**DEVELOPMENT OF A DOCTORAL STUDENT IN PREPARATION FOR DISSERTATION:**

**A PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL**

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**Development of a Doctoral Student in Preparation for the Dissertation: a Program Logic Model**

*If you don’t know where you are going, how are you gonna’ know when you get there?*

* Yogi Berra

Request for Proposal

 The commitment of becoming a doctoral student begins with desire, knowledge of personal strengths and challenges and ignorance. My desire developed through my experience as an adjunct instructor for Marshall. I began my association with Marshall in the fall semester of 2000 through the spring semester of 2011 as an adjunct instructor for Marshall’s Attendance and Social Services Certification Program. In collaboration with Dr. Rebecca Goodwin and Dr. Michael Cunningham, I developed two courses for the certification program, The Attendance Director and The Attendance Director Internship.

 During the summer of 2000, I was challenged with the development of The Attendance Director, a master’s level course required for West Virginia licensure as a school attendance director. Since my academic and professional experience is in the field of social work, I was unaware of how to develop course content, create rubrics for evaluations, design course assignments aligned with course objectives, and the other facets that are involved in creating a new course. Fortunately, Jo Dee Gottlieb, an instructor in the Department of Social Work at Marshall University, served as my mentor during the course development and teaching in my first year as an adjunct. Through her guidance, I developed a plan of study and the syllabus. Course content needed to cover the development of a theory to be used by attendance directors, knowledge of and an understanding of school attendance laws, policies and practices, collaboration with community resources, utilization of technology to assist the attendance director and knowledge of both federal and state laws specific to student behavior and special needs students. After years of experience as an adjunct I realize the volume of material presented in this course might be overwhelming to a new attendance director.

 As I gained experience as an adjunct, I became more confident in providing information to attendance director students, but desired more knowledge of how to develop these students into confident professionals. I believe Dr. Cunningham was sensitive to my desire to improve as an instructor and he would subtly suggest I consider applying for the doctoral program offered at Marshall. Years passed, and in 2007, my personal life allowed me the time and opportunity to commit to a program of study; thus I entered the doctoral program.

The Program Logic Model

 The framework of the program logic model best illustrates my journey toward completion of the doctoral program. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation developed a logic model guide defining the model as a picture of an organization and how it completes its work through theory and assumptions underlying the program, linking outcomes with program activities/processes and theoretical assumptions/principles of the process (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). The model is divided into two main sections, 1) your planned work, which includes resources and program activities, 2) your intended results, which include outputs, outcomes and impact. Completions of the coursework and portfolio activities are included in my planned work. Intended results as evidenced in the outputs and outcomes of the planned work, and the personal affects of the doctoral program will be discussed.

Planned Work – Resources

 The logic model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004) describes resources as the human, financial, organizational and community resources a program has available to direct doing the work. In preparation for dissertation, I consider my resources as the coursework completed, divided into subgroups, providing a comprehensive foundation for research.

**Coursework**

*Preparation for Research*

 The probability of success of a research project is greatly enhanced when the beginning is correctly defined as a precise statement of goals and justifications (Congdon, J.D. & Dunham, A., 1999). As a doctoral student, I was immediately confronted with the reality that research is the final product of the many hours of coursework completed for this program. Dr. Cunningham, in LS 703 Research Design, provided a comprehensive study of the research basics. Reviewing the assignments required for LS 703, I realized the importance of each task and how completion of the class has prepared me for future classes and completing my own research. Dr. Cunningham required students to present their assignments to the class for critique. I learned early to be prepared for constructive criticism and that the final product will result after several drafts.

 After reviewing published dissertations in LS 703 and considering my possible area of research, the next step was deciding about a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research project. How did I want to collect my data? LS 711 Survey Research in Education allowed me the opportunity to develop my own survey and options for distribution, and EDF 625 Qualitative Research required I complete a qualitative research project requiring Institution Review Board approval.

 The research project I completed for EDF 625 provided opportunities to gain both experience and confidence in qualitative research. I conducted a series of interviews with foster parents regarding their involvement with their foster child’s education. Professionally I used the result of this research, which was consistent with the limited research in this field, to direct my practice with foster parents. The contact I had with the foster parents for the purpose of the interview helped establish a deeper relationship between the home and the school.

*Public School Administration*

 Recently the importance of school-community relations and overall school relations has grown rapidly (Gallagher, 2005). Developing a strong school-community relationship has been a professional goal since my career began with the public school system over 28 years ago. I have been a liaison between the student and family as an assistant attendance director, meeting with the parent in their home to formulate cooperative plans for the student’s educational success. Currently in my position as the county homeless liaison I collaborate with community agencies, representing the educational needs of the students within the county and state. I am frequently the only educational representative on many of the boards and committees which I serve. The coursework I have completed in public school administration has improved my ability to represent the school system. I believe this knowledge has developed a more trusting relationship between me, representing Kanawha County Schools, and the many agencies with whom I collaborate.

 It is difficult to choose which course provided the most useful information regarding public school administration. Dr. Yeager provided both scholarly and experiential support in the courses, LS 720 School Finance, LS 760 Politics of Education, LS Educational Facility Planning and LS 740 Public School Law. Dr. Kolson, in LS 700 Superintendency, provided me the opportunity to visit three correctional facilities to complete a study of the collaboration and cooperation between the West Virginia Department of Corrections and the West Virginia Department of Education’s Office of Institutional Educational Programs. Dr. Cunningham instructed me on personnel issues in LS 600 School Personnel Administration. These courses provided a depth of understanding, drawing from different subject matters within public school administration. After completing these courses I developed a fuller understanding of the responsibilities of both the school principal and the school superintendent. Knowledge and understanding of the public school system and administration has better prepared me to represent the school system and build trusting relationships among many community agencies.

 Trust is emphasized in interpersonal transactions and understanding trust in professional relationships is vital to the work of fostering healthy cultures of trust in school organizations (Kutsyuraba, 2011). School leaders must create, sustain and foster trust, being cognizant of the fundamental importance of trust and trust dynamic for school leaders (Kutsyuraba, 2011). Public school administration coursework has better prepared me to represent Kanawha County Schools thus establishing a more trusting relationship with the community.

*Theory and Leadership*

 Dr. Nicholson, in LS 705 Introduction to Theory, defines theory as “a set of assumptions which guide practice.” These theories were developed by a number of individuals that observed the human condition and determined what seemed to motivate their behavior and then recorded these behaviors. Dr. Nicholson introduced me to theories as they relate to education such as Feminism, Marxism/Neo Marxism, and Functionalism. Assignments in LS 705 required me to select a current educational initiative/reform and analyze using opposing theories. I had a deeper understanding of theory and the influence on the development and implementation of the law which I base my professional practice.

 As required I enrolled and completed CI 702 Curriculum Theory taught by Dr. Meyer. Seven students enrolled in this summer class in 2009. At the first class meeting we reviewed the syllabus, discussed expectations for the class, and scheduled student presentations of individual curriculum theories. Within two weeks five class members had dropped the class, leaving me and one other student to endure the rigors of CI 702. With no curriculum background or experience I continued on for the remainder of the summer semester. Dr. Meyer introduced me to the theories of Grumet, Pinar, Currere, Feminism, Constructivism, Child Development, Modernism and Post Modernism. I learned curriculum theory, but more importantly I learned not to give up. Dr. Meyer challenged me both intellectually and personally, which I believe strengthened my self-determination and desire to complete the doctoral program.

 Dr. Meyer required students to develop their own personal philosophy of curriculum. My personal theory was developed with the influence of three theories, Autobiographical, Feminism and Ecological System theories. During the course we studied Autobiographical and Feminism as presented in *Understanding Curriculum* by Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman. Ecological Systems theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, is one of the foundational theories of school social work. Unifying these three theories define my personal philosophy which emphasizes the importance or the narrative of the individual (autobiographical), the belief in education as a means to “…change society, independence and ultimate isolation of the individual, doctrine or natural rights” (Grumet, 2000) (feminism) and the influence of the various environmental systems upon the student (ecological).

 Through the process of developing my personal philosophy, I examined my role within the school system and the challenge of utilizing this knowledge to improve my practice and assist the students and the community of Kanawha County. My unconventional view of curriculum theory presents an added resource to the field of education. I believe that by ignoring the influence of the student’s environment and the interaction between the systems, a teacher may be frustrated by requiring students to fit into a prescribed mold set by standards determined by environmental systems far removed from the classroom and the child’s environment.

*Area of Emphasis*

 Deciding upon an area of emphasis fulfilled both the requirement for the doctoral program and my desire to become more familiar with the area of special education. The homeless liaison is responsible to act as an advocate for the rights of those students who may require special educational services. Due to frequent moves, homeless children often lack the opportunity for complete evaluations thus denying their right to a free and appropriate public education. The coursework included in my area of emphasis, CISP 521 Children with Exceptionalities, CISP 627 Issues in Special Education and CISP 645 Characteristics and Methods of Emotionally Disturbed Children provided a solid knowledge base for the education of exceptional students. Classmates, most of whom were seeking certification in special education, provided a rich resource of current challenges in the special education program. Through the association with the students in these courses, I developed a deeper understanding of the needs of the exceptional student.

Planned Work – *Program Activities*

W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s, Logic Model Development Guide, describes program activities as the means by which the program utilizes the resources (Kellogg, 2004). These activities include the processes, tools, events, technology and actions that are important to the implementation. Using these interventions will bring about the intended program changes or results. Portfolio activities provided the opportunity to gain experience using the tools provided in the doctoral program’s coursework.

 The portfolio activities I selected were: a revision and update of the Attendance and Social Services certification program at Marshall in collaboration with Dr. Mike Cunningham, participation in the Curriculum Analysis Report of the Attendance and Social Services certification program in collaboration with Dr. Cynthia Kolson, and co-authoring a proposal submitted and presented at the Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration (SRCEA) in collaboration with Dr. Mike Cunningham.

**Portfolio Activities**

*Attendance and Social Services Certification Program Revision*

 *“To live is to change; to live well is to have changed often” Cardinal* Newman.

 In 1999, at the request of the West Virginia Department of Education, Marshall University Graduate College developed the Attendance Director and School Social Services certification program. During the first year of this certification program I assisted Dr. Rebecca Goodwin in the development of two courses for the program, The Attendance Director and Attendance Director Internship. I taught both classes for the succeeding 10 years.

 Feedback from students completing the courses and the county board agencies that employed the attendance directors regarding the certification program was gathered and reviewed. The review of the data led to a review of the objectives of the program and a subsequent revision of the program. During the summer of 2008 I collaborated with

Dr. Michael Cunningham in making program revisions. The revision reduced the number of hours from 15 to 12 for all candidates. Course content was reviewed in all required subjects to ensure proper alignment with course standards, the plan of study was revised in accordance with new course hour requirements, and a pre/post assessment was developed. The pre assessment was given at the first class of the Attendance Director and the post assessment was administered at the last class of the Attendance Director Internship. Pre and post assessments have been administered since fall 2008. This tool attempts to assess the knowledge and skills gained by the certification candidates after completion of the 4 required courses. The assessment includes 65 standards for the candidate to complete using a Likert scale measuring understanding and knowledge. Using this tool I was able to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses in the required courses. The information gained from the assessments has been helpful. However, after administering this assessment for the past 4 years, I would strongly advise a revision of this tool to something that would be more manageable.

 Revision of the certification program allowed me the opportunity to build upon the experience of the development of a program integrating the characteristics of the leadership model with which I am most aligned, servant leadership. Some of the characteristics of a servant leader are, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (Greenleaf, 1998).

 Program revision began with listening to those students that had completed the program and the county school systems that had employed the attendance directors. “The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will” (Greenleaf, 1998). As a servant-leader I not only listened to others but also listened to my inner voice, seeking to understand what my body, spirit and mind were communicating. Dr. Cunningham and I regularly reflected on the current program and how to make revisions that would most benefit both the students and their profession.

 I have invested many hours into the development, implementation, evaluation and revision of the attendance certification program. Through this labor I am first and foremost committed to the growth of the individuals who have sought certification. The servant-leader believes that individuals have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers (Greenleaf, 1998). Students in the certification program did not always seek the profession of the attendance director. As a servant-leader I believe it is my responsibility to nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of the individual. I took a personal interest in the ideas and suggestions of all my students, encouraged them to be decision makers and assisted with suggestions of other professional areas outside of the attendance director. Program revision gave me the opportunity to realize and develop my leadership style.

*Curriculum Analysis Report*

It was the beginning of the 2011 school year. I had arranged for the Attendance Director and staff of Kanawha County Schools to meet on the MUGC campus. Dr. Sue Hollandsworth approached me before the meeting began with a note that she needed to speak with me as soon as possible. During our morning break I left the group and made my way to Dr. Hollandsworth’s office. She informed me that the West Virginia Department of Education was requesting a curriculum analysis report (CAR) on the Attendance and Social Services certification program. Since I was most familiar with the program she requested I work with Dr. Cynthia Kolson in preparing the report that would be due by the end of the year did I mention it was August? Dr. Hollandsworth encouraged me with the fact that this would be a great portfolio project, and this sounded like a win/win. Accepting the challenge I began a project that would give birth to a document in less than the normal human gestation of nine months.

 During the months I worked on the CAR I was also very involved with my father’s care. He had just been admitted to a nursing home, after a visit to the hospital due to his sudden inability to walk or even feed himself. Between work, caring for my father, teaching a class for Marshall, taking two classes for my doctoral program and the CAR project I felt overwhelmed and challenged to accomplish anything of value. Greenleaf (1998) stated that anxiety is a part of the human condition. I would not banish anxiety as it gives life its challenge. As a servant-leader the anxiety gave me the opportunity to face life’s challenges and develop a strategy for dealing with the uncertainties that lie ahead.

 The CAR was completed and lies in someone’s desk drawer as it has never been reviewed by the West Virginia Department of Education. Was this an exercise in futility, or a life lesson to be learned? Even though the completion of the CAR was a major accomplishment it was not the final product that contributed to my sense of pride. I learned how to analyze, evaluate and improve the current certification program. Life lessons are taught in many ways.

*Co-authoring a proposal presented at a national conference*

Dr. Cunningham suggested I write a proposal to the Southern Regional Council for Education Administrators (SRCEA) for presentation at their upcoming conference. With the assistance of Dr. Cunningham, I completed the application and submitted the proposal for consideration. After several weeks I still had not been notified of acceptance or rejection of the proposal. I emailed Dr. Paul Watkins, conference coordinator, regarding the status of my proposal. Dr. Cunningham also emailed Dr. Watkins regarding my proposal. Within a day Dr. Watkins contacted me and apologized that somehow the proposal had been overlooked and that I would be on the schedule of the 52nd Annual SRCEA Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri on November 3-6, 2011.

 A study of homeless high school students within Kanawha County Schools during the 2011 school year was presented. The study provided a breakdown of high school students according to their classification as homeless. Through my research it became evident that situations of homelessness vary between age groups. Identifying a student as “homeless” does not provide an adequate description of the student’s current living situation and their specific educational, physical or social needs. From the ecological perspective school administrators can better serve the needs of their students by understanding their needs and the appropriate support available to address these needs.

I have made numerous presentations to a variety of audiences, but none before an audience of education administrators. I was uncertain of the interest in my topic among these administrators, although I was certain that homelessness among high school students was an important topic. I was encouraged that there may be interest when the keynote speaker made her presentation on teaching children of poverty. Her presentation relating to poverty related well with my presentation on homelessness. My presentation was scheduled for the end of the day which yielded few participants. Development of the study and presentation at a national conference provided me the opportunity to conduct research, disseminate into a written document and present to an audience of peers.

Intended Results – Outputs

 Outputs are the direct results of program activities (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Reflecting on my portfolio activities my first thought is directed toward the result of each project on a specific group of individuals such as the students enrolled in the attendance director program or the education administrators at the SRCEA annual conference. These results could be measured through a separate research project and provide valuable information for future program development. What can be immediately identified is the growth I have experienced through my doctoral work as a student, researcher, teacher and leader. I have gained confidence in knowledge of public school administration, developed knowledge of leadership style and become more driven to work collaboratively with agencies outside of the educational system when representing the needs and interests of the school system.

Outcomes

 “Outcomes are specific changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, status or level of functioning expected to result from program activities and which are most often expressed at an individual level” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

 My work within the school system is most similar to that of a school social worker. As a school social worker, many of the duties I have performed could be compared to an ambassador. In preparation for my doctoral dissertation I have gained knowledge of theory, leadership styles, and public school administration that will sharpen my skills as a school social worker. I believe I am a more competent ambassador both for the school system and to the community of the county and state.

Impact

 Impacts are organizational, community and/or system level changes expected to result from program activities, which might include improved conditions, increased capacity, and/or changes in the policy arena” ( W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

 Progressing on to the dissertation provides me with the opportunity to make an impact on the collaborative relationship between the school system and the community. I plan to conduct research within the collaborative relationship between the county school system and the Department of Health and Human Resources. This research project will allow me to be creative in my pursuit of research in an area of my passion.

Robert Greenleaf states,

 I counsel you then to be aware of your priceless gift of creativity. No matter

 how small and flickering a light it may seem to be at the time, cultivate it as

 a pearl beyond price. Whatever your competence in your chosen field turns

 out to be, and regardless of the size of the opportunities that may come your

 way in the foreseeable world, your imaginative capacity will measure the

 productive use of your strengths and opportunities (Greenleaf, 1998).

 My experience as a doctoral student has increased my knowledge of administrative, leadership and curriculum theory. Through this exposure and knowledge I have chosen both a personal and leadership theory.

 I have gained knowledge of research both through coursework and experience. I am prepared and anxious to begin my own research project, realizing the many hours ahead and the absurdity of continuous rewrites.

 Working with Dr. Kolsun on the Curriculum Analysis Report and with Dr. Cunningham on the revision of the Attendance and Social Services certification program increased my knowledge of program development and analysis. I believe as a result of these projects there has been improvement in the Marshall Attendance Director Certification program. I realize that certification programs must be continually reviewed, analyzed and revised to better serve our students and profession.

 I believe I know where I am going and will be better prepared to reach my goal of developing a school social work program to be implemented in the schools of West Virginia. Through coursework and portfolio activities I realize this is an ambitious goal, and will only be realized with years of hard work and collaboration. I look forward to the opportunity to complete a research project that will assist with realizing this goal.

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