2012 Dissertations

The Effects of Faculty Unionization on University Shared Governance

Castro, Rene

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Vega, William

Abstract

Unions have been a part of many university political landscapes for over four decades. During the early years of faculty unionization, researchers explored the effects of faculty unionization on university governance bodies and the shared governance process, but the results of these initial inquiries were often mixed. Nonetheless, several researchers predicted that over time the union would have the effect of diminishing the influence and power of faculty senates as the union's strength and influence grew. Employing several Southern California CSU campuses as the study's primary research site, this qualitative study further explored the impact of faculty unionization through the eyes, ears, and experiences of thirteen faculty senators. This process provided the participants an opportunity to individually reflect on the events and issues most relevant to their experiences with shared governance from their own vantage point, allowing me to unearth a richer and thicker description of their perceptions and views. The result was a dialogue that yielded responses that were unconfined by predetermined or conventional responses which in turn allowed me to explore the question of whether or not faculty unionization results in a loss of power and influence for faculty governance bodies by using the participant's own experiences as a window to the phenomenon.

Classroom Management: Whose Responsibility Is It?

Coleman, Jason

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education leadership

Chair: Jeynes, William

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to explore the lived experiences of classroom teachers and how they experience classroom behavior. The main research question of the study was how teachers experience behavior problems in their classroom. Results of the interviews were grouped into six distinct themes. This dissertation employed a qualitative interview and data gathering process. Phenomenology was used as the research design in this dissertation. This mode of inquiry allowed me to capture the lived experiences of how teachers experience and perceive classroom behavior problems. Recommendations include creating open lines of communication between teachers and administrators, delineating clear responsibilities with all staff personnel, and making accommodations for individual students who have are chronically misbehaving.

"If I Don't Fight For It, I Have Nothing": Experiences of Homeless youth Scaling the Collegiate Mountain

Crutchfield, Rashida

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Haviland, Don

Abstract

Within college environments, homeless students are invisible. The majority of homeless youth go undetected and unsupported in college environments. This study used validation and strengths-based perspective theoretical lenses to understand the experiences of twenty homeless, traditional age community college students. Their stories were examined to understand the exchange between students and varied faculty, staff, and support service departments. Interview data were analyzed to draw out subject matter from each interview in order to develop codes and themes within the experiences of participants. Demographic questionnaires supplemented interview data.

Students described themselves as "a different type of homeless person," different from both their homeless and college going peers, resulting in a feeling of isolation that shaped their college experience. Homeless students described numerous and competing demands on their time, limited social capital, and often frustrating administrative and pedagogical practices that contributed obstacles and frustration as they sought to avoid "the cliff" of chronic homelessness and instability. They also described a "safetyharness" (e.g., advising, helpful adults) that they constructed and accessed to help succeed and move up the collegiate mountain. They pointed to work, financial aid, academic advising, helpful adults, and other college resources, as well as their own resilience, as helping them move up the collegiate mountain.

Findings show the complex the experience of homeless students. Misinformation and misdirection in college drag youth down, yet financial aid, academic advising, faculty, and other critical resources can pull homeless students toward new vistas. As individuals, the students show great resilience; however, colleges and housing agencies can and should play a critical role in helping them move forward to more stable ground, using policy and effective practice to connect and support students.

Colleges must identify homeless students on campus and provide targeted support services that match their strengths and needs. Training in working with homeless youth for financial aid and advising staff, as well as faculty, will ensure that homeless youth are better served. Finally, additional exploration of the experiences and outcomes of homeless youth in higher education is vital to developing policies and practices to serve them.

Changing How We Change: A Case Study of Escondido Union School District

Dale, Ben

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education Leadership

Chair: Scott, Jim

Abstract

In order to survive the rapid increase in technology innovation, schools must develop emergent systems utilizing teachers and leaders in new roles to implement change focused on the task of supporting the academic needs of students. New roles in an emergent system result in the development of positive culture, creativity and collaboration. The innovative culture in a thriving emergent system provides the fuel needed to sustain consistent change strategy and implementation over time. This case study explored the emergent system created by Escondido Union School District (EUSD) to implement the iRead program, which focused on improving reading fluency of the English Language Learner and low socio-economic student populations. Through the use of story building this case study explored the elements of roles, strategy, and culture present in the iRead implementation. This study proposed an emergent system sustainable change model as a conceptual framework for school and district use relative to technology implementation. Specifically the model conceptualized the applicability of role theory, strategy theory, and change theory to implementation strategy.

This qualitative case study consisted of 11 interviews with various role players in the iRead implementation and an examination of the documentation data found in the iRead section of the EUSD website. The respondent data was coded through the lens of the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) model for program implementation. The data was grouped into PELP themes of strategy, stakeholders, culture, systems, and resources. An analysis of the grouped themes revealed the existence of new roles and an emergent system for change fueled by the innovation and creativity of the iRead staff.

The EUSD educators acting in the role of pioneer, explorer, trailblazer, implementer, mentor/coach, and standard-bearer became themselves the agents of change. The assumption of new roles to implement new programs comprised the strategy of an emergent system. The roles assumed by the participants in the iRead program provided the consistent and sustained growth of the implementation. The strategy of start small and grow over time provided the iRead program the solid foundation necessary for continued success. The environment of innovation among the iRead role players resulted in a change culture based on phases of implementation, namely idea, initiative, and implementation. Through the use of new roles, emergent strategy, and collaborative culture, EUSD has provided a model for schools hoping to keep pace with the rapid rate of technology innovation.

The Perceived Relevance of Professional Leadership Competencies Among Mid-level Managers in Student Affairs at Four-year Institutions of Higher Education

Fleischer, Stephen

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Murray, John

Abstract

Higher education in the United States is facing significant challenges that necessitate effective leadership at all levels and in all corners of the university, including mid-level managers in student affairs. In July 2010, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) adopted a set of competencies to guide student affairs professionals. This study looked at the relevance of the leadership competencies from the mid-level managers' perspective. Understanding student affairs leadership at the mid-level is pivotal to succeed in the current climate and to strategize for the future.

Mid-level managers at 4-year institutions, were surveyed for this study. A total of 294 respondents completed the Professional Leadership Competency Questionnaire (PLCQ). The PLCQ was developed by the researcher, and was based on ACPA and NASPA's 42 sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) of the leadership competency.

The five highest ranked sets of KSAs for the respondents' current positions were understanding campus cultures, fostering contributions to the organization, assess strengths and weaknesses, recognizing interdependence, and be a mentor. The five KSAs with the highest relevancy for their next positions were fostering contributions to the organization, understanding campus cultures, solutions with no precedent, include diverse others, and incorporate diverse stakeholders. Additionally, mid-level managers perceived an increase in relevance of 40 of the 42 KSAs for their anticipated next positions. Further findings included higher relevancy of all three levels of complexity among those who anticipated moving into a senior student affairs officer position.

This study fills a gap in the literature regarding mid-level managers' perceptions of the ACPA and NASPA leadership competencies. Mid-level managers perceived the majority of leadership competencies as relevant in their current positions. The breadth of leadership competencies already relevant to mid-level managers suggests they may be deployed in additional ways to address the dilemmas currently facing student affairs. The perception of increased relevancy of the leadership competencies for the respondents' anticipated next positions suggests they are preparing to ascend as competent leaders of student affairs.

An Examination of the Financial Literacy of California College Students

Gilligan, Heidi

Abstract

The rising costs in tuition and changes in financial aid resources place California Community College (CCC) and California State University (CSU) students in a precarious situation. As students take on more debt in the form of loans to finance their college education, it is concerning that many may not have a solid understanding of personal financial management strategies or skills. Now, more than ever, it is important that educational leaders take proactive steps to understand the components of financial literacy of California college students. The interplay of financial literacy and increases in tuition are of particular concern at the CCC and CSU as these large public university systems serve many first generation, low income, and minority college students.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to refine current knowledge of the financial literacy levels and the potential influences on financial literacy levels of California college students. A conceptual framework was developed utilizing the theories of social capital, self-efficacy, consideration of future consequences and financial stress. This framework guided the development of a survey instrument that included modified or adopted measures of demographic characteristics, financial literacy, financial self-efficacy, consideration of future consequences, and financial stress. The sample included 691 students, approximately 80% California Community College students and nearly 20% California State University college students.

The findings revealed that socioeconomic status, race, parental education, and class level influenced the financial literacy scores of California college students. A factor analysis on the modified scales of financial self-efficacy, consideration of future consequences, and financial stress indicated that these instruments are appropriate for use with California college students. A hierarchical regression revealed that race, class level, and consideration of future consequences influenced the financial literacy scores of California college students.

The findings provide a greater understanding of the components that influence the financial literacy of California's college students. Based on the results, recommendations are made for the development of financial education programs for college students that address their stage of life, cultural factors, family influence, economic conditions, and behavioral patterns.

Critical Pedagogy as an Instructional Leadership Initiative in a Small Urban High School Setting

Gordon, Jake

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education Leadership

Chair: Symcox, Linda

Abstract

This qualitative study explored the experiences of 3 high school students and 1 high school principal to understand how a leadership initiative rooted in critical pedagogy impacted their personal and academic development as students and as a leader. The conceptual framework, of critical pedagogy, provided an analytical lens to explore the experiences of the 3 participating students in this study as well as the 1 high school principal. Portraiture methodology was incorporated to describe the rich narrative that unfolded both with him and his students in the study.

The findings in this study revealed data that supports the existing literature in critical pedagogy as it relates to student learning. The literature details how students involved in classrooms that utilize critical pedagogy are intrinsically motivated to learn about their world within the context of a larger society. Additionally the findings further developed the literature that discusses how critical pedagogy as an instructional practice motivates students to have a desire to engage in their community to make positive change. The findings related to the role of the principal in a critical pedagogical instructional leadership initiative revealed that when students are provided the opportunity to engage in academic work related to notions of critical pedagogy they thrive and excel.

Recommendations for policy and practice include: All school site principals are encouraged to teach a research seminar class rooted in critical pedagogy. Areas for future research include further exploring a longitudinal study of students that have taken the research seminar class analyzing the impact the class has had on a larger sample of participants and continuing to collect data on the principal as he leads the initiative and how it impacts his leadership.

A Narrative Inquiry Exploring the Expectations and Childrearing Practices of Six African American Mothers

Majors, LeAnna

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education Leadership

Chair: Symcox, Linda

Abstract

This narrative inquiry explores the childrearing practices and expectations for achievement as well as socialization of six African American mothers for their sons and daughters. Using a lens of Black feminism while exploring the positioned childrearing of these mothers, I attempt to deepen understanding of how these unique parenting practices influence the gender gap in achievement for African American students. Guided by in-depth, semi-structured interviewing methods, I engaged in structured conversations with six middle class, African American mothers to convey narratives of their childrearing practices.

Transcription and narrative coding of all interview data, as well as participant and researcher journals, revealed a story of each mother's life growing up, the influence this had on their childrearing practices, how they supported their children with school, and expectations for their sons and daughters. All of the mothers who participated in this study wanted their children to be successful adults. They expected their sons to be "productive members of society" and ultimately grow up to live comfortably providing for their future families. The expectation communicated to daughters was that they would grow up to be women who would be able to take care of themselves and not have to depend on anyone. They each felt the intersectionality of their identity as middle class, African American women, influenced their experiences with involvement efforts at school.

This inquiry provides a counter narrative to the deficit based societal discourse around African American mothers' childrearing practices. Recommendations for policy that inform culturally relevant school practices that support the engagement of African American families as well as suggestions for future research are provided.

Factors Influencing the Implementation of Standards-Based Elementary School Physical Education

Neese, Hylin

Abstract

Childhood obesity is at an all-time high and California public elementary schools are in a position to combat the epidemic. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers', principals', and the superintendent's perceptions of factors influencing the implementation of standards-based elementary school physical education. Nine Title I elementary schools from one school district were purposefully selected.

Based on Ajzen and Madden's theory of perceived control behavior, four specific factors were studied. The four factors include physical education content knowledge, planning, resources, and support. Sequential explanatory mixed-methods data collection included a researcher designed survey for both classroom teachers (N = 104) and principals (N = 6) and one 20-minute one-on-one interview with teachers (N = 15), principals (N = 6), and the district superintendent (N = 1).

Results from the one-way ANOVA (p< .05) indicate there is a significant difference between teachers in planning for physical education, not pushing physical education aside for other subjects, and principal, faculty, and grade-level support to teach physical education. Qualitative narrative supports the statistical data for teachers planning and support. This study concluded standards-based elementary school physical education can be implemented in Title I schools due to principal and teacher leadership. Recommendations for model elementary school physical education programs and policy changes are suggested.

Adapted Physical Education Teachers' Attitudes Towards Their Students With Hidden and Visible Disabilities

Reich, Lori

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education Leadership

Chair: Lavay, Barry

Abstract

Research on adapted physical education (APE) teachers' attitudes towards their students with disabilities is extremely limited and most research on general physical education (GPE) teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities have been based on the concept of inclusion. The Model of Differential Expectations posits that, because students with hidden disabilities (HD) lack obvious physical signs related to their disability, teachers' may expect students with HD to attain close to model performance typical of non-disabled peers; whereas, teachers have lowered and more realistic expectations for students with visible disabilities. To investigate if APE teachers' attitudes towards their students with disabilities differ as a function of whether the disability is hidden or visible, 172 APE teachers attending a national APE conference were surveyed.

Results were consistent with the Model of Differential Expectations and indicate APE teachers tended to form different attitudes and expectations for their students with disabilities depending on whether the disability was hidden or visible. Participants were requested to nominate two of their students for prompts corresponding with the attitudes of attachment and rejection. Chi-square statistical analysis supported hypothesis one; students with visible disabilities were significantly overrepresented among teachers' nominations in the attachment category ($\chi2$ (1, N = 340) = 23.786, p < .05). For rejection nominations, Chi-square analysis did not statistically support hypothesis two; students labeled by their APE teachers' as having a hidden disability (as their primary disability) were not significantly overrepresented among teachers' nominations in the rejection category. A Paired Samples t-test revealed that students with behavior issues (a hidden disability) were significantly overrepresented among teachers' nominations in the rejection category (t (155) = 10.59, p = .000).

It is suggested that students with HD are at risk of rejection because of unattainably high teacher expectations and students with visible disabilities are at risk of underachievement due to low teacher expectations. Instructional strategies and specific recommendations for improving both APE and GPE teachers' attitudes toward their students with hidden and visible disabilities are provided and suggestions for future research are offered.

Second Generation Latinos and the Perceived Barriers to College Enrollment

Swenson, Mitchell

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Murray, John

Abstract

This quantitative study examined a secondary data set from the Pew Hispanic Research Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation on Education from 2004 to find the relationship between perceived barriers and linguistic acculturation, socioeconomic status, bilingual abilities, generational status, and academic achievement for second generation Latinos compared to first and third generation Latinos. Through multinomial logistic regression analysis, results indicated that second generation Latinos, especially bilingual Latinos, perceived greater barriers to enrolling in higher education and completing a college degree. Included in this study are recommendations and implications for future research.

First and second-generation participants perceived several barriers as either major or minor reasons for why Latinos do not enter college or fail to complete a degree. Participants from high socioeconomic status, who were first and second generation, and had a high academic achievement perceived the cost of tuition as a major reason why Latinos do not enter or fail to finish college. Receiving a poor high school education was a major reason for participants from high linguistic acculturation, high socioeconomic status, and who were first or second-generation. Discrimination, believing that people do not need a college degree to be successful, and staying close to family were minor reasons for Latinos to not enroll in college. Cost of tuition was a minor reason for bilingual, second generation, high academic achievement, and high socioeconomic status participants instead of not a reason at all. Most participants were likely to identify one of the barriers as either major or minor instead of not a reason at all.

This study showed that understanding perceived barriers for Latinos to higher education could provide the tools needed to change the trend for Hispanics in the United States. Administrators, counselors, policy makers, educators, parents, and students, working together, could help Latinos enroll in college and complete a college degree. Perceived barriers can become a reality or a myth, depending on what we choose to do to clarify or eliminate misperceptions of Latinos concerning a college education.

Small School, Big Gains: A Case Study of Urban High School Reform

Salazar, Alma

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Haviland, Don

Abstract

For the past 2 decades, considerable attention has been paid to urban high school reform. Increasingly, educators, policymakers, community and civic leaders recognize that high schools in the United States need to be redesigned and reinvented. For more than a decade, small schools have been a growing trend in secondary school reform. Since its inception, the restructuring of large comprehensive high schools to small autonomous schools has shown promise.

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that contributed towards improved student performance outcomes at one urban high school within Los Angeles Unified School District that showed considerable gains in both student engagement and increased student performance due in large part to its conversion to a small school. The study shed light into the faculty's experiences on the attributes, challenges, and pitfalls of implementing meaningful secondary reform.

In examining the experiences of the faculty, the study illuminated several findings. First, the faculty employed many of the practices identified by leading small schools researchers as effective tenets of small school reform. Namely, advisories, school size, and parental involvement, which supported sustained continuous relationships between the faculty, students, and their peers. The faculty's experiences corroborated previous studies where school size, personalization, and continuous relationships were influencing factors in creating a positive school culture that supported student and teacher engagement.

Secondly, the research findings indicate that instructional strategies coupled with structural design elements provided a strong foundation to help student achieve. In this study, the research findings revealed that structure and instruction emerged as contributing factors to improving student performance. While research has demonstrated that structural changes alone do not achieve the desired improvements in academic performance, this case study further reinforced the need to have both conditions present to achieve the desired academic results.

Lastly, the research findings also illuminated a set of intrinsic factors, such as active teacher engagement and a commitment to high standards; that combined with structural and instructional approaches were the driving force behind improved student performance.

Impact on Student Achievement with ST Math after School

Darielle, Tom

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Elementary/Secondary Education Leadership

Chair: Kim, Simon

Abstract

The mathematics achievement levels of U.S. students lag behind those of other developed countries. The purpose of this study was to examine if using a spatial temporal (ST) math software program in an after school setting could increase student achievement. The theoretical framework for this study was mastery learning with the premise that all students could learn if given the proper environment. Participants of this study included 172 third through fifth grade students who scored below the 65% proficiency level on the prior year's California Standards Test in mathematics. The three comparison groups included the ST Math group (n = 33), homework club (n = 96), and home group (n = 43). An analysis of covariance was used to compare the mean posttest scores of three groups, controlling for any initial differences on the pretest. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the groups. Possible reasons for insignificant results include the sample size, the length of the intervention, and differences among the groups not tested by this study. Overall student achievements have improved regardless of group placement, but further study is needed to examine the impact of after school programs using ST Math.

Participant Perspectives: Student Outcomes in Arts Based International Service-Learning

Trimble, Brian

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Portnoi, Laura

Abstract

Our world is becoming more interconnected through international commerce, new technological developments, and vast communications systems. As a result, the ability to successfully communicate and interact in this global environment is of critical importance. Thus, institutions of higher education are actively developing programs to address the challenges of a new interconnected world through programs that include intercultural education. At the vanguard of such institutional efforts is the development and expansion of study abroad programs, specifically in the area of short-term international service learning. As these programs expand, it becomes important that research and analysis around such programs also develops.

To fill the gap in the existing literature, the focus of this study is an exploration of the perceived effects of an international arts-focused service learning program from the perspective of program participants who traveled to East Africa. The research design is a basic qualitative study utilizing Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors of student development and Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity as a theoretical framework to explore the perceived identity development and intercultural development of the six participants from their perspectives.

The results of the study indicate a clear connection between the international service learning program and participants' perspectives related to identity and intercultural development. The results of the study also suggest that after a period of reflection, participants are able to more accurately describe the experience and its effects on their lives. Furthermore, the results suggest that the reflection process facilitates participants' ability to resolve issues that may be experienced at reentry, such as confusion about the trip's meaning and questions regarding life choices. Recommendations for future study are suggested in the areas of reciprocity, group dynamics, heritage seeking, and the reflection process.

Engaging in Synergy: Translating the Blue Skies of Effective Administrative Resource Management into Sustainable Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Williams-Slaughter, Maria

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Vega, William

Abstract

Colleges and universities have become accustom to handling the ebbs and flows of an economic cycle by implementing temporary solutions during unfavorable fiscal periods and then returning to business as usual when budgets are restored to normal levels. The 2008-09 Recession brought unprecedented financial chaos to higher education and highlighted the need for a transformational change within the Academy.

The California State University System (CSU) is the nation's largest public postsecondary institution. Each of its 23 campuses has a unique geographic and curricular character, making it exceedingly difficult to achieve significant cost reductions in academic and student programs. Tangible opportunities to implement creative and focused strategies exist within the more ubiquitous campus administrative service functions, and the CSU has introduced the Synergy Initiative (Synergy) in order to leverage resources, lower overall costs, and improve operations in support of the system's core values.
The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived level of functionality associated with administrative services and uncover factors that would drive improved efficiency and effectiveness between departments and among campuses. Based on a framework of Total Quality Management (TQM) and in the context of Synergy, the researcher constructed a 34 question survey that was completed by 167 stakeholders. The study concluded that the CSU displays a propensity to collaborate in shared services and best practice initiatives, and that open, honest, relevant and continual communication will play a critical role in successfully translating the blue skies of effective administrative resource management into sustainable implementation and continuous improvement.

Based on the findings, the researcher provides recommendations for strategic planning and operational modifications.

Rare but There: An Intersectional Exploration of the Experiences and Outcomes of Black Women Who Studied Abroad Through Community College Programs

Willis, Tasha

California State University, Long Beach 2012

Specialization: Community College/Higher Education Leadership

Chair: Ortiz, Anna

Abstract

As institutions of higher education strive to prepare global ready graduates, study abroad is on the rise at both 2- and 4- year campuses. Study abroad is also identified as a high impact program that can lead to increased engagement and student success. However, research has centered on the experiences of white, 4-year students. Literature is rare on the experiences of community college students and students of color. This study explores an underrepresented and understudied student population: Black female community college students who study abroad. Using an intersectional lens, this study provides critical insight into participant experiences and outcomes. Research questions inquired about ethnic and racial identity development outcomes, but also broadened the scope of research by including intercultural growth, global identity, and other identity development outcomes.

This qualitative inquiry utilized 19 open-ended interviews to explore the experiences of African American female students who studied abroad on community college programs in Africa and Europe from 2005-2011. At the time of their study abroad in Africa, the Mediterranean, or the British Isles, participants' ages ranged from 19-62. Five themes offer insight into the realities of being Black women studying in different regions of the world: PreDeparture Factors, Study Abroad Context, Peer Roles, Managing Racism, and Outcomes. Though their outcomes were similar to those previously documented for 4-year white students, participants also faced racial and gender microaggressions from their host cultures and/or their U.S. travel peers in each of the three regions.

This study centers the experiences of a marginalized group while widening the scope and sharpening the focus of research. Findings shed light on the complex interplay of race, ethnicity, and gender, and other areas of social diversity for Black women abroad, underscoring that campus climate extends beyond U.S. campus boarders. Implications and recommendations for practice include ways to facilitate inclusive climates in study abroad, support students in facing microaggressions, and build on peer bonds to increase campus engagement and academic success. Recommendations to increase access and equity in study abroad by reducing transfer and financial aid barriers are also discussed, as are areas for future research.