

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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M.S. in Sports Management, March 2021, Missouri Baptist University
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The Impacts of Authentic Learning on Student Outcomes

Date: July 17, 2024

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Place: Remote

Abstract

This dissertation explores the evolving American education system, emphasizing the role of authentic learning in bridging the gap between schooling and employment, especially in the context of the modern post-pandemic student. Authentic learning, characterized by hands-on activities and real-world applications, is posited as a solution to the skilled labor shortage impacting the economy. This study delves into the history and current practices of authentic learning, examining various programs and strategies implemented in educational settings.

Utilizing a phenomenological approach, qualitative data was collected through interviews with recent high school graduates to assess the impact of authentic learning on their post-secondary trajectories. The research focused on students from both rural and inner-city backgrounds to highlight the differences and similarities in their experiences.

Findings from this study indicate that authentic learning significantly influences students' decision-making and preparedness for life after graduation. Themes identified include the positive impact of internships, extracurricular activities, and real-world projects on career readiness and personal development. However, limitations such as sample size and demographic representation were noted.

The implications of these findings suggest that integrating authentic learning experiences in education can enhance student outcomes, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to improve the effectiveness of the American education system.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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