Teaching Statement/Philosophy about Educational Leadership

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Introduction

Theory and practice live together. What we experience, what we find that works, and what we realize doesn't work within each contextualized learning environment is the essence of seeking new ways of thinking that will explore how we can cause positive change for students and adults.

While narrative theory models have governed the majority of my work and research platform, I also believe that qualitative and quantitative methods assist learners to explore avenues and valleys where we don't normally see a horizon. Sometimes that horizon is invisible to us until we talk, share, and reflect on the human condition that drives us each day. It is through the marriage of multiple methods through narrative theory and practice that my work can contribute to your university.

Experience

Since the start of my teaching career, I have compiled stories from thousands of students and professionals across the nation who are invested in education. From using narrative theory to hire the best staff (Jetter, 2016), face adversarial conditions (Coda and Jetter, 2016), cause reform movements in public, charter, or private schools (Jetter, 2017), or help students to solve problems by writing with voice (Jetter, 2018), my experience using narrative theory actually began in the classroom and then became my leadership dissertation topic and focus as it relates to the leadership of assessment and high-stakes testing (Jetter, 2010). Even now, I am working on three new exciting projects related to narrative theory including: brain research and anti-bullying initiatives (to be published by ASCD), how to lead within the Internet of Things (to be published by Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.), and Escaping the Teacher's Dunk Tank (to be published by Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.). All of these projects will help educators and leaders to find their identities within narratives that drive incredible changes to both practice and policy reform.

Methods

Through the use of grounded theory research and case study methods, my platform of using narrative theory as a cross-disciplinary tactic provides stark story telling for the emerging field of new school leaders who embark on a career of school leadership. Interestingly enough, veteran practitioners have found incredible value in my work and continue to use narrative

methods to create reform in their local or regional learning networks. I am not only proud of my contributions to the field of leadership and education, I am humbled that narrative theory and my dedication to this research platform has made such a strong presence in the field of assisting leaders to find their voice, calling, and "horizon."

Philosophy

For years, my constructivist style has governed my practice. I have participated on dissertation committees and contributed new ways of thinking as a means to supplementing student passions. I have posed questions to get students to think in forward-thinking ways. Our self-interests drive our passions, but it is within such passions where theory and practice can come together in an exploratory way. My job is to supplement student passions with alternatives, choices, and independent thinking so students have a smorgasbord available to them. Technology also plays a role in creating capable, independent thinkers and innovators. Technology must always be contextual and never present. It must be future ready. It is within such a context where engagement meets the traditions of formulating powerful research models. Of course, frameworks and sound research models will provide reliable and valid contributions to the field and it is within this framework that I work best. I have had some of the most amazing professors, researchers, and faculty members provide a foundation for my passions and interests to thrive. Finally, I have coupled my narrative theory research platform (Bruner, 1990) with the theories of identity and agency which has been based primarily on the work of (Holland, 2001). Our identities as researchers and thinkers are constantly changing due to our cultural contexts and it is within this vein where the celebration of diversity can flourish and leadership can be intentional, rather than unintended or unintentional.

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