



OMEGA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

AMERICAN CENTRE FOR
RELIGION/SOCIETY STUDIES (ACRSS)

Changing the World Through Social Research

Faith-Based Educator Support Program
Sandra M. Anderson
Action Research Project
SR 920-DSL
Final Presentation
Monday, December 9, 2024
1:00 p.m.

Action Research Purpose

The action research project was to address the problem of Christian educators working in public schools needing more support and training to integrate their faith within secular educational systems with policies contrary to their beliefs. Christian educators are often unprepared for the challenges due to a lack of training in this area (Marker, 2020). Christian educators could benefit from specific training on how to use biblical influence and principles to reflect God's character in their work (2020). Christians working in the public school system are often overwhelmed with the anti-Christian beliefs that are a part of the curriculum and culture, and need more advocacy and support from their churches, and information about their constitutionally protected rights to practice their religion (2020; Anderson, S., Action Research Practicum, Fall 2024, p. 4-5)



Action Research Problem

The problem was significant because many experienced educators, including Christians, have left the profession due to the constant assaults and legislative attacks on the teaching profession, thus creating a teacher shortage. Colleges and universities have seen a sharp drop in the number of applications to teacher preparation institutions (Ravitch, 2020, p. 4). Political leaders blamed public school teachers as they tried to gain support to privatize education. This has contributed greatly to decreasing the number of students entering education programs to be a teacher (2020). “How can a nation educate its young without well-qualified, experienced teachers?” (2020; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 5-6)

Research Question (1A):

How does this intervention affect the problem of Christian educators leaving public schools because of blatant anti-Biblical curriculum and policies?

Through the faith-based support program, my goals were to empower, equip, and encourage Christian educators. The faith-based support program was designed to meet the spiritual and socio-emotional needs of the educators in the support group building a sense of belonging and community among Christian Educators. I began the 2024- 2025 school year with an in-person Fall Kickoff Breakfast to equip, empower, and encourage educators. The Fall Kickoff was followed by weekly meetings and in-person events. This faith-based support program involves prayer, scripture reading, fellowship, prayer partners, and a group chat to encourage and uplift CEs. Please see the example on the next slide. (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 17-20)

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The chart below indicates the date, intervention, and informal assessment; Daniel Study.

Date	Intervention - Daniel Study Chapters 1-6 Model for Integrating Faith Into Practice For Such A Time As This	Informal Assessment
<p>EFC Meeting 1: In-Person Saturday, 9/21/24 Daniel 1:1-Topics: Christian education history, Leading and teaching Biblical Principles. Begin Daniel study (Ch.1)</p>	<p>In-Person Meeting - Daniel 1:1-21 EFC Kickoff Breakfast (Hot) - Food, interactive activities and discussions to build relationships while learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-Person Attendance ● Participation in whole and small groups ● Work Samples ● EFC Feedback Survey
<p>EFC Meeting 2: Mon., 9/23/24 Topics: Daniel and his friends' character, integrity and unification through prayer and faith in God. Daniel 2:1-20</p>	<p>Virtual EFC Meeting - Daniel 2:1-20. Assign Memory Verse-Galatians 5:22-23. Prayer groups established at this meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Virtual Attendance ● Participation in Weekly Meetings ● Participation is Small Prayer Groups & Group Chat (Outside of Weekly Meetings)

(Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 28-30)

Research Question 1B:

How does this intervention affect the problem of Christian educators leaving public schools because of blatant anti-Biblical curriculum and policies? (con't.)

For my action research, I implemented a ten-week interactive series for Christian educators studying from the Old Testament Book of Daniel. To begin the series, I designed the first interactive lesson as an outreach. I led the first in-person Educators Fall Kickoff Breakfast, where participants engaged in the first interactive lesson in this ten-week Daniel Study series. Participants registered for the EFC Kickoff Breakfast and/or to join the EFC life group on the church website. To further expand this ministry, Educators for Christ worked with the Outreach Ministry for the EFC Kickoff Breakfast. Dr. David Anderson is the Founder and Senior Pastor as well as an alumni and Chancellor of Omega Graduate School (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 27).

My Professional Context Statement

This problem was relevant to my professional context because I am a thirty year public school Christian educator and have worked at all levels; high, middle, elementary schools and adults. I have been running schools and supervising teachers and staff for almost twenty years. I made a conscious decision to leave the comfort and safety of working as an educator in a parochial Christian school to work as an educator in the public school system to represent Jesus Christ in this secular environment. In the thirty years I have worked in public schools, I have volunteered in several roles in the church. Only once have one of my church pastors or church ministry leaders come to the schoolhouse where the families in the communities they serve attend. I have led missions and humanitarian teams around the world with church support. Where is the church's missionary support for the Christian educators and staff that God placed in our public schools to minister to America's young and their families from around the world?

Selected Sociological Theory

My selected sociological theory is Symbolic Interaction, which aligns well with Christian approaches to sociological intervention. The principal origins of Symbolic Interactionism trace its origins to the works of G. H. Mead (especially, 1934). Herbert Blumer was one of Mead's best-known students, who advanced symbolic interaction through his teaching and writing. Blumer interpreted interaction with three basic premises. First, human beings act towards things based on the meanings that the things have for them. Secondly, these meanings are a product of social interaction in human society. Thirdly, individuals modified these meanings through an interpretive process used in dealing with the signs they encountered (Meltzer, et al., 2020, p. 1; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 13)

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S. Anderson's Adaptation of Sociological Theory To Goals

I adapted the three premises outlined by Herbert Blumer to the goals of my intervention: S. Anderson's 3 Es, Equip, Empower and Encourage:

- 1) ***Equip*** CEs through targeted study of the Word of God (John 5:39), developing a Christian worldview versus a secular worldview.
- 2) ***Empower*** CEs through building a professional community to build and strengthen one another as we follow Christ (Hebrews 10:25).
- 3) ***Encourage*** each other as we bond with shared experiences and interpretations of those experiences (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 13).

S. Anderson Sociological/Psychological Monitoring Process

I chose to monitor progress with Blumer's three premises, my three goals to equip, empower and encourage with Jeremy Pollack's six psychological needs (Pollack, 2020, p. 7; Pollack, 2017):

Safety is the belief that one is psychologically and physically safe

Affiliation is the feeling of being a part of a family, community, or organization

Positive self-regard is one's identity, and how they are feeling

Interdependence is the extent to one feels they have autonomy to make their own decisions

Engaging Activities is engaging in activities that have one feeling stimulated.

Noble Pursuits are the extent to which one is learning, growing, or progressing toward their endeavors (2020; 2017; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 14, 17-21).

Action Research From a Christian Perspective

We need more ethics in Christianity to show that religion needs to be integrated with life, “transfiguring and spiritualizing all its activities and relationships” (Chiareli, 2019). Living a Christ-centered life must embrace the wholeness of our activities, not compartmentalized (2019). Christianity should be practiced as “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:5-6). Our love for God needs to be integrated into every area of our lives (Anderson, S, Fall 2024, Ethics in Global Society Essay, p. 7).

Action Research-Based Intervention

The research-based intervention utilized to address the problem in this action research project was through a Christian educator faith-based support group. At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school, I led the first in-person Educators For Christ Fall Kickoff Breakfast, where participants engaged in the first interactive lesson in this ten-week series. EFC's objective was to equip, empower, and encourage educators. The Fall Kickoff was followed up with weekly meetings for a ten-week series; the Daniel Study. To further expand this ministry, Educators for Christ worked with the Outreach Ministry for the EFC Kickoff Breakfast. Dr. David Anderson is the Founder and Senior Pastor as well as alumnus and Chancellor of Omega Graduate School (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 27).

The intervention

- **Location: Bridgeway Community Church (In-person & Online)**
- **Duration: Establish EFC in 2020/Intervention 10-week series, Fall 2024**
- **Number of participants: 25**

Before the Intervention

Christian educators are leaving public schools and even fewer are coming in.

With the problems with the demands of the profession, it has become even more challenging for those who stay (Ravitch, 2020, p. 4). Again we ask, “How can a nation educate its young without well-qualified, experienced teachers?” (2020; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 4-5). There was a void in supporting Christian educators as God’s ambassadors in public schools and secular educational institution.

Intervention Data

Daniel Study Survey

	Faith Integration Study: Daniel			Community and Encouragement		
	Beginning	End	Growth	Beginning	End	Growth
A	10	80	70	20	20	0
B	20	80	60	20	20	0
C	20	90	70	20	80	60
D	40	90	50	20	80	60
E	60	100	40	20	100	80
F	60	100	40	20	100	80
G	80	100	40	20	100	80

Of the fourteen members whose attendance was sixty percent or higher, seven completed the survey. The survey consisted of five multiple-choice questions and two short answers. The chart below illustrates the impact and the two short answer questions will be summarized (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 34).

After the intervention, it was observed

I observed after the intervention in analyzing the attendance data that 44% of life group members had participation rates of 40% or less, while 56% of life group members had participation rates of 60% or higher. (Please see attendance data on the next slide). All members receives emails. One aspect of the EFC life group ministry not captured was the percentage of life group members involved in the group chat. Out of the 25 members, 17 members (68%) are involved in the EFC group chat. Not everyone who attends the meetings was involved in the group chat, and not everyone in the group chat is attending the meetings. I established the group chat for participants to have ongoing positive communications, prayer requests, and encouragement (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 32).

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Attendance Survey for the EFC Daniel Study

Number of Events Attended	Percentage of Events Attendent	Number of Participants
0	0%	2
1	10%	5
2	20%	3
3	30%	0
4	40%	1
5	50%	0
6	60%	4
7	70%	2
8	80%	7
9	90%	0
10	100%	1

The first column represents the number of intervention meetings attended. The second column represents the percentage of events attended. The third column represents the number of EFC participants at that percentage or # (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 32).

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My Action Research Project's Personal Affect

As thirty year veteran who has worked at all levels in public school education, I have only been visited once by my pastor, and that was my brother. When he visited my school, even people who were not Christians were blessed and encouraged. I personally began to feel supported immediately after starting this faith-based educator support program. This is in line with the mission. Christian educators participating in this program centered around God's Word will meet all six of Pollack's basic needs; affiliation (belonging), safety, engaging activities or stimulation, and noble pursuits or growth. In particular, EFC will help educators have a positive self-regard of their identity (Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 33).

Implications for leadership

The results of this action research project are relevant to leading social change because having this type of program will help support and retain Christian educators in public schools and secular institutions as well as help encourage more support from churches. From my experience in working with the Christian educators in this life group ministry and in public schools, trust was something that was built, and it takes time. For many, especially those in leadership and those who had the most to lose in being vulnerable, this type of trust did not happen overnight. In Suzanne & Reiss' article (2023), it speaks to the power of having a space where you can openly vocalize and share interpretations of challenging experiences for strength and solidarity (2023; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 40).

Changing the World Through Social Research **Positive & Transformative Leadership Theory**

Leadership theories that support the results of this action research project include highly effective group and teamwork strategies for positive leadership. Utilizing scholarly research was important to lead change in today's society by bringing people together and leading in excellence and civility. OGS teaches about faith-learning integration, and people regardless of their faith or backgrounds want to be connected and feel a part of the community around them (Anderson, S., Organizational Dynamics Essay, Fall 2024). The OGS approach to Meirow's transformative learning principles strategically develops leaders through reflective transformation and inner personal growth. Meirow's transformative learning theory focuses on transforming problematic frames of reference into more inclusive, open, reflective, and emotionally able-to-change ones (Anderson, S., Transformative Learning and Adult Learning Essay, Fall 2023). Through positive and transformative leadership, I started a community of committed Christian educators to equip, empower and encourage them to maintain steadfastness in their God-given assignments.

Recommendation For Future Research

Future action research projects might consider research to equip full-time ministry leaders and clergy to work within the boundaries of the US Constitution in supporting educators and students in public schools. More research is also needed for empowering Christian Educators through belonging to a unified faith-based community to advocate for Christians and to do the work of our Savior on one accord. The challenge then is how do we unite Christian believers to transcend pass politics, race, socio-economic situations and even denominations? God has Christians in every sector of public education which educates the masses and allows access to learning for all children. This very important work is ripe unto harvest for such a time as this (Matthew 9:35-38; Anderson, S., Fall 2024, p. 33, 37-38).

Conclusion

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), about one-quarter (24.8 percent) of the U.S. population over the age of 3 was enrolled in school in 2021 ([US Census](#), 2023). In 2021, 81.9 percent (65.1 million) of students enrolled were in public school and 18.1 percent (14.4 million) were in private school (2023). To continue this work, I plan to:

- 1) Expand faith-based support programs for CEs for the 3Es
- 2) Work with churches on how to support and partner with their CEs to have a greater impact in schools
- 3) Add to the body of literature on this topic.