

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

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

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An Examination of the Impediments to Implementing Studentcentered Teaching Methods in Public Schools

Date: April 13, 2024

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Place: Remote

Abstract

In education, traditional methods have long relied upon static textbooks blackboards to knowledge into students. Unfortunately, the lack of dynamism with this approach has failed to foster creativity, motivation, inquiry, individualization, and other practices crucial to serve diverse learners, especially Black children. We sought to uncover barriers and potential solutions to this problem by elevating the voices of educators from classroom teachers to building and district administrators at a predominantly African-American suburban secondary school in the Midwest. We designed a qualitative research study to answer a single yet layered research question: What impedes Black students from experiencing and gaining access to relevant, student-centered learning (SCL) opportunities in public secondary education? The study seeks to fill the gap in implementing student-centered teaching methods in public schools.

We utilized three primary theoretical frameworks to analyze primary data collected from educators at our chosen site which included critical race theory, liberatory pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy. The three classroom teachers and three administrators who participated in the study identified a myriad of issues such as inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, family financial resources, state mandated testing, and bias and stereotyping by teachers and other faculty. Using thematic coding analysis, two themes emerged; systemic issues and cultural relevance. We trust our findings will contribute to addressing disparities that require increased funding for schools in underserved areas, help target support for disadvantaged students, and advance ongoing professional development for teachers to improve their ability to provide student-centered instruction to ensure that all students have equal access to resources and support needed to thrive.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Chairperson, Dr. Thomasina Hassler Ph.D.

Committee Faculty Member, Dr. Janae Alfred Ph.D.

Committee Faculty Member Dr. Rob Good Ph.D.

Committee Faculty Member Dr. Shenita Mayes, Ph.D.