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Preface: Elevating Intentional Education Practice in Graduate Programs

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Preface

Elevating Intentional Education Practice in Graduate Programs focuses on analyzing how higher education leaders implement performance improvements for graduate education. Further, graduate programs provide workforce alignment and theory-to-practice for management applications. Thus, graduate programs must view performance initiatives through the optics of student engagement, stakeholder satisfaction, and economic development. Additionally, determined is how leaders make significant, sustainable changes utilizing quality initiatives, envisaging, educational leadership, and innovative initiatives. Simultaneously, educational leaders must evaluate performance metrics of educator quality, educational services, activities, technology, continuous improvement, educational leadership, and intentional education practice theory (IEPT) (teaching style). Therefore, evidence-based strategies are used to examine graduate program effectiveness.

ENHANCING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING THROUGH INTENTIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICE THEORY

Like most disciplines, graduate education must adapt to current educational challenges that persist in the field and industries (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). In doing so, higher education practitioners and proponents must develop new strategies, theories, initiatives, and programs that elevate liberal, behaviorist, progressive, humanistic, radical adult philosophies. Further, outcome-based metrics can strengthen strategic development and graduate programming to measure the extent of change in instruction (Herrmann, 2018). As a result, new strategies must be developed to address extant issues, provide instructors and stakeholders with pertinent information to advance solutions, build on strengths, and opportunities. Likewise, instructors must demonstrate adaptability by working with adult learners in consideration of cultural context, learning styles, and preferences. Instructors must intentionally develop requisite skills, knowledge, perspectives of students to self-reflect, dialogue, and act based upon classroom experiences (Hooks, 2014).

Innovative Teaching Philosophy: Intentional Educational Practice Theory

Based on the understanding of radical adult philosophy, course material, and personal teaching philosophy; Intentional Educational Practices Theory as a graduate education theory has been developed and based on critical theory, which promulgates fundamental, social, political, economic changes in society through education; to transform culture and its structure (El-Amin, 2021). In perspective, theories are established, abstract, general, logically related assertions designed to justify observed phenomena in the natural world (Markovsky & Webster Jr. 2007). Additionally, critical theory is not limited to a particular field or specific content. It entails reflection upon the premises, concepts, and categories used in different disciplines such as business, literary studies, history, political theory, and technology, to name a few. Thus, critical theory is interdisciplinary, useful as a teaching method, and instructors are to facilitate dialog which pose problems, whereas students interact to solve problems in discussion or study groups. Ultimately, the instructor is to advise but not limit the direction of learning to create equality in the classroom.

Specifically, Intentional Educational Practice Theory will impact the field of graduate education by contextualizing the pursuit of instructional competence, foster pedagogical quality, technological proficiency, and expand upon knowledge within the field. Intentional Educational Practice Theory is a process in which instructors facilitate the learning of adult learners, whereas the individual is responsible for their own learning. Further, learners also assume a large responsibility for what occurs in the learning process. Individuals select, manage, and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at their convenience, in any place, through any means, at any age (Challis, 2005). Instructor facilitation emphasizes adult learning skills, processes, and systems rather than content coverage and tests. For the individual, adult learning involves initiating personal challenge activities and developing personal qualities to develop practical assignments. Intentional Educational Practice Theory is dynamic; thus, facilitators are encouraged to fuse many modalities such as andragogy, self-directed learning, transformative, embodiment, experiential, spiritual learning as teaching methods to create positive experiences for students (Duncan & Fiske, 2015). Additionally, instructors must be cognizant of the different learning preferences of auditory, visual, and reading/writing to help students achieve comprehension of topical matter.

Finally, Intentional Educational Practice Theory incorporates an evaluative component to provide assessment of instructors or facilitators to ensure competency. However, evaluation metrics of Intentional Educational Practice Theory is in contrast from traditional instructor evaluations in that it helps instructors focus on improvement of the curriculum, instead of simply execution.

Graduate Education in a Divided Society

Both Horace Kallen and Alain Locke discoursed about the potential of graduate education connecting individuals and communities from different backgrounds, achieving a “pluralism” that allowed various cultures to contribute to society and be respected for their roles (Guy et al., 1996). Utilizing elements of philosophy, pedagogy, and andragogy the purpose of graduate education in a divided society is explored. Therefore, teaching and learning communities can cement the practice of pluralistic graduate classrooms to bridge divided communities. For instance, graduate education learning communities create an awareness of the self, instructor, and the whole. Students are urged to take part in self-reflection and self-exploration with respect to their own attitudes toward topical information and its application to practice from a cultural context.

Further, transformational classrooms must include students’ assessments, instructors’ perceptions, interviews with students, interviews with several educators, and discussions with an array of staff. In this way, diversity of thought is encouraged. This is a departure from traditional lecture style classrooms. Most importantly, various internal and external communities should be invited into the classroom as this encourages diversity of experiences and thought where students can gain perspectives from those of the different or same race, class, sex, physical ability, and sexual orientation. The instruction and learning process become more dynamic when power relationships are challenged, and their dependence is decreased in the elements.

Moreover, the importance of cross-cultural communication is a necessity in method and means; as learning occurs in the classroom, virtually, or a hybrid of the two to bridge learning preferences and create inclusion. It can be difficult for an instructor to identify issues unless diligent as some students may have different schedules or work virtually; and some students may not have access to the same technological tools as instructors have. Some information would best be communicated face-to-face, as this method is typically more personable (Duncan & Fiske, 2015). Today’s global educational environment requires an all-encompassing approach to instructional design. Regarding communication challenges to instruction, the instructor must create an effective global learning environment, despite the medium of instruction.

There are barriers to education where marginalization and social justice are factors. As a result, systematic subjugation of people is done or in the act according to a fixed plan or system or methodical. Many people are marginalized; whether women, people of color, those with a lack of socio-economic status, etc. Focusing on one element of who is marginalized is not as important as using education to reduce or eliminate marginalization all together. Every individual has a right to equity. Education is the right of every citizen, and for society to exist harmoniously

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every safeguard must be made for people to achieve equity from infancy through adulthood. Unfortunately, in research and practice, some promulgate their truths and subsequently, systematically impose marginalization on others (Wolgemuth et al., 2018).

Role of Graduate Education in Society

Applying the materials used throughout a course (videos, FACE, philosophy, reviewed book), discussed is the role graduate education plays within society. Also, discussed is how graduate education can be used to solve social problems and create opportunity. Additionally, the role of graduate education is compared with traditional secondary education; in context to the important roles each plays in society. Bell Hooks, has written in *Teaching to Transgress* that, “Shifting how we think about language and how we use it necessarily alters how we know what we know.” Although emancipatory knowledge is important, communicative knowledge is a bit more important because it is how an educator inspires learners to journey through emancipatory knowledge. Educators at all levels must embrace the rationale for language-conscious education regardless of status quo leanings. Language-conscious education incorporates a diversity of perspectives and opportunities for individuals to take latitude, which provides inclusion for all into scholarly dialogs. Likewise, language-conscious education must extend to evaluative measures in every space in academia to ensure equity and provide for more accurate data sets.

In education, exceptional language and communication requires understanding the needs of students. Students need negotiators in education and also need to negotiate their own needs. Negotiators are people in the education setting who strive to be well-connected and likely own the trust of their peers (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). One of the benefits of using negotiators in education stems from past experiences, which highlights the importance of building and sustaining networks. Likewise, other qualities such as content acumen, technical expertise, and leadership skills are necessary components for instructors (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). Finally, people have a better learning, teaching, and working environment when they experience: appreciation, autonomy, affiliation, status, and their role in the classroom is respected.

Furthermore, teaching and learning communities can be used to solve social problems and create opportunity in the practices of progressive classrooms. For instance, teaching communities create an awareness of the self, instructor, and the whole. Students are urged to take part in self-reflection and self-exploration with respect to their own attitudes toward topical information and its application to practice. Further, transformational classrooms must include students’ assessments, instructors’ perceptions, interviews with students, interviews with several educators, and discussions with an array of staff. In this way, diversity of thought is encouraged.

This is a departure from traditional lecture style classrooms. Most importantly, various internal and external communities should be invited into the classroom as this encourages diversity of experiences and thought where students can gain perspectives from those of the different or same race, class, sex, physical ability, and sexual orientation. The instruction and learning process become more dynamic when power relationships are challenged, and their dependence is decreased in the aforementioned elements.

Unfortunately, access to education continues to pose a challenge in graduate education. With limited access, people experience lower salaries. For instance, women and minorities continue to be marginalized in the workforce. To improve the incidence of inequity more commitment needs to be made to provide diversity education to existing professionals. Inequality is systematic; therefore, diversity education must extend to those in pre-school, throughout compulsory education, in college, and the workforce. Equally, access to K-12 community college programs provided by the government make getting an AA, BA, or graduate degrees attainable. In turn, this reduces the overall cost for college making higher education possible.

Likewise, from a critical perspective, graduate education lends a different view than that of traditional education and can even be thought of as advanced education. Moreover, graduate education is a contrast from pedagogical education because instructors connect topical interests to student's careers without boundaries. Additionally, engagement of the learner allows the learner to highlight topical connections made during learning. Likewise, Challis (2005) purported there are instructive and challenging issues of implementing graduate education. As graduate education is considered an advanced educational andragogy, there are challenges that persist in the implementation of graduate education programs, whereas there may be a lack of support by institutions of higher education to market programs and properly staff classes. More needs to be done to ensure there is cohesion in support services as well.

Most importantly, a well-organized instructional environment promotes competency, creates structure in the classroom, and engages participants. For instance, when the instructor indicates what they are going to do from start to finish and then follows through, students feel more comfortable with specific assignments and moderated processes, rather than haphazard and disorganized direction. If a classroom environment is not well-organized or intentional in the execution of adult learning methodologies; students may become disengaged, speak poorly of the instructor, and the institution. It is incumbent on the instructor to understand different issues that can arise from an unstructured learning environment. Resultant from poor instructional execution is a poor experience for student participants, a poor reputation for the instructor, and the institution. As an instructor, it is important

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to mitigate all issues that arise from ill-preparation, which may indicate or be a perception of one's competency in the field they teach.

Social Forces That Contribute to the Expansion of Graduate Education

Social forces contribute to the expansion of graduate education in today's society. Some of these interrelated forces include demographic changes, globalization, and the explosion of technology, and information. As such, graduate education is designed to help adults achieve knowledge in practical topics so they can better function in their personal and professional lives. Graduate education instruction must strike a fine balance between being teacher, guide, and facilitator; thus, it is important to construct assignments where student participants can make meaningful contributions in the classroom environment in class or through technological means.

Adult students thrive in educational environments where they can engage in a dialogue which examines their interests and perspectives against those of others and apply them to learning goals. In perspective, adults need to reflect critically and base understanding of historical, cultural, and biographical motives for their needs and interests. Instructors must include interactive models in instruction where there is emphasis on several factors, such as environmental, personalities of learners, cognitive processes, and contextual learning methods. When combined, develop experiences of autonomous learning. Likewise, students are guided to assume primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning experiences. To facilitate this kind of learning, instructors must possess skills to assist learners' complete needs assessments, locate learning resources, and choose instructional methods, and evaluation strategies to make learning meaningful.

Several instructional methods should be considered when developing continuing education programs. El-Amin (2020) presented the idea of a "traditional education" with methodology to utilize andragogical theories. Traditional educational benefits are that it differs from distinctly online instruction in that instructors and students have face-to-face contact, yet instructors can still utilize electronic applications to examine student artifacts. Traditional education is an articulation of individual and expert achievement. Moreover, traditional education can be used in most disciplines. Similarly, electronic applications offer valuable media options to traditional education, such as slide decks, video, mp3/4, sound bites, graphic renderings, etc.

Further, communities of learning are beneficial to assist students in the classroom and promotes greater engagement. As a student, the importance of being in a community of learning means that as a group member, one should communicate information regarding intentions, method, and means. It can be difficult for a group member to be transparent when communicating within the project team because

people have different personalities and reasons for taking part in a learning community. Although it may be challenging, students must be encouraged. Moreover, while online educational technology has its benefits, it's not the best communication method. In fact, face-to-face interaction is the most effective manner to communicate (Duncan & Fiske, 2015). On the other hand, providing remote options are the best way to communicate transparently in today's multi-dynamic educational environment (Schmidt et al., 2001). Finally, the incorporation of technology in graduate education is the most profound social force that has contributed to the expansion of graduate education. The incorporation of media, advanced technology, computers, and the internet are empowering tools for educational evolvement. When utilized strategically access to education occurs and has the potential to increase educational quality by making instructing and learning.

CONCLUSION

Elevating Intentional Education Practice in Graduate Programs is an indispensable reference source that provides an interdisciplinary perspective of how issues and challenges concerning graduate program performance effectiveness impacts stakeholders (students, staff, instructors, and administrators). Further, as higher leaders manage graduate program performance, they must ask themselves critical questions: what went right, what needs improvement, and what innovations should be incorporated? Leaders must encourage stakeholders' to openly share their experiences when issues arise. Leaders may find challenges engaging stakeholders due to a myriad of concerns. However, educational leaders must institutionalize, implement, execute, and review initiatives to ensure graduate programs exceed performance metrics of educator quality, educational services, activities, technology, continuous improvement, and intentional education practice (IEP) (teaching style) (El-Amin, 2021). Likewise, leaders must recognize that stakeholder engagement is invaluable to alleviate challenges in developing, assessing, and improving graduate program performance. Likewise, the capacity of higher education leaders is critical for creating an institutional culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging (DEIB) in student and faculty recruitment, retention, promotion, attrition, and succession. This text highlights research on graduate program performance, collaborative leadership, shared responsibility, higher educational leadership, organizational development, organizational change management, strategic management, and stakeholder development.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is organized into 13 chapters. A brief description of each of the chapters follows:

Chapter 1 examines problems related to teaching effectiveness includes failure of institutions to identify process improvements, ascertain appropriate stakeholders to accomplish institutional goals, and implement streamlined classroom processes to ensure instructors have the appropriate professional support needed to apply intentional educational practices in graduate programs. Consequently, current performance measures of educational programs illuminate issues in processes within instruction, quantity of trained instructor mentors, professional support networks, and existing programming which may need improvement, yet is not being addressed in educational environments. Performance measurement factors that impact long-term institutional effectiveness service quality of HE (educator quality, educational services, activities, technology, continuous improvement, educational leadership, and IEPT (teaching style).

Chapter 2 illuminates the experiences of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), who serve racially, ethnically, economically, and academically diverse populations of students. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program, a professional master's degree program at one HBCU, has positioned itself to attract highly experienced mid-career professionals, recent college graduates with little experience, those with lots of relevant coursework, and others with very little exposure to the basics. This necessarily requires careful consideration of learning objectives and the methods used to reach them. This chapter highlights the ways in which intentional construction of learning objectives, formal and informal assessment, and closing the loop by correcting findings have enhanced this MPA program as part of a continuous improvement model. A sampling of these experiences will be shared in this chapter as well as some key takeaways for administrators of similarly oriented programs.

Chapter 3 explores how graduate educators are tasked with helping students connect theory to operationalized learning and practice. This connection represents the learning that graduate students must bring to the workplace to recognize the relevance of their education. Thus, graduate educators must be diligent in designing viable pedagogies in graduate programs that evoke deepened learning that can be translated into action in the workplace to meet the call by organizations. This chapter reviews critical reflection practices and their use as viable assessment mechanisms for student learning outcomes in graduate programs. The teaching styles required by graduate educators to successfully implement these critical reflection learning designs are also examined. This review and examination are conducted through the lens of transformative learning theory, a learning orientation grounded in

constructivism and adult learning that occurs when the learner experiences a shift in beliefs, perspectives, attitudes, habits, and actions.

Chapter 4 focuses on challenges in higher education, including faculty leadership's role in elevating intentional practice in graduate programs, concentrating on developing inclusive higher education educational environments. It offers various perspectives on the changes in United States demographics and examines dialogue as a sustained opportunity for diverse groups of students to learn together. Although this chapter is dedicated to looking at the specifics of graduate programs, the discussions and recommendations are relevant to graduate and undergraduate students and programs. This chapter also looks at institutional change efforts from the level of the individual faculty member, the department or college, to university-wide leadership to ensure diversity in graduate programs in higher education. Lastly, this chapter offers instructive guidance to create campus climates that welcome all students and suggests a path forward for faculty development that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion of underrepresented ethnic minority students.

Chapter 5 seeks to hold space and grace. A student's life is mentally demanding and time-consuming for any learner. U.S. culture values hard work, no excuses mantras, and discipline to achieve a graduate degree or the next promotion, and often it is a badge of honor to be overcommitted, stressed out, and exhausted (Rattrie et al., 2019). As mental and physical health issues arise, the implementation of a health and wellness statement for graduate students was utilized to open the proverbial door to hold space, grace for life's challenges, and empower learners in an inclusive setting (Chtourou et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2021; Matsumoto et al., 2022).

Chapter 6 expresses how administrators in the upper echelons of higher education face an array of dilemmas that impact and inform institutional priorities around how to serve various student populations best. Chief among those considerations is how to empower historically disenfranchised students toward a deeply substantive experience that inspires them intellectually and involves them in areas of social justice. This chapter provides an explanatory case study of a successful program launched by two vice presidents of a small, predominately white institution (PWI) in rural Kansas. It shows how deeply impactful outcomes for black male students can be achieved through intentional Elevating Educational Intentional Practice Programs. The case study explores the "how" and "why" and offers insights for sustained future programming.

Chapter 7 highlights action-Based research as an approach used to design studies that seek to both inform and influence practice. The goal of this type of research in the academic arena centers on guiding school improvement to take informed actions. This chapter specifically focuses on action-based research, the process, and the effects the approach has in both P-12 and higher education through the use of two case studies. These case studies show that action-based research can be

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applied to various settings and age ranges. Theoretical frameworks are provided to endorse ways in which action-based research is an effective hands-on approach aimed towards getting results to improve practices.

Chapter 8 assesses whether the six variables of graduate educational quality predict intentional education practice (IEP) (teaching style) in United States graduate university programs. The issue is that graduate student engagement, student satisfaction, and matriculation diminish without IEP (Al-Ali, 2017; Arif & Ilyas, 2012). Consequently, current performance measures of graduate higher educational programs illuminate issues in processes within instruction, quantity of trained instructor mentors, professional support networks, and existing programming, which may need improvement (Al-Ali, 2017; Arif & Ilyas, 2012). Indeed, past researchers have noted limitations in higher educational and graduate school environments (Lu et al., 2017; White, 2018). Performance measurement variables impact long-term institutional effectiveness and remain largely unknown within educational institutions. However, White (2018) and Arif and Ilyas, (2012) noted IEP may be used as a variable to impact teaching effectiveness.

Chapter 9 focuses on how globalization and graduate intercultural communication studies have become an important topic of scholarly pursuit. Although academics study intercultural communications both in Western and Non-Western cultures, most studies reflect a Western Eurocentric perspective, even in Non-Western cultures. As such, questions arise: (1) What is Non-Western communication? (2) How does it differ from Western communication, i.e., collectivistic, or individualistic, universal, etc.? In an effort to address these questions, this chapter: (1) discusses the definition of Eurocentrism and its effect on international communication studies in Non-Western cultures; (2) explores Asiaticity and Chinese Communication in Non-Western communication; (3) examines the differences between the West's individualistic culture and Asia's collectivistic culture; and (4) provides an example of collectivism through an example of 'guanxi' in the Chinese culture.

Chapter 10 demonstrates how effective higher education leadership is a movement in internationalized higher education. Moreover, incorporating principles of internationalized higher education is a contrast from traditional graduate educational practices because new assessment methodologies are utilized to demonstrate institutional aptitude. Additionally, there has been a critical move in cutting-edge economies on how to attract students, grants, and funders. Globally, access to internationalized higher education has grown exponentially. Innovation is changing the idea of how people define internationalized higher education. Centralized leadership, information sharing, cooperation, and advancement are more prevalent than prior. Internationalized higher education has superseded traditional educational notions. Achievement lies in the capacity to impart, offer, and utilize data analytics

to mitigate complex issues; to adapt to evolving conditions; to marshal the wave of innovation, and to promote new educational management techniques.

Chapter 11 conveys how historical evidence shows how there have been attempts to divide communities as to point and blame others. Worse still, some groups have preference towards contemporary American cultural values preferred over the values that represent minority populations. The status quo was to translate American contemporary cultural values as being White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), primarily patriarchal populations or images as ideally preferred over that counter to this narrative, especially among minority groups. We can question whether contemporary American cultural values, for higher education, were any different within African American communities. We might appreciate the diversity of values and cultural influences a true American identity and diversity of opinions brings to being a stronger nation overall. African American cultural values towards education parallel contemporary American cultural educational values (West, 2003), including in graduate school administration.

Chapter 12 denotes how educational leadership requires more than designing a plan of action and persuading others to adopt the vision. Educational leadership is about encouraging others to be a part of the solutions that persist in innovative ways. Utilizing feedback communication with stakeholders, (students, parents, teachers, administrators, community, policy makers) improves initiatives and legal compliance implementation, which is a value-added to organizational excellence. Principled leadership fosters transparency in daily interactions. Educational leadership requires that one consistently communicates the vision to those above and below. Educational leadership must be diligent in both stating visions clearly and also following up with written documentation. Evaluation allows others the capability to follow through with graduate programming vision. Working collaboratively with other leaders includes collaborating in the envisioning process. In this way, others feel connected to the process and the solution.

Chapter 13 articulates how ethical leadership with regards to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and stakeholder management impacts institutional and departmental culture. Formalized leadership ethics and compliance initiatives improve institutional structures. The importance of graduate leadership that embraces ethics and compliance programs ensures adherence to policies set forth by institutions and mitigates bias. Stakeholder management is key because adherence allows leadership to develop strategic plans with stakeholders in mind, while decreasing quality issues. As a result, there is value to executing stakeholder management plans within graduate education.

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