knowledge into meaningful practice (Warren, 2017) resulting in a teacher workforce that is not prepared well to teach a diverse student body (Siwatu, 2007). This is exacerbated by the scarcity of research examining the effect of culturally responsive instruction on student outcomes, and the value of culturally responsive instruction, above and beyond, evidence-based teaching practices. Thus, the goal of this study is to assess if culturally responsive instruction is just good teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995) in classrooms that serve students from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

**Sample and local impact:** For the U.S.-based site, this project is being conducted in partnership with one large district in the state of Utah. It is anticipated that as many as 20 teachers (from the most diverse schools within this district) will participate in the study. The district and participating teachers will receive aggregate study results and the PI has agreed to offer teachers individualized feedback based on their instructional practices. One outcome of this project will be a set of exemplary video clips and vignettes of culturally responsive instruction that will be available for professional development. It is intended that these findings will also inform the content, instruction, and activities included in the following courses: TEAL 6060 Assessment for Curricular Accountability and TEAL 6280 Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners.

**Effective Feedback Project**

**PI:** Alyson L. Lavigne, Ph.D.

**Funding:** $ 10,000 ~ Utah State University Grant-writing through Mentorship (GEM) Grant

**Project Description:** Despite research on feedback in organizational behavior management (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) and teachers’ feedback to students (e.g., Hattie & Timperely, 2007), there appear to be no empirical studies that have captured the characteristics of effective feedback as it pertains to the feedback that principals provide to teachers to improve their instruction in real classrooms. Without this knowledge, principal educators, policymakers, and practitioners will not know how to enact instructional leadership practices in ways that yield positive outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008), and support principals in doing so.

In order to fill this gap in the literature, the project goals are to: develop psychometrically sound instruments to measure the quality and content of feedback that principals provide to teachers and to establish a preliminary model of effective feedback that principals provide to teachers by listening to and learning from the post-observation conferences that principals have with their teachers.

**Sample and local impact:** This project is being conducted in partnership with two districts in the state of Utah. It is anticipated that as many as 12 principals and 84 teachers will participate in the study. Districts, principals, and teachers will receive aggregate study results and the PI has agreed to present the research findings to all principals in at least one district as they prepare to begin their 2019-2020 school year. It is intended that these findings will also inform the content, instruction, and activities included in the following courses: TEAL 6050 Theories of Instructional Leadership.

**Additional Projects**

For additional research partnerships that demonstrate engagement “with local partners and stakeholders to support high-needs schools” and “efforts to reduce disparities in educational outcomes” (AAQEP, 2018) please see the work of Dr. Nicole Pyle (<https://teal.usu.edu/people/vitae/PyleNicoleCVOct2017.pdf>)

who teaches TEAL 6280 in the Instructional Leadership program and conducts research on dropout prevention and at-risk youth as well as provides leadership for GEAR UP (<http://utahstars.usu.edu/index>).