Oral Defense Announcement  
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

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The Experience of Faculty Transitioning from Traditional to Non-traditional Methods in the  
Community College Classroom

Date: April 15, 2020  
Time: 9:30am  
Place: Remote

Abstract

There is documented success with the use of active learning strategies in community college classrooms, yet instructors lack the necessary skills and incentives to develop these strategies. While faculty members may have an expertise in a particular discipline they often lack the necessary skills to recognize the specific academic needs of a student and respond and/or adapt to those needs. Many specialized degrees do not include pedagogical training as part of the required curriculum but community colleges are typified by diversity in student backgrounds and learning styles. This has led to increased attention to the implementation of a diverse array of teaching strategies.

The purpose of this study was to document the experiences of those who have made the transition from lecture-based teaching to using more non-traditional methods in the community college classroom and to identify the challenges experienced during that transformation. How did this transformation impact the faculty members’ teaching strategies? This qualitative study utilized the method of thematic analysis in order to interpret the data obtained from interviews of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods with focus on the factors that played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods.

It was found that faculty members who made the decision to transition from traditional methods of instruction to more non-traditional methods were motivated by an intrinsic desire to engage students. Additionally, comprehensive professional development as well as ongoing and frequent support for faculty members may translate into a lasting and meaningful change in classroom instruction.

Keywords: engagement, non-traditional methods, professional development, instructional strategies, teaching strategies, community college.

Defense of Dissertation Committee  
Chairperson, Kathleen Haywood, Ph.D.  
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