MELLIE TORRES, Ph.D.

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SUMMARY

Bilingual applied researcher, program evaluator, and practitioner with deep experience working with and for communities that have been systematically and structurally excluded to uplift their promise and talent and to advance social mobility. Expertise in mixed methods, monitoring and evaluation, and learning; research management, and cross-sectoral partnerships.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SEL4NJ   2021 – 2022
Grant Officer
Managed a $30,000 budget to support a diverse portfolio of school districts and community partners; Lead all aspects of grant processing and review including crafting the request for proposals and the grant application, recruiting and convening review committee, publicizing grant, communicating with prospective grant applicants, providing technical assistance, organizing and reviewing all applications, and designing rubric scoring guide.

Mirror Group, Inc.   2020 – 2021
Subject Matter Expert Consultant
Supported strategic planning of a national foundation's efforts to implement place-based, equity-centered grantmaking; Gathered and reviewed organizational data from online sources and interviewed executive leadership and program staff from foundations across the U.S. to inform recommendations.

The Newark Trust for Education   2017 – 2020
Evaluation and Learning Consultant, Summer 2017
Conceptualized and executed community-centered learning and evaluation plan of the Funders' Collaborative program; Designed timeline, and data collection plan and protocols; Managed project logistics; Collected and analyzed data to inform learning from philanthropic funders, school leadership/staff, and community program partners. Produced final evaluation report; Disseminated findings and recommendations to community stakeholders.

Grants Review Committee Member
Reviewed and evaluated grant proposals for both the Victoria Foundation and the Funders' Collaborative Grants for High-Quality Schools, funding for public schools to support social-emotional learning, and systems reform efforts.

NYC Department of Education   Summer 2016
Evaluation, Impact, and Learning Consultant
Directed formative evaluation of the Bank of America Career Technical Education Summer Scholars Program to assess program implementation and describe the perceptions of student participants and internship supervisors; Updated protocols, obtained IRB clearance from NYC Department of Education, administered student and supervisor survey, and analyzed data. Wrote evaluation report for the funding agency.

The Ford Foundation   **Fall 2015**
Applied Research Consultant
Investigated the opportunities and challenges associated with educating a rapidly growing Latinx immigrant population in a suburban school district in New Jersey. Cultivated and nurtured relationships and conducted interviews and focus groups with parents, school staff, and community partners in Spanish and English; Analyzed qualitative data and completed findings report.

NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools   2013 – 2014
Senior Research Associate
Lead investigator of a theory of change and implementation review of a district-wide expanded learning initiative. Oversaw all MEL processes: project timeline, development, data collection, and analysis, Supervised and trained graduate students in research and evaluation methods; Developed and stewarded relationships with district personnel, school staff, and community partners; Reported findings to stakeholder groups; Co-authored implementation reports aimed at practitioner and policy-maker audiences; Collected, coded, analyzed, and interpreted mixed-methods data for root cause assessment of equity concerns.

Research Investigator/Assistant   **2006 – 2012**
Lead investigator of a 2-year evaluation of a violence prevention program for young men of color funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Designed, executed, and reported on evaluation and learning studies of youth development and out-of-school time programs; Collaborated on all stages of the evaluation and research process on multiple mixed-methods projects including research design, data collection, and analysis, presentation of findings at conferences, and writing reports and publications; Interviewed students, teachers, and parents, conducted focus groups, and classroom observations; Crafted research briefs and reports for dissemination; Developed qualitative and quantitative tools and obtained IRB clearance from NYU and school districts.

Newark Public Schools   **2001 – 2006**
Mathematics Teacher and Assistant Track & Field Coach, Arts High School
Incorporated problem-solving techniques, technology, and manipulatives to promote critical thinking as national and state standards recommended. Tutored students in all math classes.

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

New York University, New York, NY   **2020 – 2021**
Founding Faculty, Administration, Leadership and Technology
Designed Quantitative Methods for Educational Leadership I and II, a course for mid-career professionals enrolled in the online Ed.D. Leadership and Innovation program. Taught online course and incorporated CritQuant through readings, assignments, and lectures; Mentored and advised doctoral students.

The Graduate Center at the City University of New York   **2017 – 2020**
Visiting Assistant Professor
Developed and taught Latino/a/xs, Schooling, and Identities graduate course. Produced, published, and presented original research and scholarship, and engaged in professional development activities. Mentored graduate students and wrote letters of recommendation for fellowships and doctoral studies.

Montclair State University   **2014 – 2015**
Visiting Assistant Professor, Educational Foundations
Designed courses and facilitated learning in graduate-level research methods and applied statistics. Supervised and mentored 7 undergraduate and graduate student teachers in professional semester placements in urban and suburban districts.

RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS

NSF CONVERGE Natural Hazards Center   **2021**
COVID-19 Quick Response Program
"¡Estamos bien, Puerto Rico!: Compounding disasters and young adults in Puerto Rico"
Co-PI: $2,000

AERA Education Research Service Project   **2014**
"Building Data-Driven Capacity in OST Programs: NYU
and The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. Research Partnership."
Co-PI: $5,000

SKILLS

Language: Spanish (Native/Intermediate Professional)
Proficiency in SPSS, Dedoose, Qualtrics

BOARD LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC)   **2021 – Present**
Board of Directors

The University of Michigan, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy   **2019 – Present**
Alumni School Board, Vice Chair

New York Consortium of Evaluators   **2019 – Present**
Board Member, Program Chair

CUNY Service Corps   **Summer 2019**
Puerto Rico Disaster Relief Efforts Volunteer and Chaperone

Friends of the Newark Public Library   **2016 – 2018**

EDUCATION

New York University   2013
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Ph.D., Teaching, and Learning

Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ   2006
M.A.T., Mathematics Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI   1997
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
M.P.P., Social Policy, and Inequality

Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ   1995
B.S., Mathematics