

Research Week 2019 Proposal

Title: The Impact of Early Literacy Experiences on Pre-Field Teachers' Success in Learning Phonics and Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

Program of Study: Elementary Education

Presentation Type: Print Poster

Mentor and Mentor Email: Dr. Stacey Bose, slbose@liberty.edu

Student Name and Email: Ashley Puskar, apuskar@liberty.edu

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines the relationship between pre-service teachers' early literacy experiences and their success in phonics. Furthermore, this study examines the influence of pre-service teachers' early literacy experiences and university training on their beliefs about teaching literacy. Using multicase research methodology (Stake, 2015), this study examines the aforementioned relationships in five pre-service teachers currently enrolled in pre-field teacher education program. Data was collected from pre-test scores and pre-test questionnaire, a focus group, individual interviews, and a post-test questionnaire. The findings were compared to current literature on whole-language, phonics, combined-approaches to reading development, and the correlation between teacher beliefs about early literacy and teacher classroom practices.

Biblical Integration: From a young age, early literacy experiences influence every aspect of our formal and informal education. Early literacy experiences have the potential to negatively or positively impact a student for their rest of their lives. As teachers, we have a responsibility to equip our students with the necessary language skills to be successful leaders and lifelong

learners. In order to successfully engage our students, teachers must be prepared by university training and understand their own personal early literacy experiences.

Language has been given to us by God and is a vital part of who we are. God uses words to communicate to His people. From the beginning God has spoken and continues to speak to us through His word. In order to know the Creator of the Universe, we must understand language. Teachers have the opportunity to equip their students with adequate language skills, so they will not only be successful academically but so that they may know the One True God.

Knowing that teachers have a responsibility to engage students in language so that they may know God has pushed me to further research how a pre-field teacher's early literacy experiences and their university education influences their understanding of language. A generation of teachers has been taught reading differently than they will teach their students. I find it important to address the potential discontinuities in pre-field teacher's beliefs about early literacy so that teachers will be equipped to go into the classroom. As teachers, we are called to a higher standard because we are educating the next generation, and responsible teachers will understand the language debate so that they are best equipped and good stewards of what the Lord has called them to. Language is a powerful tool and as teachers we have the opportunity to empower students to be lifelong learners.