At Research For Action, I am a research intern on an evaluative project of an arts integration initiative of the Mural Arts Program.

My Internship at RFA

In the three months that I have been on the project, I have:

- Interviewed teaching artists and classroom teachers from two Philadelphia schools
- Conducted a review of literature on arts integration
- Designed survey questions
- Written memos and documents of preliminary findings
- Coded and analyzed data
- Transcribed interviews

Being an intern with Research For Action has been an incredible learning experience. I have worked closely with my field supervisor, Katrina Morrison, who has been very attentive to my role as an intern: to not only to contribute my skills to the project, but to also prioritize building new skills.

Upon joining the project in January, I spent time familiarizing myself with the project. This involved my reading the interviews that had already been conducted, as well as reading up on relevant literature about arts education, arts integration, the Mural Arts Program, and the public school system in Philadelphia.

The evaluation is a 2-year mixed-methods study. Year one involves interviews with teaching artists and classroom teachers from four partnering public schools in Philadelphia. The second year will include student surveys and quantitative data analysis.

The study is looking at successes and challenges of the Mural Arts Program’s arts integration initiative, as well as its impact on academic achievement, school attendance, and behavior.

The following are a few of the books and articles that I read:

- The Death and Life of the Great American School System - Diane Ravitch
- Doing and Writing Qualitative Research - Adrian Holliday
- "Community organizing creates a new form of accountability" - Eva Gold and Elaine Simon

I have been actively involved in the project in both data collection and data analysis.

Not only have I learned so much about the process of conducting research, but also about the Mural Arts Program, arts education, education reform, and the city of Philadelphia.

For my final project, I am formulating my own research questions and methods which I hope to use as the foundation for my senior thesis.

Having a real-world learning experience, in which I have a structured component to reflect and build upon academically, has been a really exciting and unique process. It has strengthened my interested in pursuing a career in conducting education research.

This summer, I am looking forward to continuing my internship with Research For Action.

Description
Each week, I updated my dialogue journal, an online document where my faculty advisor Alice Lesnick and I commented and conversed between our weekly meetings.

In my journal, I reflected on my internship and articulated ideas and questions that arise from my readings.

A major focus of my journaling was regarding the discourse surrounding education reform, and the ways in which the meaning and mission of education reform varies widely.

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Reflections
I chose to do a Praxis independent study because I wanted the opportunity to expand upon my interest in education reform outside of the classroom.

Having a real-world learning experience, in which I have a structured component to reflect and build upon academically, has been a really exciting and unique process. It has strengthened my interested in pursuing a career in conducting education research.

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Course Readings
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