



Sherri Stepp
Doctoral Portfolio Presentation
Portfolio Website at
<http://sherristepp.weebly.com/>

Changing Leaves and Strengthening Roots: A Reflection of a Doctoral Student

*“One is wise to cultivate the tree that
bears fruit in our soul.”*
--Henry David Thoreau



Introduction

Becoming a Doctoral Student

- Unexpected path into Higher Education
- Nearly 20 years in support service positions
- Appointed to an academic position
 - Opportunities to offer more to the University
 - Rekindled desire to pursue doctorate

The Cohort Model

- The Saturday schedule
- The continuous, rigid, and rigorous course schedule
- Learning from faculty, coursework, and classmates
- New perspective on the connection between public education and working with college freshmen

“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The next best time is now.”

--Chinese Proverb



Lessons in Leadership

Personal Best

- Discovering value in my organization skills and attention to detail

Immanuel Kant (Kant, 2009/1785)

- “With Duty” and “From Duty”
- Acknowledging that we all have different beliefs
- Finding the balance between my beliefs and respecting others’ perspectives

Personal Leadership Model

- Fiedler’s Relationship-Oriented Contingency Theory (Fiedler’s Contingency Model, n. d.)
 - No single best leadership style; effectiveness of leader based on situation
- Servant Leadership (What is Servant Leadership, n. d.)
 - Leader considers individual as well as collective needs
- Leadership is something we do everyday (Coles, 2000)

"Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots." --Victor Hugo



Lessons in Leadership (continued)

Personal definition of leadership:

Leadership is the opportunity and ability to bring together one or more followers in a collaborative effort to accomplish a common objective(s) in a manner that is moral, ethical, respectful, responsible, timely, and mutually beneficial to the leader, follower(s), and any third party community serving as a recipient of the defined objective. (Stepp, 2011, p. 4)

"Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots." --Victor Hugo





Area of Emphasis

Stepp's Theory of Curriculum

- Every teacher has her own personal theory of curriculum.
- *“My head leaned toward Tyler, my heart began to lean toward Eisner.”*
- *“I have grown beyond a need to control the experience to need to enjoy and be a part of the educational experience.”*

Case Study: Developmental Math Reform at Marshall University

- Considering the details in restructuring one discipline compared to the restructuring of an entire general education curriculum
- The importance of collaboration between teachers and administration

Complimentary Curriculum (Moroye, 2013/2009)

- Every teacher *unconsciously* brings something to the curriculum
- Encouragement to consider what we can *consciously* bring to the curriculum?

“Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is.”

–H. Jackson Browne



Collaboration

Understanding that it is important that those collaborating share a set of values.

In our group projects in the cohort, I have learned:

- I do not need to be in control; others can be in control
- I have learned to trust others in the development of our project
- We found ways to bridge the physical distances in planning projects
 - We learned to be efficient and thorough in planning (typically two meetings)
- We shared a common commitment, often with the same group members
- Connecting individual tasks the project as a unified whole

In higher education, it is essential that key departments collaborate to meet the needs of students.

- The entire University needs to collaborate in student retention
- **We are not autonomous; we cannot operate independently**
- **Collaboration is essential**

“Focus on faith and grow your roots strong and deep so no one can make you believe in something that is not good for your soul.”--Molly Friedenfeld



Collaboration (continued)

Behavioral Systems Family of Models (CI 703)

Moral Responsibility and Protecting the Nation: Security vs. Individual Rights (LS 707)

Transformational, Transactional, and Servant Leadership (LS 705)

Doctoral Student/Faculty Fall Seminar

- Committee member, seminar booklet, etc.

“Focus on faith and grow your roots strong and deep so no one can make you believe in something that is not good for your soul.”--Molly Friedenfeld





Scholarship

Evaluating Developmental Education Programs: A Proposed Model and Guidelines for Higher Education Administrators

(SRCEA, Oklahoma City, OK, October 2013)

- Importance of survey timeliness and thoroughly vetting survey questions
- Using a theory-based model for developing an evaluation plan
- The ability to synthesize multiple projects into one cohesive project

Evaluating Developmental Education Programs: A Proposed Model and Guidelines for Higher Education Administrators

(National Social Science Journal, publication pending)

Week of Welcome: Building a “First-Class” Tradition

(eSource for College Transitions, April 2013, National Research Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition)

- Confidence in my own work

“All that is gold does not glitter. Not all those who wander are lost; The old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost.”
--J.R.R. Tolkien



Scholarship (continued)

Providing Consistency in Freshman Seminar Content through Master Teachers and Video Delivery

(32nd Annual Conference on the First Year Experience, Orlando, FL, Feb. 2013)

Proposal Reviewer

(33rd Annual Conference on the First Year Experience)

Presentations and publications taught me to:

- Plan thoroughly; work smarter
- Edit one more time
- Face public speaking fears and trust my abilities
- Embrace new opportunities to present based on my confidence in my content.

“All that is gold does not glitter. Not all those who wander are lost; The old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost.”
--J.R.R. Tolkien



Scholarship (continued)

Co-Teaching CIEC 534 Application Software in the Classroom Curriculum Area

Development of Online UNI 100 Freshman First Class

Co-Teaching and Course Development taught me to:

- Understand the importance of a grading rubric for fairness and consistency
- Importance of creating measurable objectives
- Understand the Quality Matters process for online instruction
- Adapt a classroom course for online instruction

“All that is gold does not glitter. Not all those who wander are lost; The old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost.”
--J.R.R. Tolkien



Research

Research Article Critique (LS 776)

Dissertation Critique and Research Proposal (LS 703)

Evaluating the Experience of UNI 100 Facilitators & IRB (EDF 625)

Reading Report on Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia (CI 706)

Research Paper, Survey Project, and Evaluation Project (CI 676, EDF 711)

Research opportunities taught me to:

- Build my confidence in my research and APA skills
- Read and understand scholarly journal articles
- Analyze others' research work
- Identify opportunities for my own research

“A seed hidden in the heart of an apple is an orchard invisible.” --Welsh Proverb



Reflection on the Rubric

Collaboration

- Faculty in teaching and course development
- Faculty and doctoral students in seminar planning

Scholarship

- Faculty in research, presentation, and publication
- Marshall University administrators in presentations
- Exemplary coursework

Research

- Coursework and IRB process

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man’s life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.” -- Albert Einstein



Reflection on the Rubric (continued)

Depth of Understanding

- Synthesis of learning experiences in portfolio reflection paper
- Relation of learning experiences to professional growth

Reflection

- Becoming a doctoral student, the process, the coursework, and next steps

Communication

- Portfolio reflection paper
- Oral and visual presentation
- Collection of artifacts on portfolio website

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man’s life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.” -- Albert Einstein



Next Steps

Dissertation

- Continued work with the restructuring of developmental math
- Potential state and or national level research

Continued professional growth and advancement

- Administrative opportunities in a student-oriented position
- Potential faculty opportunities
- **I want to serve students *individually*; I want to know their names.**

Continued leadership growth to benefit students, staff, and the administration of Marshall University

Continued personal growth

“Anyone can count the seeds in an apple. Only God can count the apples in a seed.” --Robert Schuller



Thank you.

Doctoral Committee Members:

Dr. Ronald Childress, Chair, Leadership and Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Michael Cunningham, Leadership

Dr. Lisa Heaton, Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Brenda Tuckwiller, External

My Family:

Eugene Stepp, my husband

Kelsey Goodall, my daughter

Larry & Olga Sumpter, my parents

2011 Cohort Classmates and Faculty

“One is wise to cultivate the tree that bears fruit in our souls.”

--Henry David Thoreau





References

Apple tree image from: <http://eofdreams.com/apple-tree.html>

Cherryholmes, C. (1988). *Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Coles, R. (2000). *Lives of Moral Leadership*. New York, NY: Random House.

Eisner, E. W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Eisner, E. W. (2013). What does it mean to say a school is doing well? In D. J. Flinders & S. J. Thornton (Eds.), *The curriculum studies reader* (pp. 279-288). New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 2001)

Eisner, E. & Vallance, E. (Eds.) (1974). *Conflicting conceptions of curriculum*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Fiedler's Contingency Model. (n. d.). *Mindtools*. Retrieved from <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/fiedler.htm>

Hewitt, T. W. (2006). *Understanding and shaping curriculum: What we teach and why*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Kant, I. (2009). The Foundations of Ethics. In L. P. Pojman & P. Tramel (Eds.), *Moral philosophy* (4th ed.), (pp. 218 – 237). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. (Original work published 1785)

Kezar, A. (2005, November). Redesigning for collaboration within higher education institutions: An exploration into the developmental process. *Research in Higher Education*, 26(7), 831-860.

“One is wise to cultivate the tree that bears fruit in our souls.”
--Henry David Thoreau



References (continued)

Moroye, C. M. (2013). Complimentary curriculum. In D. J. Flinders & S. J. Thornton (Eds.), *The curriculum studies reader* (pp. 379-398). New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 2009)

Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (7th Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Schmidt, W. H. (2003, February 6). Speech at the Summit on Mathematics. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/progs/mathscience/schmidt.html>.

Stepp, S. L. (2011). *Personal leadership theory*. (Unpublished document). Marshall University, South Charleston, WV.

Stepp, S. L. (2013). *Stepp's theory of curriculum*. (Unpublished document). Marshall University, South Charleston, WV.

Stepp, S. L. (2014). *Evaluating developmental education programs: A proposed model and guidelines for higher education administrators*. (Submitted for publication). Marshall University, South Charleston, WV.

What is Servant Leadership? (n. d.). *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership*. Retrieved from <http://www.greenleaf.org/whatiss/>

Wood, D. J., and Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *Journal Applied Behavioral Science*, 27(2), 139-162

“One is wise to cultivate the tree that bears fruit in our souls.”
--Henry David Thoreau

