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

Curlinda Mitchell Blacksheep
M.A. in Education, Northern Arizona University

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M.A. in Education, Washington University-St. Louis

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Kids These Days: Increasing Youth Engagement in Community Heritage and Social Justice Through the Implementation of a Youth Participatory Empowerment Model

Date: Thursday, May 30, 2019
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: UMSL South Campus
Technology and Learning Center
Monsanto Room (Room 110)

Abstract
Citizen engagement in community and heritage issues is vital to a healthy democracy. Young people have a unique position within the community. They are often not yet able to vote or serve in powerful roles, but often times have the largest stake in those changes and can be powerful allies. The purpose of this qualitative, action research study was to arm youth and youth mentors with a Youth Participatory Empowerment Model (YPEM) to identify and engage youth in a community heritage or social justice need. This study used interviews and observations with individuals and focus groups to observe and record the process of empowerment of youth through the use of the YPEM based on research based interventions and competencies outlined in the Social Change Model of Leadership. Through research analysis, four key themes emerged that were essential to youth empowerment: strong youth leadership, trust and safety, partnerships, and strong mentorship. These new themes were then combined with observed strategies to create the YPEM 2.0. This research conveyed the importance of building a culture of trust while using a scope and sequence with active and engaged mentors that will guide youth to be empowered to create change.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Theresa Coble, Ph.D. - Chairperson
Carl Hoagland, Ed.D.
Keith Miller, Ph.D.
Phyllis Balcerzak, Ph.D.