

SHARING SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

DISSERTATION OF THE YEAR

Awardee Information Sheet

Name: Suzanne M. Buglione, Ed.D.

Institution: Bristol Community College

Position: Dean, Lash Division of Teaching & Learning

Dissertation Title:

“Nontraditional Approaches with Nontraditional Students: Experiences of Learning, Service and Identity Development”

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Dissertation Advisors: Dwight Giles, Jr., Tara Parker, Joan Arches

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Abstract:

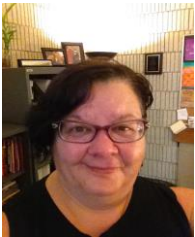
Nontraditional students are a growing population in higher education, yet our understanding of the unique factors that predict their success have not increased. Economic challenges, changing work demands, and the desire for personal and professional advancement fuel the nontraditional student's return to school (Kelly & Strawn, 2011). Their isolation and lack of social networks lead to poor academic outcomes as defined by retention, graduation and degree attainment. The classroom offers a beacon of hope for the engagement of nontraditional students, an opportunity to strengthen student identity and draw connections across the multiple worlds where these students reside. This phenomenological inquiry examined the lived experiences of highly nontraditional students enrolled in credit-bearing, undergraduate higher education courses, that used pedagogy related to service and learning and the effects of this pedagogical intervention with attention to civic and student identity, reflecting the extent to which students perceive these identities as marginalized. The central question explored was: To what extent did experiences of learning and service contribute to the civic and student identities of highly nontraditional students? Using Saddington's (1998) dimensions of experience in adult learners' lives, the learner's life experience is utilized for integration, not only as a source of knowledge

but also as the content of the curriculum. This research added concepts from Weil and McGill's (1989) Four Villages of Experiential Learning and from Identity Development theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Adult learners' Outgroup and Ingroup identities produce experiences related to personal perceptions, societal power, and validity in roles. Adult learners have vast cultural and contextual experience, as well as pre-constructed meaning schemes (Knowles, 1998, 1990) and service connects to community role identities, and can trigger the exploration and redefinition of identities (Mezirow, 1997; Hogg, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Adult learner identity is drawn from multiple sources, past and present, and shaped by beliefs that are contradictory in nature (Kasworm, 2005). Findings include the inherent challenges for this student population related to their Outgroup status, the advantages of pedagogy that uses service and learning, the importance of opportunities for intergroup exchange, and the need for specific faculty roles.

Key words:

non-traditional students, service-learning, social change, implications, phenomenological inquiry, identity

Author bio:



Dr. Suzanne M. Buglione is the Dean of the Lash Division of Teaching and Learning at Bristol Community College. She is responsible there for faculty and staff development, academic support, library services and experiential education. Suzanne has well over a decade of college teaching experience in undergraduate and graduate education at institutions including Worcester State University, Quinsigamond Community College and UMass Amherst's University Without Walls. She currently teaches online at Worcester State University and in Eastern Nazarene College's Masters in Higher Education. Her work has included development of First Year Experience programming, Outcomes Assessment, Prior Learning Assessment and a Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. Dr. Buglione's company, CommunityBuild, has provided individual, community and organizational development to a number of higher education institutions in New England.

Dr. Buglione received the Outstanding Experiential Education Research/Dissertation Award from the National Society of Experiential Education (NSEE) and the Honorable Mention Dissertation Award from the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) for her research completed for her doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts Boston's Higher Education Administration Program. She has presented widely at conferences and authored articles and publications. Much of Suzanne's scholarly work is related to Civic Engagement. She has presented on the Scholarship of Engagement with John Saltmarsh, Dwight Giles, Jr., and Elaine Ward at the International Research in Service-Learning and Civic Engagement (IARSLCE) Conference, and the New England Educational Research Organization Conference (NEERO is the Regional unit of the AERA). She has published book chapters with this group of scholars in *New Directions in Higher Education* and in *Advances in Service-Learning Research* as well as in *University engagement with socially excluded communities: Towards the idea of 'the engaged university'*. This group, along with Kerry Ann O'Meara and Lorilee Sandmann, published in the book, *Creating Our Identities in Service-Learning and Community Engagement*.

Dr. Buglione's research has focused largely in the area of Service-Learning with Adult Learners and at Community Colleges with presentations at the National Society of Experiential Education Conference, the Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education Conference and at the NEERO Conference. She has presented faculty and staff development training on Service-Learning with Dwight Giles, Jr. at many higher education institutions in the country as well as Massachusetts Campus Compact and Teaching Learning and Student Development conferences. Working with Amanda Wittman, she has presented research on Faculty and adult learners' experience in Service-Learning and with Susan Reed and Jeffrey Howard at the IARSLCE conference.

Dr. Buglione's research has extended into the exploration of social justice perspectives examining the distinct experiences of the adult learner in higher education. With Kathy Garganta she presented this research at the American Association of Community Colleges Conference and with Jennifer Safford-Farquharson and Lynn Bloomberg at the New England Center for Inclusive Teaching Conference. Suzanne and Jennifer have also presented on faculty and student identities using a social justice lens at Harvard University and at the Center for Inclusive Teaching/Educational Technology Conference. Their article, *The Difference Between You and Me: Faculty Identities at Play in the Classroom*, was published in *The Journal of Human Architecture*. Additionally, Suzanne has presented about the Outgroup Experiences of adult learners in higher education at the Transformative Researchers and Educators for Democracy Conference and about Faculty Development at NEERO.

Dr. Buglione's eclectic research interests have produced presentations on Guided Pathways for Success with Complete College America, School Turnaround at the American Association of Charter Schools Conference, on First Year Students, Service-Learning and Political Engagement at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Humanist Sociology. With Jennifer Safford-Farquharson and Laurie Ross, Suzanne published *Training the 'Wizards': Integrating Formal Teaching with Peer Learning to Develop Knowledge, Skills, and Self-Efficacy in Community-Based Youth Workers* in the journal, *Child and Youth Care Forum*. Again with Jennifer, Suzanne presented on *Facebooking with First Year Students* at the Teaching for Transformation and Educational Technology Conference. With Domingo Guyton and Carrie Rice, Suzanne presented a session entitled *Are you YouTubing It: Engaging Youth Culture in the Classroom* at the New England Center for Inclusive Teaching Conference and with Lynn Bloomberg, Tracy Cooney and Suzanne Singh she presented *Applying the Resiliency Paradigm to Peer Leadership Training* at the Annual Conference of the Society of Public Health Educators. With Mary Kay Alexander, Elaine Parker and Robin Leo, Suzanne presented *Quality Improvement: Recruit, Develop, Retain Qualified Nursing Faculty* at the 8th Excellence in Nursing Conference.

Dr. Buglione has three works pending: a book chapter entitled *Developing Service and Learning Approaches to Address Nontraditional Student Outgroup Experiences* in the edited text, *Metagogy*; an article, *Reflections on Reflections* submitted to *Currents in Teaching and Learning: Service-Learning in Higher Education*; and with Amanda Wittman, a chapter entitled, *Connecting Past and Present: Adult Learner and Practitioner Experiences Through Service-Learning* in the edited text, *The Community College and Service-Learning*.