



**Whoever Gardens...Grows
Reflections of a Doctoral Student**

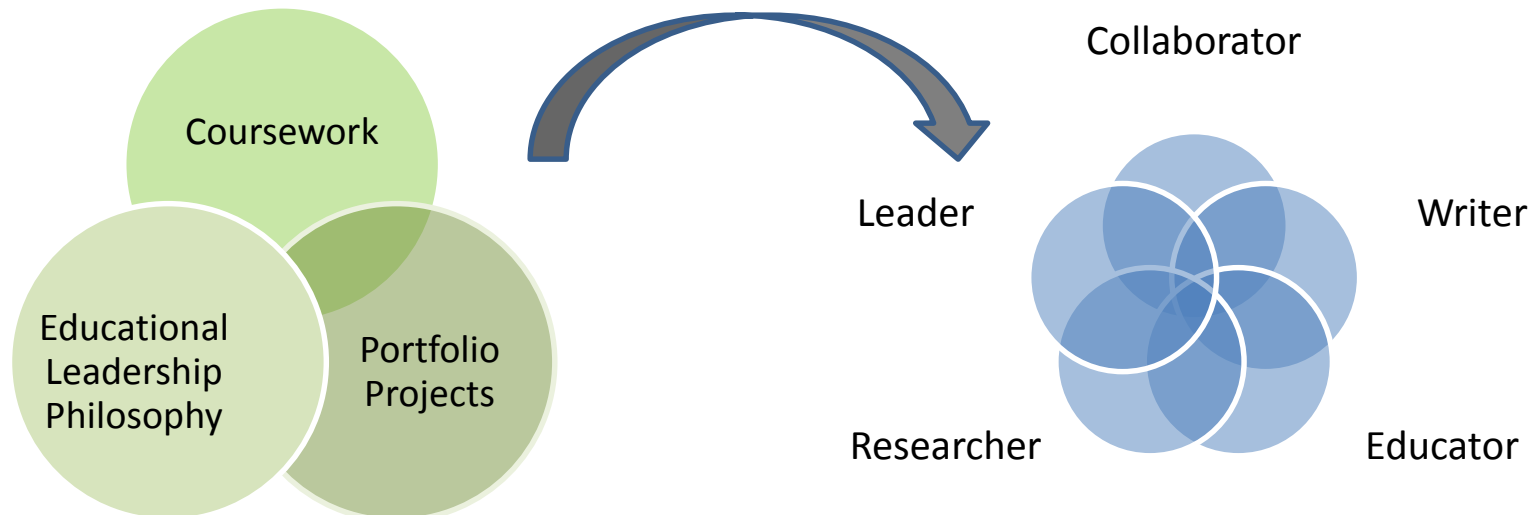
**Presentation of Qualifying Assessment by
Kathy J. Bialk**

September 25, 2014



Planning the garden: Introduction


Gardening is the perfect analogy for explaining how I have engaged the Ed. D. degree program in higher education leadership studies.





Sowing seeds:
Establishing the
groundwork to achieve
a life aspiration

- EDF 625 Qualitative Research with Dr. Linda Spatig
 - Taught me a different way to study and understand phenomena
- Additional Higher Education Leadership courses with Dr. Dennis Anderson
 - Expanded my higher education administration knowledge base




Germinating: Admission to the Ed. D. degree program

“Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.”

~Henry David Thoreau




A pair of hands, one with a ring, gently holds a small green seedling with several leaves in a dark, rich soil. The hands are positioned as if nurturing the plant.

Tending the seedlings:
Select coursework

Leadership Studies: Higher Education Administration


- LS 745 Higher Education Law with Dr. Dennis Anderson
 - The Evolution of FERPA: Student Privacy vs. Government Policy Goals
- LS 725 Higher Education Finance with Dr. Dennis Anderson
 - Higher Education Finance Comparative Analysis of Two Post-secondary Institutions
- LS 707 Ethical Theory with Dr. Bobbi Nicholson
 - The Moral Dimensions of Public Funding of Higher Education: Egalitarianism vs. Neo-liberalism
- LS 705 Administrative Theory with Dr. Bobbi Nicholson
 - Policy Analysis of the 1972 Amendments of the Higher Education Act: Functionalism vs. Marxist and Critical Theory Perspectives



Tending the seedlings: Select coursework

Area of Emphasis: Program Evaluation

- CI 627 Program Planning and Evaluation with Dr. Eric Lassiter
 - Learned evaluation-specific logic and methodology
- EDF 620 Mixed Methods Research with Dr. Eric Lassiter
 - Introduced to theoretical perspectives (e.g., interpretative, positivist, and critical) that link a research problem with a particular method or methods
- LS 780 Special Topics: Rural Appalachian Women's Study with Dr. Linda Spatig
 - Practiced program evaluation using qualitative research methods




Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Collaboration

- Professional Service
- Publication
- Research
- Presentations
- Co-teaching





Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Professional Service

In collaboration with faculty and higher education professionals from West Virginia and the mid-west region served on various professional committees

- 2012-13 WVASFAA Spring Conference, Program Chair
- 2013 Doctoral Faculty/Student Seminar Planning Committee, Program Chair
- 2013-14 MASFAA Federal Issues Committee
- 2013-14 MASFAA Fall Conference Program Committee
- 2013-14 MASFAA Fall Conference Local Arrangements Committee
- 2014-15 WVASFAA President-elect
- 2015-16 WVASFAA President

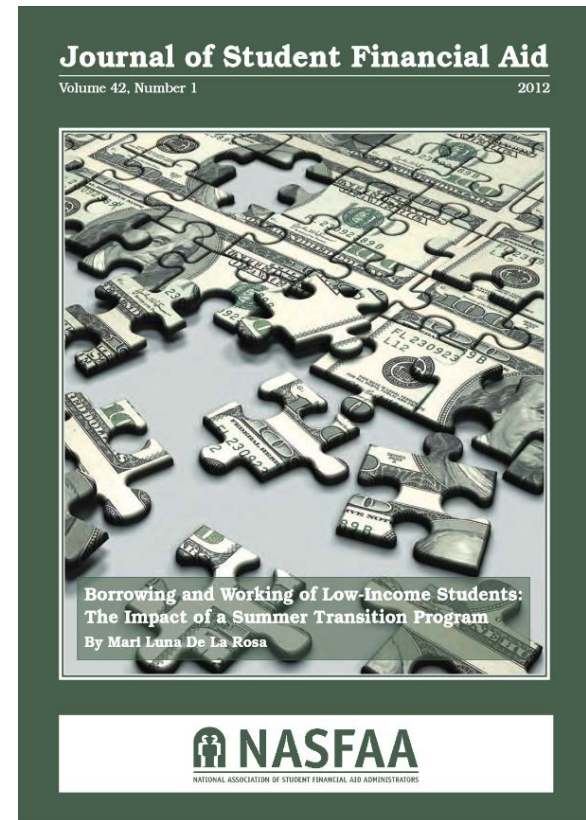


Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Publication

In collaboration with Dr. Eric Lassiter and fellow-doctoral students published a scholarly article

- Bialk, Kathy (2012). Book review: The art and science of student aid administration in the 21st century. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 42 (1), p. 40-43.





Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Research

- In collaboration with Dr. Linda Spatig and the Qualitative Research Team members studying and evaluating the **WV Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Program (MIHOW) Program** since January 2013
 - More proficient with interviewing
 - Strengthened skills in collecting data, performing inductive content data analysis by assigning code words, and developing themes describing the experiences of the research participants
- **Research-related coursework**
 - Obtained necessary practical and theoretical knowledge



Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Presentations

In collaboration with faculty members and higher education administrators conducted numerous national, regional, and local scholarly and professional presentations

- “Studying the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Program: A Multi-site, Mixed-Methods Randomized Control Trial Program in Rural West Virginia,” 2014 Appalachian Studies Association Annual Conference
- “Faculty/Student Panel: Experiences Writing for Publication,” 2014 Marshall University Doctoral Faculty/Student Seminar
- NASFAA, MASFAA, WVASFAA, Student Success Summit Conference Presentations



Flowering and fruiting: Collaboration

Co-teaching

- In collaboration with Dr. Eric Lassiter co-taught CI 677 Writing for Publication 2014 Spring Semester
 - Learned to teach by facilitating collaborative learning
 - Took responsibility as an educator for the development of each student according to specialized needs
 - Learned to give feedback collectively and individually
 - Learned to deal with the discomfort of critiquing fellow-doctoral students' works of writing
 - Exercised skills in empowering students to succeed
 - Greatest lesson learned about teaching
 - Collaboration invites participation through intellectual engagement and life experiences



Harvesting: Conclusion

- **Greenleaf's (2002) Servant Leadership Philosophy**
 - Are those being served becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous? Do those served grow as persons?
- **Critical theory**
 - Provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms
- **Continue the research work with MIHOW**
 - Tentative proposal is to understand factors that are responsible for enabling and restricting rural Appalachian women in achieving life aspirations in key areas of family, education, and employment



Harvesting: Conclusion

“The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before.”

~Vita Sackville-West

Harvesting: Conclusion

With gratitude and respect to my committee

- Linda Spatig, Ed. D., Committee Chair
- Eric Lassiter, Ph. D.
- Bobbi Nicholson, Ph. D.
- Mary Beth Reynolds, Ph. D.



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