

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 Psychology

Kim Starkey

BA, University of Missouri–Saint Louis 2002
MEd, University of Missouri–Saint Louis 2006

Design Thinking's Effect on Empathy Development in Middle School English- Language Arts

Date: November 13, 2023
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Place: Sigma Aldrich Room- TLC

Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative was to explore the impact of Design Thinking on students' empathy development in middle school English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. The study involved two middle school instructors with eight classes, implementing Design Thinking, Reader's Workshop, and traditional ELA curriculum in different combinations (n =102) and two control classes (n =27).

The Adolescent Empathy Measure (AMES) and rubrics for analyzing student writing samples were used to assess changes in empathy. The AMES was given before and after the interventions, and the writing samples were analyzed before and after the interventions as well. The findings indicate partial support for the hypotheses related to cognitive empathy but no statistically significant results for affective empathy. The study contributes to the understanding of Design Thinking's potential in enhancing empathy and suggests the need for further research in this area. Limitations and implications for future studies are discussed, emphasizing the role of Design Thinking in education and its potential to address the social and emotional needs of students in a post-pandemic educational landscape.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Marvin Berkowitz, Ph.D.
Natalie Bolton, Ph.D.
Phyllis Balcerzak, Ph.D.
Nancy Singer, Ph.D.