

Research Assistantship: Research & Evaluation Addressing
Innovation in Teacher Development Programming

Project

The delivery of effective and equitable public education is a core focus of much research and practice, given the wide-ranging effects of educational advancement on economic and workforce development, health outcomes, and more. This includes specific attention to new mechanisms to train and support beginning teachers, as they play a pivotal role in fostering positive outcomes. In 2018-19, the School of Education at North Carolina State University (NCSU), with funding from and in partnership with North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI), developed and implemented a new initiative, called Wolfpack WORKS, to enhance lower elementary literacy instruction in North Carolina. This program provides professional development activities to beginning kindergarten through second grade teachers in 16 high-need, high-turnover North Carolina school districts. In the 2019-20 school year, the program is concluding its second academic year of supports for eligible teachers.

Members of the Duke University Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) Applied Research, Evaluation and Engagement Team have partnered with Wolfpack WORKS to develop and implement evaluation and related applied research processes. These processes have been designed to examine program outcomes and guide adjustments to the program for future years. Quantitative efforts to address teacher engagement, experience, and outcomes utilize survey and Wolfpack WORKS program administrative data; quantitative efforts to address student outcomes utilize large-scale administrative educational data from NC DPI. This RAship will primarily involve work on the DPI student data side of this project, though there are also opportunities to be involved with collecting and analyzing primary data through teacher surveys.

Job responsibilities may include:

- Assisting with the creation of a matched administrative dataset consisting of students and teachers in intervention and control school districts
- Updating and maintaining essential project documentation
- Analyzing data using a variety of statistic methods, including descriptive statistics and regression
- Reviewing and cleaning administrative and original teacher survey data; assistance with merging and recoding data is also possible, dependent on prior experience and interest
- Programming the summer 2020 teacher survey in Qualtrics, including assisting with adjustments to survey questions and design
- Preparing data for presentation, including results tables and reports for partners at NCSU and/or DPI

Ideal Candidate

Through this RAship, the Wolfpack WORKS RA will have the opportunity to engage with various aspects of the data collection and analysis process, including manipulating and examining big, messy data. In addition to data cleaning and analysis, this work will provide a good opportunity to develop effective data management strategies as well as to experience adjustments to evaluation research in real-time, as both programmatic and evaluation efforts may be adjusted to improve outcomes in future cycles (i.e., updating analysis plans for administrative data in future years and/or informing programmatic adjustments for the following school year). For someone without prior SAS experience, this RAship will also provide the opportunity to build SAS knowledge and skills.

Please submit a CV and cover letter explaining the reason for your interest and any relevant past experience to Doreet Preiss (Doreet.preiss@duke.edu) as soon as possible. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.