

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

School of Education Fall Colloquium Series

Jennie Whitcomb & Kent Seidel

Teacher Quality:

“I Know It When I See It”

Common sense suggests a good teacher matters. Personal experiences with inspirational and challenging teachers reinforce this notion. Research has also shown that some teachers have a more significant impact on student achievement than others. Teacher quality is seen as a key policy lever to narrow achievement gaps that exist along racial and economic lines. Ensuring the quality profile of the teacher workforce is crucial to extend the democratic mission of public schooling to the unprecedented number of students who are more diverse than at any point in U.S. history.

This talk examines current research and policy efforts nationally and in Colorado to enhance teacher quality. We will clarify terms widely used in policy discussions of teacher quality and note some limitations in the research and policy efforts to improve teacher quality. Additionally, we will discuss an ongoing research project in Denver Public Schools to develop an observation tool that focuses on those teaching practices that matter most in both engaging students and fostering their achievement.



Jennie Whitcomb is Associate Dean for Teacher Education in the School of Education at CU Boulder. Her research focuses on teacher learning, pedagogy and practice in teacher education, and policy in teacher education. She has studied teacher learning in the contexts of curriculum development activities with veteran teachers, case writing with veteran teachers, and online case conversations among teacher candidates. She has also written about Montessori education and studied approaches to teacher preparation for Montessori classrooms.

Kent Seidel is Associate Professor and Chair of the P-20 Leadership programs at the University of Denver Morgridge College of Education. His primary research has focused on performance-based approaches to improving educator support and school quality, including a major emphasis on value-added and growth measures in accountability systems.

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Fall COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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