

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 Teaching and Learning Processes

Brian Thomas

Graduate Certificate in Museums, Heritage, and Public History, University of Missouri-St. Louis, December 2023
MA, International Relations, Webster University, 2008
MAT, Science, Webster University, 2005
BA, History, University of Illinois, 1996

Experiential & High Impact Learning as Catalysts for Change: Exploring the Historical Inquiry Process and Experiences of High School and College History Instructors

Date: April 22, 2024
Time: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Place: Bayer Room - TLC

Abstract

This study explores how high school and college history instructors' perspectives of experiential learning opportunities and high-impact practices influence their epistemic beliefs as history teachers. The research considers teachers' pedagogical practices, aligning inquiry and historical thinking with experiential learning opportunities and high-impact practices. This study aligns with the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) notion that college success is not determined by earning a degree but by becoming a civic-minded, engaged graduate. Kuh (2008a) and the AAC&U created the HIPs framework to transform higher education and prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing global world. These explanatory sequential mixed methods (QUANT → qual) study will investigate the extent to which experiential learning opportunities and high-impact practices (HIPs) (Kuh, 2008a) were instrumental in the educational experiences of current high school and college history instructors. In what ways and to what extent do these experiences translate into history classrooms as experiential learning opportunities and HIPs? Do history instructors use experiential learning opportunities and HIPs to develop content designed to move students from objective/subjective views of history to a criticalist orientation to historical inquiry? Finally, how do these history instructors achieve these goals through experiential learning opportunities and HIPs, and why do they focus on a particular orientation to historical inquiry?

Kuh (2008a) states that although high-impact practices will differ, each approach supports experiential learning. Experiential learning couples activities and experiences to facilitate learning by doing; hands-on learning is the source of knowledge and is a lifelong process (Kolb, 2015). Experiential learning and high-impact practices create opportunities to facilitate various approaches to learning. This study will examine the use of experiential learning and high-impact practices via a criticalist orientation to historical inquiry in high school and college history courses to propose a theory of change model supporting professional practice and targeted outcomes. The initial phase includes explanatory sequential mixed methods and a purposeful sampling of current Missouri and Illinois high school and college history instructors. Sampling collection will use electronic surveys and digital interviews, which will be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Dr. Theresa Coble - Chairperson
Dr. Keith Miller
Dr. Laura Westhoff
Dr. Shea Kerkhoff