Inclusive Praxis for 21st Century Education: Advocacy, Challenges, and the Public Good  
(Nov. 6 & 7, 2017)  
Sponsored by:  
Center for Educational Transformation and University of Northern Iowa College of Education  
Call for Proposals 2017  
Due Date: Monday, July 17, 2017

Designed for teachers, leaders, university faculty & policymakers, UNI’s Education Summit will explore the opportunities and challenges of 21st century education. Providing strands of discussion focused on diversity and cultural competence; social emotional learning; personalized and blended learning; and community engagement and partnerships, this Summit will feature presentations and panels, interactive workshops and dialogue sessions led by experts from Iowa and the nation.

Education has entered a new era where partnerships between educators in PK-12 and higher education are becoming more prolific. These partnerships are moving away from the prior research-driven studies that may or may not be relevant to practitioners and policymakers and looking for ways to support the relationship between educators at all levels.

The 2017 Education Summit, a regional conference in Iowa, invites you to submit a proposal that shares the culminating knowledge about advocating, meeting challenges, and operating for the public good in education. We ask you to (1) share research and scholarly perspectives on the theme, (2) offer innovative ways to think about how research and theory can inform educational practice at national, state, and local levels, and (3) to discuss insightful ways in which the educational field can enhance academic excellence, equity and social justice in P-20 educational contexts. What implications do advocacy and the public good have for education policy at various levels of governance (i.e., school, district, and state levels)?

The call for proposals encourages submission of efforts that stretch the boundaries of discourse about inclusive praxis for the 21st century education and that exemplify effective, “out of the box”, innovative, and dynamic approaches to schooling, and education.

I. Topical Strands (Select One)

Diversity and Cultural Competence

Given the diverse and ever-evolving demographics of schools and communities in Iowa and across the U.S., cultural competence is an increasingly important characteristic for the development of equitable and just arrangements of schooling. Cultural competence involves developing a greater understanding and appreciation of students and communities representing a variety of cultural, ethnic, racial, economic, and religious backgrounds, as well as genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. Proponents of cultural competence strive to create environments where teaching is made relevant and accessible to diverse learners. We invite proposals that help foster theories of diversity and cultural competence, and aid better practice.

- What does it mean to be inclusive, and how can educators create environments in which the diversity of students and their communities is valued, appreciated, respected, and honored?
- Why does diversity matter, and how does it factor into collective ideas about the public good?
- What does the relationship between diversity and cultural competence mean for learners and practitioners?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and...
show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL). SEL approaches—such as those that teach self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—are associated with students’ long-term academic and career success, as shown by outcomes such as improved classroom behavior, improved reading and math achievement, higher graduation rates, and increased ability to handle stress (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Osher et al., 2016). Other terms used for SEL include nonacademic skills, whole child development, 21st-century competencies, etc. We encourage proposals that share emerging or established SEL programs, examine differential effects of SEL programs for different types of students, describe state efforts to address SEL under ESSA, etc. Possible questions to explore may include:

- How can a focus on social emotional learning (SEL) inform and challenge our thinking about current educational practices and what needs to change?
- What factors contribute to the effectiveness of SEL programs and initiatives?
- How can community partners support schools’ SEL programs and activities?

Personalized and Blended Learning

For the betterment of students, many innovative educators offer a personalized blended approach to learning. These innovators believe that, by tailoring the school experience to students’ strengths, stretches, interests and goals and by making learning available to them anytime, anywhere through the use of technology, students will respond positively and enjoy greater educational benefits as a result. The personalized blended learning approach is proving to be a powerful tool in harnessing untapped student potential as schools everywhere strive to ensure that all students are college and career ready upon graduation from high school. Researchers and practitioners share their research and perspectives.

- What are some creative ways educator preparation programs are teaching prospective teachers and school leaders to embrace personalized and blended learning?

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Coalition-building, sustained partnerships, civic duty, and a concern for the public good are all central tenants of community engagement. Publicly engaged educators, scholars, and activists move beyond mere community outreach, and instead demonstrate a commitment to reciprocity and shared knowledge-building where students, families, community members, and educators are recognized for the tremendous local expertise they hold. We encourage proposals that highlight and explore the potential for reciprocal partnerships across communities, families, public schools, and institutes of higher education. Possible questions to explore may include:

- How does your work provide an exemplar of long-term community engagement/publicly engaged scholarship and what factors discouraged or supported your innovative practices and partnerships?
- How does community engagement provide a unique and enriched lens for understanding equity, justice, and inclusion in today’s public schools?
- What counts as community engagement and partnerships and how do they influence the preparation of teachers and school leaders and those who prepare them?

II. Session Categories

Paper Sessions - These sessions are intended for reporting research results or analyzing issues of policy and practice in an abbreviated form. The proposal summary should include a statement of purpose, theoretical framework, findings, and conclusions. For research papers, also describe data sources and methods. A discussion leader will be assigned to facilitate dialogue for the session. Accepted paper sessions will have their final papers added to the conference proceedings.

Conversations/Dialogues - These sessions are intended to stimulate informal, lively discussions using a series of provocative questions or vignettes. Session organizers may organize a panel of participants who facilitate and guide the conversation about critical issues, concerns, and perspectives. Alternatively, these sessions may be organized as a
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dialogue where the organizers and audience discuss together an issue or series of questions in small groups. The proposal summary should describe the purpose of the session, the ways in which participants will engage in conversation/dialogue, and examples of questions or areas to be addressed.

Symposia - A symposium should examine specific issues, research problems, or topics from several perspectives and allow for dialogue and discussion. Session organizers are expected to chair the session, confirm session panelist attendance, and facilitate discussion. There is a limit of three papers per symposia session. Accepted symposia sessions will have their final papers added to the conference proceedings.

Poster Session - These sessions are intended for individualized discussions of one’s research and/or development projects. Like a paper session, poster session proposal summaries should include a statement of purpose, rationale, findings, and conclusions. For research reports, also describe data sources and methods.

III. Proposal Information

The final proposal submission will include two separate documents - a cover sheet and a proposal narrative. These documents may be shared as PDF or word documents and should use 12 point New Times Roman font. The Cover Sheet should include the following information:

- Presenter(s) Name(s), Title, Organization, and Contact Information
- Title
- Session Category (Paper, Conversations/Dialogues, Symposia, or Poster)
- Topical Strand (Diversity and Cultural Competence, Social Emotional Learning, etc.)
- Abstract (150 word limit)
- Key Words for searchable repository
- Please answer the question, “Would you be willing to serve as a session chair or discussant?” on the Cover Sheet.

The proposal narrative should include the information listed below:

- Title
- Session Category
- Topical Strand
- Abstract (150 word limit)
- Proposal Narrative not to exceed 1,500 words, double-spaced
- References - one page, single spaced

IV. Criteria for Review of Proposals

All proposals will be subject to a blind, peer review process. The proposal must not include names or any identifying information of session organizers or presenters. Proposals for papers and posters will be evaluated for: (a) relevance of research problem/topic to the convention theme and/or broader discourse in the field, (b) thoroughness and clarity of the proposal; and (c) theoretical framework, methods, and analysis (for empirical research). All other proposals will be evaluated for: (a) relevance of research problem/topic to the convention theme and/or broader discourse in the field, (b) thoroughness and clarity of the proposal, and (c) the likelihood that the format of the session will support the purpose of the session. Accepted paper and symposia sessions will have their final papers added to the conference proceedings.

V. Proposal Deadlines

Proposals must be received by Monday, July 17, 2017 at 5 pm CST via email submission to Edsummit@uni.edu.