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Student Success in Face-to-Face and Online Sections of Biology Courses at a Community College in East Tennessee

by

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there were significant differences in student success in face-to-face and online biology courses as categorized by gender, major, and age; and as measured by lecture grades, lab grades, and final course grades. The data used for analyses included data from 170 face-to-face sections and 127 online sections from a biology course during the fall and spring semesters beginning fall 2008 through spring 2011.

Researchers have reported mixed findings in previous studies juxtaposing online and face-to-face course delivery formats, from no significant differences to differences in grades, learning styles, and satisfaction levels. Four research questions guided this study with data analysis involving *t*-tests for independent groups and chi-square tests.

The results of this study enabled this researcher to note significant differences between grades, success rates by gender, success rates by health and non-health majors, non-traditional age (≥ 25) success rate, and attrition rate for students in the face-to-face course compared to the online students. There was no significant difference found in the success rate for traditional age (< 25) students in the face-to-face sections compared to those in the online sections.

Ethical Climate, Organizational Commitment, and Job Satisfaction of Full Time Faculty Members

by

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to better understand the relationship of perceived ethical climate on the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of full time faculty members in institutions of higher education. Full time faculty members are the forefront employees of any educational institution, and they have a direct impact on the successful implementation of the vision, mission, and goals of the institution. It is imperative to understand potential factors influencing organizational commitment and job satisfaction because decreased levels of commitment and satisfaction have been linked to lower productivity, stagnated creativity, higher levels of turnover and deviant workplace behaviors. The nationally reported controversy that occurred in the Sociology department of The Ohio State University during the 1960s provided the theoretical framework for this research.

Four different regional universities, producing 594 responses, participated in this study. A modified version of three previously established scales were used to measure each factor: 1) Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment created by Meyer and Allen (2004), 2) Revised Ethical Climate Questionnaire (RECQ) created by Victor and Cullen (1993), and 3) Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) created by Hackman and Oldham (1980).

The data analysis found significant differences in self-reported levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction for full time faculty members with regards to type of perceived ethical climate (i.e. egoism, benevolence, and principled). Results of this study also indicate that gender differences play a significant role in the self-reported level of organizational commitment. Females reported higher levels of organizational commitment than their male counterparts. There was no significant difference in the self-reported levels of job satisfaction

based upon gender differences. Finally, the results of the study found a significant and positive correlation between the total organizational commitment scores and the total job satisfaction scores of respondents.



Relationships Between Reading Ability in Third Grade and Phonological Awareness in Kindergarten

by

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The purpose of this study was to identify relationships that exist between reading ability in third grade and phonological awareness in kindergarten. A second purpose was to identify specific pre-reading skills that best predict later reading success. This study used a quantitative research design to answer the research questions posed. The population for this research was 244 fourth grade students enrolled in three primary schools in a school system in Southwest Virginia. The data used for this research study was obtained from each student's score on the kindergarten Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening and the third grade Virginia Standards of Learning examination in reading. Four predictor variables (rhyme awareness, letter recognition, letter sound knowledge, and concept of word) were evaluated to determine their level of predictability for later reading success. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether a significant difference in the mean score of the PALS and SOL examination in reading existed between male and female students. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the PALS and the SOL examination in reading. Subsequent Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed to determine if a significant relationship existed between the PALS and the SOL examination in reading for female and male students. Female students were found to have a higher mean score than male students on the kindergarten PALS. Female and male students tended to score about same on the third grade SOL examination in reading. PALS score and SOL score were found to be significantly related suggesting that students with high phonological awareness scores in kindergarten tended to also have high scores on the third grade Virginia SOL examination in reading. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient also indicated that female students with high kindergarten phonological awareness scores tended to have high scores on the third grade Virginia SOL examination in reading. Rhyme awareness was identified as the best early predictor of later reading ability.

A Portraiture of Evelyn Thompson Lawrence

by

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The purpose of this study was to determine the obstacles and motivators Lawrence addressed in her thirst for lifelong learning and desire to share that learning through her life stories. The study also sought to understand how everyday events played a role in the outcome of her life. More than just observing major events, the study included how the smallest moments made an impact on the continued desire for learning. This study evolved through Lawrence's accounts. By allowing this African-American woman, who was a lifelong Appalachian, to explore her past and present, it was intended that a wide array of experiences would provide a more holistic view of a lifelong learner.

The interviews with Lawrence were both video and audio taped to ensure proper acquirement of Lawrence's life stories told in narrative form. In addition to the interviews, Lawrence provided numerous primary documents such as awards, photographs, news clippings, and books to add a deeper dimension to the portraiture. To verify the information Lawrence provided, three subjects who had specific connections with Lawrence in specific areas of her life were interviewed. The interviews from this qualitative research with Lawrence, and the secondary subjects, were then transcribed, coded, and considered for emergent themes. Three distinct areas appeared as the portrait of Lawrence's life was painted through her life stories: her connections to her family, her profession and academics, and her community.

Through this qualitative research, it was determined that history was a factor in motivating Lawrence to become a lifelong learner, and there was a connection between research results on the characteristics of lifelong learners and the characteristics exhibited by Lawrence. Her desire to acquire knowledge, both formal and informal, continues to this day.

It was suggested that future studies would consider provisions for the needs of the lifelong learner and the importance of looking at the individual's life (birth-present) as a means for determining how best to nurture a love of learning as an adult. Research also recognized that through life stories the adult could find meaning from the past and motivation for the future.

The Role of Noncredit Continuing Education as a Workforce Revitalization Partner

by

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the partnership role of noncredit continuing education in revitalizing the workforce during the economic crisis in selected communities in east Tennessee. This research synthesized meaningful information regarding how the leaders of business and industry perceived the role of noncredit service providers as economic development partners.

This qualitative study was conducted using interviews of chamber of commerce officials in 9 of the 10 counties served by Walters State Community College. The participants indicated that they were interested in partnering with the noncredit department to accomplish the goal of helping displaced workers be retrained and employable.

In order to meet this goal, the respondents stated that it all begins with communication. The perceptions of the participants could serve as a catalyst for the community college to implement the specific changes identified by the respondents to the interview questions.

The synthesis of data collected from a microcosm of communities in east Tennessee and their relationship with Walters State Community College suggested that there was a perceived role of noncredit continuing education as a workforce revitalization partner. The data suggested two barriers negating the effectiveness of this partnership: communication and awareness. This may or may not be universally applicable to other colleges in other communities. Further research could synthesize meaningful information regarding noncredit programs in other communities and identify additional barriers between colleges and business and industry.



The Superintendency through the Eyes of Women

by

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The purpose of this study was to collect information about the leadership characteristics of the female superintendents of North Carolina, to understand their perspectives about the role of superintendent, and to discover any challenges and obstacles they may have met during their path to the superintendency or during their tenure as superintendent.

Six of the 14 female superintendents serving in North Carolina during the 2011-2012 school year participated in the study. The superintendents were interviewed and were asked to take the StrengthsFinder 2.0 online profile. This profile provided the superintendents top five leadership strengths. Five of the six women participated in the profile.

The women revealed that the superintendency had not been a predetermined goal, but rather a goal that growth and learning had led them to attain. Passion and teamwork were terms used to describe the superintendency. The women discussed challenges. Responses were clustered as those having no challenges, having challenges within themselves, and having external challenges. Challenges after reaching the superintendency included declining budgets, perception of American education, and gender bias.

The women stated that communication, being open to learning, knowing who you are and what you believe, and the ability to create a county wide vision were important leadership characteristics. They believed that these qualities were static across the genders but how leadership was perceived, accepted and expressed could be effected by gender.

The StrengthsFinder 2.0 results revealed some patterns in the five women's scores. All five women scored as being strong in Learner. Three of the five were strong in Achiever. Five traits were each repeated twice in the results. Only seven strengths occurred singly.

The study revealed that the women tended toward transformational leadership. They sought to become visionary leaders who listen to others and use teamwork to address problems and make decisions.

Women who plan to seek the role of superintendent need to hear the voices and understand the experiences of those who passed before them. This study provided such an opportunity.

**An Analysis of the Variables Associated with Alumni Giving
and Employee Giving to a Mid-Sized Southeastern University**

by
Christine Hawk Loveday

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The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship among selected demographic variables and donor or non-donor status of alumni and employees at the participating university. The variables involving alumni were gender, highest degree earned, and college of major study. The variables regarding employees were gender and position.

The study was conducted utilizing archived alumni data from the Alumni Association's database program and the archived employee data from the Office of Human Resources' database program. The population for this study consisted of the 76,728 alumni and the 2,279 full-time employees of a mid-sized southeastern university during the fiscal year 2009-2010.

The results of the data analysis gave insight into what degree alumni and employees gave back to their university and place of employment. For example, 3.9% of alumni were found to be donors while 18.4% of employees were shown to be donors. The percentage of alumni who donated increased with each advanced degree earned. Males in both categories, alumni and employees, donated at a higher percentage than females. In the employee category, faculty were shown to donate at a higher percentage than administrators or staff. The study provided an increase in the body of knowledge of the variables of alumni giving and employee giving at the participating university.



**Family Satisfaction with Early Interaction Services as
it Relates to Family Functioning**

by
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This study examined the perceived impact and satisfaction levels of early intervention services of families living in the Appalachian region of northeast Tennessee. Families living in the Appalachian region of northeast Tennessee in Hawkins and Johnson counties whose children with disabilities had recently exited an early intervention program participated in the study. The primary sources of data collection were personal interviews based on the Beach Center Family Quality of Life (FQOL) Scale (Beach Center on Disability, 2003), the Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS) (Deal, Trivette, & Dunst, 1998), and member checks.

The FQOL contains 5 subscales: Family Interaction, Parenting, Physical or Material Well-Being, Emotional Well-Being, and Disability-Related Supports. Each subscale includes items unique to the subscale that participants examined and ranked (Low, Medium, or High) as to how important, how satisfied, and the priority for support regarding each item. The study focused on and addressed one of the four categories of family-based practices; strengthening family functioning (Trivette & Dunst, 2000). The findings of this study revealed that families, overall, were highly satisfied with the early intervention services received. The findings suggest that families in Hawkins and Johnson counties valued and found the need for family interaction important. The levels of support regarding individual subscales revealed some variations but maintained consistency within group majority expectations and family requirements. It can be concluded that the perceived impact of early intervention services met the needs of each individual participant in the area of family interaction and the satisfaction level was ranked high.



Understanding Philanthropic Motivations of Northeast State Community College Donors

by

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At Northeast State Community College (NeSCC) nearly 70% of students need some form of financial aid to attend. State support is flattening or decreasing and the gap is filled by private donors' support (Northeast State Community College, 2011). Hundreds of donors have made significant contributions to aid in the education of those in the northeast region. The purpose of this study was to investigate the philanthropic motivations of a select group of 4 donors who have already given a significant amount to a community college and to garner their specific reasons for doing so.

This qualitative study included 4 interviews from current donors in the President's Trust at NeSCC who had contributed at least \$10,000. I interviewed an alumni representative, a faculty member, an individual contributor, and a corporate representative to better understand their approaches and perspectives on giving to NeSCC.

Through the interviews, I learned personal stories and motivations for giving. Some of their experiences can be linked to the servant leadership theory, transformational leadership, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Also, the participants had similarities in that it was rewarding to give back and they all agreed that something from childhood spawned their motivations for giving.

Transformational Leadership in the Life and Works of C.S. Lewis

By

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Dr. Phyllis Thompson



This study examines the works of C.S. Lewis, as well as memoirs and scholarship concerning Lewis, to argue that he was a transformational leader. These works included Lewis's fiction and nonfictional works, which include not only essays which address social issues, but also his science fiction trilogy and his children's series *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The examination aimed to determine if the same transformational qualities which Lewis exhibited were also developed in his characters.

A qualitative descriptive explanatory qualitative design was employed with transformational leadership serving as the conceptual framework for this study. Essentially, the works of C.S. Lewis and subsequent scholarship surrounding him were analyzed through the lens of transformational leadership. Data collected included document review, interviews with Lewis scholars and clergymen, and observations. This data was synthesized to prove that C.S. Lewis possessed the four qualities of transformational leadership as established by Kuhnert and Russell (1989).

Findings indicated, through a blended evaluation of scholarship, observational data, and interview responses, that C.S. Lewis did exhibit the four qualities of transformational leadership (Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration). In addition, Lewis displayed a transformational leader in Aslan (from *The Chronicles of Narnia*), as well as pseudotransformational leadership in his science fiction trilogy and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Lewis is explored in context to history, as a veteran of World War I and a voice of hope during World War II. Pseudotransformational leadership is illustrated in reality (with Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime) and echoed in literature (with the N.I.C.E. organization from the science fiction trilogy and Shift from *The Chronicles of Narnia*). Recommendations for further study are provided for future scholars to expand the roster of transformational leaders to include artists and thinkers, as well as various aspects of Lewis which are yet to be researched.