Lyle Spencer Research Awards to Transform Education
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In 2014, the Spencer Foundation announced the Lyle Spencer Research Awards grant program with the aim of supporting intellectually ambitious research projects that aspire to transform education. Since that time, Spencer has accepted proposals each of the past 7 years and to date has provided funding for 44 different research projects.

The Spencer Board of Directors recently voted to discontinue the Lyle Grant Program in order to make space for new, creative approaches to funding intellectually ambitious, transformative research. We look forward to sharing further details as our plans develop.

Recent Awardees

The Lyle Spencer Research Awards program has been active since 2015 and in that time we have funded the 40 projects listed below.

2014-2015

“Leveraging Lotteries for Value-Added: Bias Reduction vs. Efficiency”
Joshua D. Angrist, Parag A. Pathak, Christopher R. Walters, and Peter D. Hull
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

“School Choice in Indiana: An Examination of Impacts and the Conditions Under Which Choice is Effective”
Mark Berends and R. Joseph Waddington
University of Notre Dame

“The New 'One Best System?': Urban Governance and Educational Practice in the Portfolio Management Model”
Katrina Bulkley, Julie Ann Marsh, Douglas N. Harris, and Katharine O. Strunk
Montclair State University

“Using Multiple Lenses to Investigate the Development of Content Knowledge and Teaching Practices in Relationship to Learning Opportunities”
Elizabeth A. Davis and Annemarie Palincsar
University of Michigan

“Broadening Participation in a Computational Future: Casting a Wide Net”
Michael Horn, Kai Orton, and Uri Wilensky
Northwestern University

“The Education Governance & Accountability Project”
Stephane Lavertu, Vladimir Kogan, and Zachary Peskowitz
The Ohio State University

“Supports for Rich and Explicit Language and Vocabulary Instruction in Preschool Classrooms Serving Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds”
Beth M. Phillips and Carla Wood
Florida State University Research Foundation, Inc.

“A Comparative Study of School Systems: Infrastructure, Practice, and instructional improvement”
James Spillane and Donald J. Peurach
Northwestern University

“Parenting Matters? Examining the Value and Optimal Approaches of Family Engagement in Educating Students of Color”
Ming-Te Wang and James P. Huguley
University of Pittsburgh

“The Development of Ambitious Instruction in Elementary Mathematics and English Language Arts”
Peter A. Youngs, Corey J. Drake, Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, and Spyros Konstantopoulos
University of Virginia

2015-2016
“Distinguishing between Low English Proficiency and Learning Disabilities”
Jamal Abedi and Robert J. Bayley
University of California, Davis

“The Children Cannot Wait: Generating Actionable Evidence to Improve the Practice of Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts”
J. Lawrence Aber and Jeannie Annan
New York University

“Teachers in the Movement: Pedagogy, Activism, and Freedom”
Derrick P. Alridge
University of Virginia

“Youth, Peace, and Violence in Nairobi and Karachi: Testing Educational Assumptions”
Dana Susan Burde, Elisabeth King, Daphna Harel, and Jennifer Hill
New York University

“Improvement of Mathematics Teaching At-Scale”
Richard J. Correnti and Mary Kay Stein
University of Pittsburgh

“English Learner Achievement in Elementary School: Classroom Composition and Opportunity to Learn”
Peggy Estrada
University of California, Santa Cruz

“How Does Eliminating Tenure and Collective Bargaining Affect Teacher Labor Markets and Student Achievement?”
Matthew A. Kraft
Brown University

“Supporting Parents: Clarifying the barriers to parental involvement in early childhood through experimental testing within a highly effective parent text messaging program”
Susanna Loeb
Brown University
“Indigenous-Language Immersion and Native American Student Achievement”
Teresa L. McCarty, Tiffany S. Lee, Sheilah E. Nicholas, and Michael H. Seltzer
University of California, Los Angeles

“Improving Instruction through Data Use on Teaching Quality”
Lauren Sartain, Dan A. Black, and Jennie Y. Jiang
The University of Chicago

“Making the Invisible Visible: Systematically Examining Classroom Enactments of Bias with MET Data”
Carola Suarez-Orozco
University of California, Los Angeles

2016-2017

“Race-based Biological Stress, Ethnic-Racial Identity, and Educational Outcomes: New Approaches to Studying Academic Achievement Gaps”
Emma Kristine Adam, Mesmin Destin, and Adriana J. Umana-Taylor
Northwestern University

“Knowledge and Nudges: Increasing Educational Achievement Among Disabled Youth”
Manasi Abhay Deshpande and Rebecca Dizon-Ross
National Bureau of Economic Research

“Understanding Thinking and Learning Among Students with Significant Disabilities”
Karen A. Erickson and George Noblit
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Up, up and away: Malleable features of pre-k and primary classrooms and their contributions to sustained benefits for vulnerable children”
Anna D. Johnson, Diane M. Horm, and Deborah Phillips
Georgetown University

“The Promise and Practice of Prison Higher Education”
Amy E. Lerman
University of California, Berkeley
“Design Meets the Real World”  
Jal Mehta  
Harvard University

“Towards An Inclusive Education for Refugees: A Comparative Longitudinal Study”  
Maha Shuayb, Nina Maadad, and Ali Zafer Sagiroglu  
Centre for Lebanese Studies

“The Listening Project: Addressing the Crisis of Connection in Education via Semi-Structured Interview Training of Teachers and Students”  
New York University

2017-2018

“Understanding marginalized youth’s secondary education experiences: A mixed-methods study of Colombia, India, and Malawi”  
Amita Chudgar, Nancy Kendall, and Thomas Luschei  
Michigan State University

“Teacher Turnover and School Improvement: Examining the Mechanisms Through Which Instability Disrupts Schools, and How to Mitigate It”  
Jennifer Jellison Holme and Huriya Jabbar  
The University of Texas at Austin

“Project TRANSLATE”  
Vanderbilt University

“Prototyping and Evaluating a Living Research Synthesis Infrastructure”  
Pamela A. Moss and Carl Lagoze  
University of Michigan

“Matching in Multilevel Contexts”  
Lindsay Page and Luke J. Keele  
University of Pittsburgh
“Discriminating Language: Race, Gender, Letters of Recommendation and Outcomes in Academic Hiring”
Kimberlee A. Shauman, Catherine R. Albiston, and Victoria C. Plaut
University of California, Davis

“Exploring the Development of Teaching Skills”
James H. Wyckoff, Courtney Bell, and Eric S. Taylor
University of Virginia

2020-2021

Organizing Family and Community: Collective Parent Action and Intergenerational Learning
Joanna D. Geller, Jennifer E. Cossyleon, Fabienne Doucet
New York University

Longitudinal Peer Social Networks and Early Language Development: Transforming Understanding of Critical Features of Young Children’s Classroom Experiences
Laura M. Justice, Daniel S. Messinger, Dwight Irvin, Kelly M. Purtell, Tzu-Jung Lin, Hugo Gonzalez Villasanti, Lynn K. Perry, Chaoming Song, Batya Elbaum, Brian A. Boyd, Jay Buzhardt
The Ohio State University

Student Supports: The Role of Social Safety Net Programs in Community College Student Success
Jesse Rothstein, Johanna R. Lacoe
University of California, Berkeley

Re-imagining Alternative Education: Designing for Geographies of Care and Responsibility
Eli Tucker-Raymond, Beth Warren, Brian E. Gravel, Gregory Benoît, Maria C. Olivares
Boston University