**More Than a Score: The Test-Optional Movement in Higher Education**

**Presenter: Lisa Montgomery (Literacy)**

**Faculty Mentor:  Dr. Heather Schugar (Literacy)**

"Test optional", "test flexible" and "no tests required" are buzzwords surrounding the college admissions' process today. Getting into a college or university may require a student to submit several sets of grades and scores from either the SAT or ACT, write essays, prepare for interviews and/or complete other admission requirements. As of 2018, there are at least 1,000 accredited, bachelor-degree-granting colleges and universities that altered their admissions policy to either eliminate consideration of standardized testing scores or have moved to test-optional or text-flexible admissions policies (Safier, 2017).

This qualitative mixed methods study investigated why higher education institutions are implementing test-optional policies as part of their admissions process. The answer to this question required inquiry into the decision-making processes at test-optional higher education institutions. Admissions officers answered survey questions regarding demographics, admissions materials, the rationale for implementing a test-optional admissions policy, and perceived benefits and drawbacks of their test-optional policy. Additional in-person interviews were also conducted with four admissions officers who consented through the survey. Utilizing qualitative survey and interview feedback, admissions officers identified diversity, access, and a desire to realign the admissions process with the institution's mission and values as some of the main drivers for the implementation of a test-optional admissions policy. This study provides additional insight to the existing literature encompassing the reasons why higher education institutions are choosing to adopt a test-optional admissions policy and how this decision has impacted faculty and students.