

Doctoral Program in Educational Psychology Ball State University Faculty Research



Dr. Bronk's program of research centers on **positive youth development** most broadly, and moral and character education more specifically. She has explored youth purpose, a construct which represents youths' long term, personally meaningful goals for making positive contributions to society. Her recent work includes a five-year, longitudinal study of a small sample of intensely committed young people. Currently, she is studying purpose among different types of youth, including **high ability and rural adolescents**. Dr. Bronk is also an expert in **qualitative research approaches**.

Dr. Cassady's research includes exploring the impact of **academic anxieties** on learner outcomes in educational settings. He has studied **emergent reading development** and phonological awareness acquisition for children in kindergarten through 2nd grade. Dr. Cassady has also examined the impact of technology solutions for learning in schools. He is active in **program evaluation** with several grants examining the efficacy of federally funded educational programs.

Dr. Finch conducts research in the areas of **latent variable modeling** and nonparametric multivariate statistics. He has conducted studies in the area of multidimensional item response theory, invariance testing for **structural equation models**, differential item functioning, and latent class analysis. Dr. Finch is also studying multilevel latent variable structures, focusing on parameter estimation in the context of both **item response theory** and structural equation modeling. He also has conducted a number of studies comparing various methods of multivariate prediction.

Dr. Fletcher's research focuses on the role of **parenting** on child and adolescent development. She has investigated on the effects of maternal **reading to children** on language development. Dr. Fletcher is also interested in how parenting may relate to student's approaches to academic stress such as **perfectionism and coping skills**. She has also examined the impact of parenting practices on adolescent crowd memberships.

Dr. Holden's research primarily focuses on optimal use of **statistical methods** in the social sciences. At present, her research interests include performance of statistical **classification techniques** under optimal and **sub-optimal research situations**. She is also actively researching use of new cutting edge statistical methods with the hopes of incorporating these techniques into her teaching.

Dr. Huffman's research focuses on **memory development** and cognitive development of children related to classroom learning. This research has explored early mathematics learning, the role of teacher behaviors in **children**'s **strategy use**, and more recently video games for learning science and mathematics in middle school. In addition, she has served as a grant evaluator on federally funded research focused on **distance education** for high ability students



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Dr. Marchant's research explores the relationship of demographic characteristics to **standardized test scores**. Dr. Marchant has determined the majority of the achievement differences among schools, districts, and states is related to their **demographic differences**. He is working to implement a metric that allows for **achievement comparisons** that consider demographic differences.

Dr. Mucherah's research includes examining **classroom environments** and how they impact student's **academic achievement**. This line of research has explored the influence of technology, ethnicity, gender, and grade level on perceptions of classroom climate. Dr. Mucherah also studies the impact of reading motivation on student achievement in middle school. Currently, Dr. Mucherah is actively engaged in **cross-cultural research** on classroom climate, self-concept and student achievement. Dr. Mucherah has also evaluated federally funded programs pertaining to various factors that promote student achievement.

Dr. Shim's research interest revolves around **achievement motivation**, especially during **early adolescence**. Her research program is focused on personal and contextual factors that nurture love of learning and promote achievement. Currently, she examines how academic and social dimensions of classroom context foster or hinder the desirable changes in motivation, engagement, and achievement over time. Other research interest includes social achievement goals, help seeking behavior, **peer relations and peer culture**, epistemological belief, and gender and racial variations in motivation.

Dr. Speirs Neumeister's research interests include the **social and emotional dimensions** of giftedness (specifically, intensities in gifted children and perfectionism) and the identification of gifted students. She has also investigated the role of parenting in the development of **perfectionism** in gifted students. Dr. Speirs Neumeister is also active in the areas of professional development and program evaluation for services related to the education of **gifted students** in public and private schools.

Dr. Paulson's research focuses on family and school influences on **adolescent achievement**, using an ecological perspective. This research has explored parenting, educational values, and school climate, among other factors. Most recently, she has conducted a series of studies on the relations of **family demographics** to aggregated high stakes test scores. Dr. Paulson has evaluated **after-school programs** in local schools for the past 10 years.