Professional Practice Project:
Utilizing action research courses to demonstrate proficiency through a comprehensive exam in an online Ed.D. Program

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Session Learning Objectives

- 1. Workshop participants will gain an understanding of the purpose of comprehensive exams in an Ed.D. program.
- 2. Workshop participants will be exposed to the intent and learning outcomes of a professional practice project.
- 3. Workshop participants will discover the possibility of integrating two online action research courses into a student’s professional practice project and program comprehensive exam.
- 4. Workshop participants will discuss alternative potential methods for assessing student proficiency in an online Ed.D. program.
Background & Description of the Comprehensive Exam

◊ Doctoral Degrees
  ◊ “is a research-oriented degree that certifies that the recipient has capabilities and training for independent scholarly work” (Ponder, Beatty, Foxx, 2004, p. 227)

◊ Success in individual courses does not equate to overall mastery of field of knowledge

◊ Pass or Fail Exams
  ◊ Comprehensive exam allows student to display cognitive objectives of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill & Krathwoh, 1956), including assessing knowledge, analyzing, and synthesis (Kostohryz, 2015; Shafer & Giblin, 2008).

◊ Generally a prequal to the dissertation process (Kelley, 2014)
Description of Case Study

- Two online action research courses in online Ed.D. program
- Students develop professional practice project and receive feedback throughout the two studied courses
- Professional practice project presented in person at program residency
- Passing grade required in order to move forward in the program
Benefits of Professional Practice Project

- Allows students to put into practice what they are learning in action research coursework
- Provides opportunity for professional development
- Further development of research, writing, and presenting skills
Challenges of Professional Practice Project

1.) Students feel extreme stress and anxiety prior to and while presenting their action research project.

2.) Some students indicated that they felt the in-person presentation of the professional practice project was too similar to the required virtual presentation in their action research courses.

3.) There is a potential for a problem if a student passes their virtual presentation in the action research course but does not pass their in-person presentation, as the two are similar styles and content; the student may have grounds to appeal their failing score on the competency exam.
Recommendations of Future Research

Need to Accurately Assess Effectiveness and Value of Comprehensive Exam

Need for Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Recommendation for Student Surveys Collected Post-Exam
Session Conclusion

Questions & Answers

Discussion of Thoughts and Ideas
References


Session Evaluations & Drawing

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
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*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

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