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

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

Jamillah L. Boyd
MLIS, Library and Information Science, University of Missouri, 2019
M.Ed., Adult and Higher Education, University of Missouri -St. Louis, 2017
BIS, Business Admin. & Information Systems, University of Missouri -St. Louis, 2014

Nykea T. Watts-Edwards
M.Ed., Higher Education, Purdue Global University, 2012
B.S. Sociology, University of Missouri -St. Louis, 2004

Plus 50 Students and Their Experiences with Technology in Undergraduate Classes

Date: November 18, 2021
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
As adult learners over 50 continue to pursue higher education, postsecondary institutions should have
resources and services available to support this demographic. Previous research often combines Plus 50 students
with all nontraditional students 24 years and older, making it difficult to understand the unique needs
and learning experiences of older adult students in the academic environment. The use of technology for curriculum
has increased significantly over the years and may present challenges for Plus 50 learners as they are introduced
to it and learn to navigate it. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Plus 50 students when
they used technology in undergraduate courses. This phenomenological research study employed a purposeful
homogenous sampling method to identify 10 Plus 50 participants at a 4-year institution in the Midwest. Malcolm
Knowles’ theories of andragogy and self-directed learning served as appropriate frameworks for this study allowing
the researchers to gain a more holistic understanding of how Plus 50 students used technology in their classes.

The data from this research will contribute to the body of scholarship regarding the experiences of Plus 50
students and their use of technology in undergraduate classes. In addition, institutional stakeholders can use the
findings from this study as a guide when reviewing curriculum and policy to support the needs of this unique student
demographic. This research can also serve as a resource for Plus 50 students and provide them with insights on
how to advocate for their learning needs and be adequately prepared when enrolling in courses that use
technology.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D.
Dr. Jennifer Simms, Ph.D.
Dr. Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Ph.D.