

Higher and Postsecondary Education at Teachers College

A Note from the HPSE Program Coordinator: Dr. Anna Neumann

Dear students and alums, colleagues, and friends of HPSE,

We are thrilled to bring you into the life of the HPSE Program, however briefly, by way of this newsletter which speaks to important linkages among several big and important words: research, practice, and theory. In the next few pages you will find brief write-ups of each of these words – as today’s HPSE students experience them. Written from students’ perspectives, these write-ups honor each of those “big words,” and importantly, they search out linkages among them. As you read, listen for the student-authors’ responses to the following questions: In the study of higher education, how can theory shed light on the professional practices, and on knowledge for practice, that practitioners must enact “on the job”? Can higher education practitioners rely on theory, for practice, if research fails to confirm that theory’s validity? Of what use is practice if lacking an underlying theory, we watch it crystallize and fragment? -- and if lacking research, we fail to grasp the effects of practice, good and bad? You can see, that research, practice, and theory – as we enact them in higher education professions – rarely stand alone, and that to understand these words, *we must study them in relation to one another*. Another way to say this: These words become meaningful only when linked to one or both the others. In the field of higher education, they rarely stand alone. Please read the next few pages – all focused on linkages among research, theory, and practice -- to learn still more, including how many of our students are coming to understand these linkages.

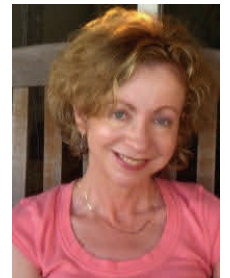
And while you are pondering those “big words” – and the equally big ideas behind them – recall that you are in one of the most intellectually and professionally vibrant places in the world – New York City. Take time to explore it, and to learn from within it.

Wishing you an autumn full of generative ideas –

Sincerely,

Anna Neumann

Professor of Higher Education
Coordinator, Program in Higher and Postsecondary Education
Chair, Department of Organization and Leadership



Anna Neumann, Professor of Higher Education, is serving as Chair of the Department of Organization and Leadership effective September 1, 2013. She will continue as Coordinator of the Program in Higher and Postsecondary Education.

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Connecting Theory and Practice in Higher Education

By: Dr. Corbin M. Campbell



One of the unique aspects of HPSE at TC is the strong emphasis on connecting theory and practice in higher education. Today this connection is more important than ever as education schools and higher education continues to try and focus on efficiency and cost effectiveness—for example, MOOCs and non-university affiliated education schools. What would a higher education degree look like without theory? Perhaps focusing on immediate skills necessary to do a job, training with past experiences—and little capacity for innovation, evolution, comprehensive understanding, and change. Learning theory about any higher education topic, such as access, retention, and student learning enhances our understanding and provides a specific window through which to view the topic. Developing theory in higher education is what continues to push our field in new directions, providing new insights and ways to understand our practice. Similarly, I am reminded of what higher education might look like without practicing the theory we learn. For example,

those students in my organization and administration class might consider how well we would understand the organizational theories from our class without our final project, which requires each student to select, visit, and interview people from a department or unit and analyze it using three different theories. Another example comes from my research team. While we spent countless hours learning and training about our conceptual framework on educational quality (academic rigor, teaching quality, and learning goals) prior to our site visits, it was not until we sat and observed classrooms that this framework came to light in a meaningful way. The connection between theory and practice is foundational in HPSE—a part of the fabric of our program.

Bridging Theory to Practice in Research

By: Diana Chadi

Research is a social endeavor, brought about by thoughtful conversations and discourse, an exchanging of ideas to uncover new approaches otherwise not realized. Yet, research can be seen as large, complex and overwhelming. Without direction, research can become a frustrating and overly complex pursuit. However with guidance, research can be a stimulating and illuminating experience. For every research endeavor, the different phases of research give shape and identity to one's research which include: formulation of a research question, identification of a conceptual framework, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and reporting. Researchers, as a result of new knowledge, may find themselves retracing steps within the research process that theoretically may have been completed and adjusting their work to better inform the subsequent steps of their research to obtain their desired results.



As an Ed.M. student in the HPSE program since 2010, spending each semester studying the process of research, my desire to become engaged in an actual research agenda and experience the process from inception to conclusion, was heightened. When Professor Campbell joined the faculty of our program during the Fall of 2012, I was able to actualize my goal by joining her research team. From the very beginning Professor Campbell created a safe and inclusive environment where students could ask questions, state opinions and contribute in a meaningful way to her agenda. Professor Campbell seeks to devise a measure that will more accurately measure the educational quality of an institution based on classroom observations, syllabus analysis and student feedback. With a goal of devising a rubric and utilizing the rubric on a single pilot institution by the conclusion of the Spring 2013 semester, we not only fulfilled our goal but surpassed it by studying two pilot institutions. This goal was achieved through our weekly meetings that often ran late into the night, discussing different ideas and attempting to come up with the best possible route. As our research continues to expand nationally, I have had the opportunity to experience what it means **to do research** – to experience the ups and downs, and to experience how agendas are shaped and reshaped as new experiences and feedback arises.

Research is a process of discovery. While the design of a project is essential, the sketching out of the ways in which the study will proceed cannot predict all the myriad surprises that may arise in data collection and data analysis. Being attuned to those unexpected discoveries and making adjustments that lead one closer to the goal of answering one's research questions is what allows the researcher to work toward transforming questions and hypotheses into new discoveries. I encourage all students to find an opportunity to join a research team in hopes of actualizing lessons learned in the classroom.

Master of Arts Advisor Advice Corner

By: Dr. Monica Coen Christensen

Now that the fall is fully underway, I am truly getting a feel for this year's class and I get the sense that things are going well. Good work! Thanks for coming out in really nice numbers to our first social and to "Thriving in Graduate School" (kudos to Katie Conway and her "team" of returning students and alumni for what I hear was a fabulous event – and to Yvonne Pitts who makes it all happen). Thanks to all of you who have "LinkedIn" to me and who have joined our "HPSE at Teachers

College" LinkedIn group. By doing so, you are connecting to a fantastic network of alumni, and you may have just taken the first step toward getting your next job!

In keeping with the theme of "Theory to Practice," I will mention that Liza Bolitzer and I are knee deep in analyzing the data collected last year from participants in the study of the internship program (note: we are NOT yet looking at the data collected from anyone who has not graduated as

promised). We are really excited to be discovering more about the learning that happens through the program. I am looking forward to being able to strengthen the internship program as a result of our findings.



Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Kenny Nienhusser Bridging Theory to Practice in Teaching

By: Chris Chamberlin



Dr. Kenny Nienhusser is a recent graduate of the HPSE doctoral program and is now Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership in the Department of Education at the University of

Hartford. He teaches courses such as organizational theory in higher education, qualitative research methods, diversity in higher education, and student affairs administration. Dr. Nienhusser's research focuses on the implementation of public and institutional policies that impact underserved minority students' postsecondary education access. In particular, his scholarship focuses on the undocumented and Latino student populations. This article details Dr. Nienhusser's experiences as a student in the HPSE program at Teachers College (TC) and how he has translated his knowledge learned while at TC into practice.

Dr. Nienhusser found the HPSE program at TC to be a very transformative experience for him. When Dr. Nienhusser first enrolled in the TC HPSE program his intention was not to become a faculty member. However, his coursework and interactions at TC guided him in that direction. He feels that Dr. Neumann's course on The Professoriate was a pivotal class for him in terms of truly understanding the role of faculty and symbiotic nature of research, teaching, and service. Also, working closely with Dr. Dougherty on several research projects allowed him to engage in and begin to understand the intricacies of scholarly inquiry.

During his time at TC, Dr. Nienhusser also worked as the Director of Academic Administration (DAA) for the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology. In this role, he often found himself asking the question, "What can I do as an administrator to make faculty even more successful?" Dr. Nienhusser's experiences in MST also had a strong impact on his decision to pursue the professoriate. "The DAA position really helped shape the understanding of what a faculty

member does," he said. The culmination of both experiences, Dr. Nienhusser recalled, helped him understand the roles and values of research, teaching, and service.

Dr. Nienhusser had a very positive experience in the HPSE program. One piece of advice that Dr. Nienhusser offered is that students should try to cast their nets as wide as possible and become exposed to as many different perspectives as possible; specifically he mentioned taking classes in other departments at the College and outside through, for example, the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium. Dr. Nienhusser recommends that students work very closely with other students and with faculty and get involved with research as much as possible. He feels that hands-on research experience is the best way to tie theory to practice and to see first-hand how practice and research are intertwined. Dr. Nienhusser's closing remarks are that students should look for every possibly opportunity to expand their thinking and the lens through which they view the field of higher education.

Bridging Theory to Practice in Service

The theoretical frameworks that ground much of my academic work are funds of knowledge and critical pedagogy. The theory of funds of knowledge posits that the daily experiences and practices of people provide important context and background for learning in the classroom. Critical pedagogy adds to funds of knowledge by addressing the role of teachers and educators as mediators in the learning of students. My service to the HPSE program has allowed me to put theory into practice. Specifically, my role as Graduate Assistant in the HPSE program has provided me with a great opportunity to understand further the ways in which curricular and co-curricular experiences are opportunities for students and teachers to ex-

pand on their teaching and learning contexts. For example, in my previous GA role as Programming Coordinator, I learned about the experiences that were important for students to have in order for them to develop as students and professionals. As a result, I became more mindful of my role as a facilitator and organizer of career and professional development programs. In my current role as Inquiries Coordinator, I have been able to expand my practice of funds of knowledge in particular. Specifically, the students that I have met and have talked to regarding their interest in the HPSE program have had unique life journeys and experiences that have shaped their interest in higher education. Having their life context and experiences in mind allows me to

understand better their views on higher education, their fit into our program, and their career trajectories. For me, being grounded in funds of knowledge and critical pedagogy allows me to assess the ways I can approach particular situations, particularly in the service work I do for the HPSE program. Moving forward with the service work I do for the program and beyond, I hope to expand the practice of funds of knowledge and critical pedagogy.



By: Dianne Delima

Bridging Theory to Practice in Student Affairs



provides opportunities that promote such practice.

As a student affairs practitioner, I found theory to be a great tool in my ability to assist students. Theory provided me with a better understanding of how students develop, how they make meaning of their college experience, how they process challenges, and most importantly how I could help guide them in their development as they work to become inde-

This article is about my thoughts regarding how to bridge theory to practice in Student Affairs with a focus on how the Higher and Postsecondary Education Program at TC provides opportunities that promote such practice.

pendent adults. I utilize theory to assist students in their understanding of how their actions not only impact them as individuals but their communities and those with whom they interact. Learning about theory changed my thinking from, "I am meeting with a student that has a problem" to, "I have an opportunity to listen and help a student."

As a practitioner in the field, theory has not only enhanced my ability to serve students directly but to lead and influence change at a departmental and institutional level. Understanding theory and research about the different components of higher education has made me a more informed practitioner, and an active participant and contributor to the larger vision of the departments and organizations for which I have worked.

While I have been a higher education practitioner for over seventeen years, now that I have graduated from the Ed.D program, I am blessed

with the opportunity to share my knowledge with the MA students in our program as I facilitate the required Internship practicum course. While the semester is just starting and I am just getting to know my students, I have already seen how eager they are to learn and make a difference in the lives of students. I encourage my students to keep up with their readings and to ask questions regarding the application of the theories they are learning, the relationship between them, and how they can be applied. I encourage them to think about how they are applying what they are learning in the classroom in their interactions with students and as they work to develop programs and activities.

Understanding theory has allowed me to be an informed practitioner and increased my level of engagement and participation in higher education.

By: Dr. Delmy M. Lendof

Congratulations to the May 2013 Higher and Postsecondary Education Doctor of Education Graduates!



From left to right: Dr. Milagros Castillo-Montoya, Dr. Delmy Lendof, Dr. Sosanya Jones and Dr. Rebecca Natow

Dr. Milagros Castillo-Montoya is now Assistant Professor of higher education and student affairs at the University of Connecticut. She is focusing her research on teaching and learning in urban colleges and universities, with specific attention to the learning and development that first-generation college students may experience as they interact with subject-matter ideas in their college courses. Dr. Castillo-Montoya's dissertation was entitled "A Study of First-Generation African American and Latino Undergraduates Developing Sociopolitical Consciousness in Introductory Sociology Classes."

Dr. Delmy Lendof is happy to continue in her role at NYU as the Associate Director for Residential Life. She is also taking on a new role teaching the Observation and Supervised Fieldwork in the Higher & Postsecondary Education Program at TC. Dr. Lendof's dissertation was entitled "University Administrators, Latina/o Students and Latina/o Parents: Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Higher Education and the Impact on the Student College Experience."

Dr. Sosanya Jones is now a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Qualitative Research Methods for the Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Dr. Jones' dissertation was entitled "Diversity Leadership in Practice: Examining STEM Graduate School Preparation Program Leaders in Their Institutional Contexts."

Dr. Rebecca Natow has been promoted to Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Her current project investigates the implementation of state-level performance funding policies for higher education (Prof. Kevin Dougherty is the principal investigator). Dr. Natow's dissertation was entitled "Making Policy in the United States Department of Education: The Political Process of Federal Rule-making for Higher Education."

Congratulations to HPSE Faculty with Publications and Presentations

Publications

Campbell, C. M. & O'Meara, KA. (2013). Faculty Agency: Departmental contexts that matter in faculty careers. *Research in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. Doi:10.1007/s11162-013-9303-x

Niehaus, B., **Campbell, C. M.**, & Inkelas, K. (2013). HLM behind the Curtain: Unveiling decisions behind the use and interpretation of HLM in higher education research. *Research in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. Doi: 10.1007/s11162-013-9306

Presentations

Campbell, C.M. & Cruz Paul, T. (2013, July). *A Bird's Eye View—New Ways of Measuring Educational Quality at the Institutional Level*. Presented at the Academic Affairs conference of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Baltimore, MD.

Campbell, C.M., O'Meara, KA, & Terosky A.L. (2013). *Faculty Agency and Associated Outcomes: A Mixed-Methods Study of a Public Research Institution*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Congratulations to HPSE Faculty with Awards, Grants, Recognition & Milestones

Anna Neumann, Professor of Higher Education, is serving as Chair of the Department of Organization and Leadership effective September 1, 2013. She will continue as Coordinator of the Program in Higher and Postsecondary Education. As the Immediate Past President of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, she serves on the Association's Board of Directors and chairs its Nominations Committee. In Spring 2013, Neumann was elected to membership in the National Academy of Education.

Professor **Anna Neumann** and Professor **Corbin M. Campbell** were awarded the Teachers College Provosts Investment Fund (\$20,000), entitled ***Reinventing Research on Practice for Higher Education***. Professor Neumann's research project is entitled, "Defining 'Good Teaching' Relative to Students' Learning of Core Subject Matter Ideas in the Liberal Education Curriculum of Undergraduate Education." Professor Campbell's research project is entitled, "Assessing College Educational Quality."

Janice S. Robinson was recently appointed to the St. John's University School of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors (3 year term).

In December 2013, **Dr. Corlisse Thomas** will assume the position of Assistant Vice President of Student Development at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ. As the AVP of Student Development, she will provide leadership for several areas of Student Affairs including Residence Life, the Dean of Students Office, Career Development, Cooperative Education, Health, Counseling, Disability Services and the Educational Opportunity Program.

During the Spring 2013 term, **Dr. Corlisse Thomas** conducted a two-day training on responding to student crisis with the Student Affairs and Campus Safety staff at Butler County Community College (BCCC) in Butler, PA. Specifically, the training focused on creating and maintaining an effective Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) at BCCC.

Congratulations to HPSE Students with Publications and Presentations

Presentations

Campbell, C. and **Cruz Paul, T.** (2013, July). [A Bird's Eye View - New Ways of Measuring Educational Quality at the Institutional Level](#). American Association of State Colleges and Universities Summer Meeting Session, Baltimore, Maryland.

Campbell, C. and **Cruz Paul, T.** (2013, April). [Assessing Higher Education Quality Across Institutions](#). William Paterson University 2013 Scholarship Day, Wayne, New Jersey.

Congratulations to HPSE Students with Awards, Grants, Recognition & Milestones

This year's winners of the *Anna Neumann Supporting Doctoral Students Research Award* are **Leslie Williams** and **Jolie Woodson**. Both winners are advanced doctoral students in Higher and Postsecondary Education program at Teachers College.

Chris Chamberlin is now Associate Dean of Student Affairs at The Cooper Union.

Theresa Cruz Paul is now Associate Director of Undergraduate Internships at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY) and Research Assistant for Dr. Campbell's College Educational Quality Research Project.

Staci Ripkey received a faculty appointment as Adjunct Instructor for NYU College of Dentistry, and will be teaching "Diversity & Cultural Competence for Healthcare Professionals" and "Teaching Skills and Scholarship in Professional Education."

Dr. **Delmy Lendof** and Dr. **Rebecca Natow** have been appointed as adjunct assistant professors of Higher and Postsecondary Education at Teachers College.

Dr. **Kenny Nienhusser** (HPSE alum), **Blanca E. Vega** (HPSE Ed.D student), and Mariella Saavedra (TC student) were awarded a \$5,000 research grant from Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and findings were presented at the Annual Conference in Chicago, IL on October 28, 2013. Their research is entitled: "Stigma Associated with Undocumented Immigrants' Unauthorized Status and its Impact on Higher Education Access."

Congratulations to HPSE Faculty and Students Presenting at The Association for the Study of Higher Education's 2013 Annual Conference

Campbell, C.M. (2013, November). *Assessing College Quality: Illuminating the Black Box and Contending with Data Gluttony in Higher Education*. Paper to be presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Saint Louis, Missouri.

Campbell, C.M., Jimenez, M., Benmergui, D., & Walker, C. (2013, November). *A Mosaic of Methods: Measuring College Educational Quality at Two Research Institutions*. Paper to be presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Saint Louis, Missouri.

Nienhusser, K., Vega, B.E., & Saavedra, M. (2013, November). *Role of Stigma on Undocumented Students' College Choice*. Paper to be presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Saint Louis, Missouri.

Fall 2013 HPSE Events



Welcome Back Social

September 12, Everett Lounge

Thriving in Graduate School

September 26, Russell Hall 306

Alumni Panel

October 29, 5:30-7:00pm, Grace Dodge 277

Wellness Break

November 5, 5:30-7:00pm, Horace Mann 144

Student Affairs Conferences Panel

December 5, 5:10-6:50pm, Zankel 212C

HPSE Open House for Prospective and Inquiring Students

December 6, 6:00 -8:00pm , Grace Dodge 285



Photographs are of students and faculty enjoying the Welcome Back Social on September 12 in Everett Lounge

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This edition of the HPSE newsletter was brought to you by the HPSE Newsletter Committee:

Chief Editor: *Jessie Ostrow*

Committee: *Diana Chadi, Chris Chamberlin, Dianne Delima, Delmy Lendof*

A special thank you Dr. Monica Christensen and Ms. Lucy Tam for their invaluable insight.