The Annual Mary Lou Fulton Mentored Research Conference showcases some of the best student research from the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. The mentored learning program encourages undergraduate students to participate in hands-on and practical research under the direction of a faculty member. Students create these posters as an aide in presenting the results of their research to the public, faculty, and their peers.
Abstract:
This study analyzes the effects of attending a Title I funded school on student achievement by examining fall and spring test scores of kindergarten students, and achievement gains between the two evaluations. The study presents two hypotheses: students attending Title I funded schools will have higher math test scores for both fall and spring tests than students attending schools that do not receive Title I funds, and students attending Title I funded schools will have higher achievement gains between fall and spring than children attending schools that do not receive Title I funds. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study 1998-1999 (ECLS-K), it is determined that students who attended Title I funded schools received lower test scores than their peers at schools that did not receive these funds. Also, no significant difference in achievement gains was found between the two groups.

Introduction:
Not all students in the United States receive an education that leads to literacy and success in the labor market (Darling Hammond, 2007). This can be attributed to the unequal distribution of educational resources (Murnane, 2007). Children who live in poverty tend to go to school with high levels of students in poverty. Because of the housing patterns that put these children in schools together, the schools often do not have an adequate budget to afford quality teachers, computers, textbooks, or small class sizes.

The home environment can also influence a child's level of student achievement. The child rearing techniques used in a home can affect a child's talents, abilities, values, social skills, behavior, and achievement in school, and often leave the poorer children at a disadvantage. Poorer parent's tend to talk with their child less, enroll them in fewer extra curricular, and even spend less time with them (Lareau, 2002).

Title I: to "[close] the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Title I: The goal of this study is to achieve the goal of providing additional funding to schools with high percentages of poor children.

Funding used to improve teacher quality, improve classroom procedure and reduce class size can have a positive influence on student achievement (Wenglinsky, 1997).

Table: 

Hypothesis 1:
Students who attended schools that received Title I funds will have lower test scores for both fall and spring tests than students who attended schools that did not receive Title I funds.

Results:
Fall Test scores: Students who attended a Title I funded school received 1.359 points less on the fall math evaluation than students who attended a school that did not receive Title I funded schools. This relationship was significant at the p < .001 level.

Spring Test scores: Students who attended a Title I funded school received 1.757 points less on the spring math evaluation than students who attended a school that did not receive Title I funded schools. This relationship was significant at the p < .001 level.

Conclusions:
In accordance with previous literature, students who attended Title I funded schools earned significantly lower marks on test scores than their peers who attended schools that did not receive Title I funding. There was no significant difference found in math score gains between students attending Title I funded schools and students that attended schools that did not receive these additional funds.

Title I is a program that intends to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers. These results posit that Title I is not meeting its goals. Both groups of children had achievement gains, but because there was no significant difference in the size of achievement gains between the two groups the students attending Title I funded schools still had significantly lower test scores than their more advantaged peers.

Because funding has been found to have a positive influence on student achievement (Wenglinsky, 1997), it would be helpful to evaluate how Title I funds are being used, to help them reach their greatest potential. Wenglinsky (1997), also found that it is not having funding that is important but how funding is used. "Title I funding may be more beneficial if schools focused additional funding on improving teacher quality, reducing class sizes, improving classroom procedures and content, and finding ways to better include parents in their children's education and lives.

References: