

# DISSERTATIONS IN BRIEF

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS BY WKU EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL PROGRAM GRADUATES

### THE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS AND ATTENDANCE

BY GREGORY ROSS

Chair: Nedra Atwell

Committee: Marge Maxwell, Janet Applin

Defense Date: July 9, 2012

As school districts work to utilize instructional time, student behavior is often a huge hindrance to maximizing instruction. In 2001 while at the University of Oregon, Horner and Sugai created Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), now utilized in over 7,000 schools throughout the country (Sugai & Horner, 2002). This program is provided to schools throughout Kentucky through a federal grant extended to the Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline (KYCID).

This study analyzed PBIS in an elementary school in southwest Kentucky, McNabb Elementary, to measure the effect of PBIS on student discipline referrals and attendance. Referrals were evaluated from 2006-2012, to provide longitudinal data over time. Results of the study indicated that PBIS had a significant effect on discipline referrals within the school. Student attendance percentages also were gathered for a timespan of six years from McNabb Elementary. Results suggested that PBIS did not have a significant effect on attendance during the 2006-2012 school years. Future research of PBIS in Kentucky would be beneficial. Analysis of referral data bridging from elementary to middle school would provide extensive data for districts that have implemented PBIS. Also, a comparison of attitudes and satisfaction of parents of students who have participated in a PBIS program for at least three years would enlighten districts on parents' evaluation of PBIS.

### AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BODY MASS INDEX AND FACTORS OF WELLNESS AMONG FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES AT PRIVATE KENTUCKY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BY CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT

Chair: Nevil Speer

Committee: Scott Lyons, Dean Adams

Defense Date: July 10, 2012

The United States is in the middle of a health epidemic that shows no signs of stopping. Obesity is a disease that carries a significant number of health-related issues. The adult population has experienced a decrease in overall wellness, where the mental and physical health of individuals is disrupted by the effects of obesity. Even more alarming is the rate of increase in childhood obesity and its impact on America's future.

The consequences of this health epidemic are especially visible in the increased costs of health care caused by obesity-related diseases. This epidemic reaches across many aspects of life. The impaired ability to function mentally and physically has left individuals incapable of performing daily functions in their personal and professional lives. As the demand on individuals' time has increased, there has been a noticeable decrease in health-and-wellness activities. Inactivity, demanding work environments, stress, fast food, processed groceries and meals, consumption of sugary drinks, and smoking all may contribute to obesity in the United States.

This research project attempted to determine the viability of Body Mass Index (BMI) to predict employee wellness. By using BMI as a predictor of wellness, both individuals and organizations can organize initiatives to direct employees into healthy lifestyle programs. Addressing obesity and reversing a culture of inactivity, disease, and death are fundamentally correct. The challenge is for leaders and employees to discover a path to living well.

The research addresses BMI as a predictor of wellness by determining the relationships across the factors of The Indivisible Self (Myers & Sweeney, 2005a) wellness theory. Is there a relationship between BMI and total wellness (the creative self, the coping self, the social self, the essential self, and the physical self)? The research indicates that a relationship does exist. The strengths of the relationships between BMI and factors of wellness do not offer conclusive evidence that BMI alone predicts wellness. The relationships observed, however, offer opportunities for changes in Americans' lifestyles.

### **THE UNIVERSITY AS A GENDERED ORGANIZATION: EFFECTS ON MANAGEMENT TYPE, CLIMATE, AND JOB SATISFACTION**

**BY MARGARET E. CROWDER**

Chair: Linda Gonzales

Committee: Thomas Bell, Quida Meier, Janet Tassell

Defense Date: November 11, 2012

Numbers of women holding faculty positions in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) remain low in university systems, despite gains women have made in achievement of advanced degrees. No one reason is clearly the culprit for the low numbers, though women in STEM have been shown to have more negative perceptions of climate, be more dissatisfied with their jobs, and have greater inclination to leave their positions than men.

As males comprise a majority of STEM employees, the masculine-genderedness of these organizations may create a more dissatisfactory work environment for women. This may, in turn, have negative impact on the retention and promotion of women. The concept of genderedness has been defined by relative numbers of males, occupation type through language, and through the hierarchical nature of the bureaucratic organizational system. Both STEM disciplines and university environments have been considered gendered based on these definitions.

One potential component that has not been strictly applied to gendered organizations is organization system management type. As female leaders tend to be more participative while male leaders tend to be more authoritative, this study proposed that measurements of organization system type could be

utilized as an additional indication of organizational genderedness. In addition, the study proposed that more authoritative styles of management systems in gendered organizations would yield lower satisfaction and more negative climate perceptions for women.

Faculty members from a comprehensive university were surveyed for their perceptions of system organization type, climate, and job satisfaction. Survey results were analyzed to determine if perceptions varied by gender, college type (STEM or non-STEM), rank, and organizational hierarchical level.

The study determined that faculty perceived the system management type within ascending hierarchal university levels as increasingly more authoritative and that gendered colleges are perceived as more authoritative than non-gendered colleges. This may provide a new way to help define organizational genderedness. The study also found that correlation existed for both male and female faculty between perceptions of organizational system type and both climate and job satisfaction. However, the perception difference between genders was not significant enough to provide evidence for differential effects for women versus men.

### **THE IMPACT OF COMPETITION IN COLLEGE FORENSICS ON FUTURE CAREERS**

**BY JACE LUX**

Chair: Randall Capps

Committee: Cecil Garmon, Robert Owen

Defense Date: November 2, 2012

Each year, thousands of college students participate in forensics (competitive speech and debate). Despite previous studies that identify numerous benefits to forensics participation, the activity is often eliminated from college campuses due to financial constraints. Although previous literature identifies the benefits of forensics participation to competitors, these studies do not address the lasting impact of college forensics participation on the careers of former competitors.

This exploratory study sought to identify the forensics outcomes that former competitors felt are used most frequently in their current careers, as well as the amount of

emphasis forensics programs are placing on teaching these particular skills to students. The study also sought to determine the level of agreement between former participants and coaches/directors of forensics about which skills students will use most frequently once the competitive experience ends.

One hundred twenty-one former competitors provided responses, as did 33 coaches/directors of forensics. The data analysis revealed that coaches/directors of forensics and former competitors agreed on the importance of most survey items. Additionally, the analysis revealed that most forensics programs seem to be teaching students the majority of the skills they will need in their future careers. However, the analysis also revealed that forensics programs are directing some emphasis at outcomes that are not very useful to students once they enter the workforce. analysis also revealed that forensics programs are directing some emphasis at outcomes that are not very useful to students once they enter the workforce.

Additional findings revealed differences between the value placed on certain outcomes by former debaters versus the value to former individual-events-only competitors. Also, the length of time since a former participant last competed in forensics resulted in a variation of responses for some of the outcomes.

### **KEY FACTORS AND STAGES OF COLLABORATION WITHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE/AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

**BY ANNETTE PARKER**

Chair: Randall Capps  
Committee: Keith Bird, Sally Ray  
Defense Date: September 28, 2012

As corporations compete they recognize the need to reengineer operations to reflect the impact of a globalized market and attract, retain, and grow the skill sets of employees as strategic assets. To meet the need for employee continuous learning, financial turbulence, and rapid technological advancements, corporations have accelerated the formation of collaborative partnerships with higher education. At the same time, higher education institutions have a growing number of working adult students in attendance and view collaboration with

corporations as a means to increase enrollment and revenue streams. These factors have created an opportunity to explore the dynamics of key factors and stages of collaboration between community colleges and automotive manufacturers and suppliers to enhance the educational process.

This study examines the dynamics of college-industry partnerships through the Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC) that includes community colleges from 12 states and several large automotive manufacturers and their tier suppliers. In this context, James Austin's (2000a) theoretical model of collaboration provides a promising framework in which to view college-industry inter-organizational collaboration. The model is based on a continuum of stages in collaborative relationships, from philanthropic to transactional to integrative. The model also uses the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), a set of success factors that influences the collaborative process. Data collection used for the case study includes survey results to measure success factors of collaboration that influence the collaborative process and stages using Austin's collaboration continuum framework categories.

### **AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN FIRST- YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**BY KRISTIE GUFFEY**

Chair: Nevil Speer  
Committee: Tuesdi Helbig, Fred Carter, Sherry Power  
Defense Date: October 16, 2012

This non-experimental, quantitative descriptive study was designed to determine what factors influence a first-year college students' global mindedness and if any of those factors were predictors of the five subscales of global mindedness. Surveys were used to measure students' global mindedness and their type of personality (N=424). Demographic questions were administered that included gender, county population, Pell grant eligibility, and first generation college student.

Results indicated that first-year college students at a four-year public Master's Large institution were moderately global minded. To predict global mindedness and its subscales, a

regression model was developed using the Myers Briggs scores for extravert, sensing, thinking, and judging along with Pell grant eligibility, first generation college student status, gender, and county population as the independent variables. The prediction model indicated that global mindedness had four predicting variables that were either positively or negatively correlated with total global mindedness: extravert, sensing, and thinking personality types, and the demographic factor of socio-economic status. The five subscales of global mindedness each had predictive variables as well. More studies are needed to further enhance the effectiveness of instructional strategies concerning personality types on students' global mindedness.

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT PRACTICES IN KENTUCKY**

**BY RHONDA KELLY SIMPSON**

Chair: Nedra Atwell

*Committee:* Tuesdi Helbig, Janet Applin, Marge Maxwell

Defense Date: September 12, 2012

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Kentucky least restrictive environment (LRE) practices and KCCT assessment annual measureable objectives (AMO) in reading and mathematics for students with disabilities. This research was designed to determine whether districts achieved AMO targets for reading, mathematics and LRE. Also, it examined whether a relationship exists between special education students' placement and assessment scores attained for the with disability subpopulation AYP category.

This quantitative, correlation study utilized data from the Kentucky Department of Education Open House, 2011 No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress Reports for each school district, and KCCT Combined Reading and Mathematics Goal to Gap Comparison Report. Additionally, the 2011 KDE Expanded Data file and LRE district target data for students ages six through 21 were analyzed to investigate the questions.

Results from this investigation indicated that one district

achieved the scale score for reading achievement, and seven districts achieved the scale score for mathematics. Nine districts achieved reading and mathematics AMO targets due to safe harbor, while nine districts achieved reading AMO and fourteen districts achieved mathematics AMO due to confidence interval. LRE results indicated that 158 districts achieved LRE target for removal from regular education less than 21% of the school day, 157 achieved LRE target for removal from regular class greater than 60% of the day, and 146 achieved the LRE target for placement outside the regular school.

The Pearson Correlation results indicated a weak, yet positive, relationship exists between the removal of students from the regular classroom less than 21% of the school day and reading achievement and a weak, but negative, correlation relationship between removal from regular education greater than 60% of the school day and reading achievement. Similar to the reading achievement, statistical analysis revealed a weak, but positive, relationship between students removed from regular education less than 21% of the school day and mathematics achievement. The strength of the relationship between removal from regular class greater than 60% of the school day and mathematics achievement revealed a negative degree of association between the two variables.

### **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN KENTUCKY**

**BY LEE ANN WALL**

Chair: Nevil Speer

*Committee:* Sherry Powers, Charley Pride

Defense Date: November 13, 2012

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of empowerment and principal use of power within career and technical education in Kentucky. The researcher posits that, with the continual process of educational reform, principals need to understand what empowers teachers to perform as additional expectations and responsibilities are being mandated.

The researcher used a mixed methods design to examine

The findings indicate that most teachers perceive themselves as operating from self-efficacy empowerment subscale, while their principals were using the legitimate power base. In addition, teachers determined that the power base of referent was related to the empowerment subscale of professional growth. This research identifies a relationship between teacher empowerment and principal power bases and suggests that principals know how to utilize leader power effectively, as it will affect student success and school effectiveness.

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