

Personal Statement

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During my doctoral studies at Oklahoma State University, I have strived to begin my transition from the role of a graduate student into the role of scholar. According to Boyer (1990), this scholarly role includes four equally important components that must be integrated into the individual's regular academic activity: discovery, integration, application or engagement, and teaching. Within this portfolio, you will find evidence of each of these forms of scholarship as well as an indication of my intent to further these areas throughout my academic career.

The scholarship of discovery, similar to the traditional role of research, involves conducting quality research that promotes future studies upon dissemination of the results. I have been devoted to the discovery component of my graduate training. I have participated in and led multiple research teams, and have completed numerous studies. I am currently conducting additional research examining several existing research instruments concerning student perceptions of their classroom, teacher perceptions of the arts, and an instrument to measure of human creativity. I am also studying the impact of an arts infusion program on the academic achievement of elementary students, examining the impact of cultural perceptions upon health care, and developing my own instruments to study the care and justice dimensions of moral theory. Throughout these research projects, I have remained committed to the dissemination of my results through conference presentations as well as more recently through publications.

The scholarship of integration requires that the scholar collaborate with colleagues from a variety of fields to expand knowledge. During the past few years, I have collaborated with a variety of individuals both inside and outside academia to gain a wide range of knowledge and experience. Among the research teams in which I have participated, I have worked with individuals regarding disparities in health care, cultural competency, arts integration in the classroom, and the moral dimensions of justice and care. I am involved in professional organizations, attend professional conferences, and read academic journals that contain articles by scholars from a wide array of disciplines. My dissertation has required me to utilize resources from varying areas within education and psychology as well as philosophy and other fields. Through these experiences, I have integrated my knowledge with those from other backgrounds and fields, and have extended my own knowledge base in the process.

Similar to the concept of service, the scholarship of application, or engagement, requires that the scholar utilize their knowledge and experience to help society address issues or concerns. Through my research, I have attempted to serve others. Through my involvement in Project CREATES, a research project regarding infusing arts into the classroom, I am helping to serve students through the development of more successful learning environments. My research involvement with disparities in health care and cultural competency will lead to a better understanding of why disparities exist as well as differences in perceptions among the disparities. The results will allow improved methods of addressing and eliminating such disparities. My research interests in moral theory stem out of a desire to help improve society as a whole by better understanding how and why people behave in morally appropriate ways.

I have become involved in other forms of service throughout my doctoral studies in addition to my research. I have participated in several local student organizations, including the Educational Psychology Student Society and the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association,

served on university-wide committees, attended conferences and presented original work, reviewed conference proposals and a textbook prospectus, and have even served as the graduate student representative on the *Journal of College and Character* editorial board.

The fourth type of scholarship, the scholarship of teaching, involves advancing classroom learning through research on teaching and by applying effective teaching and mentoring strategies. As demonstrated through this portfolio, teaching has been an important aspect of my doctoral training. I have taught *Learning to Learn* (in class), *Freshman Orientation* (in class), and *Child and Adolescent Development* (online) for two semesters each, and am currently preparing to teach *Exploring the Creative Experience* (online) next semester. Additionally, I am working with a colleague to co-teach an ongoing, non-credit undergraduate research methods course at Langston University, in which we have mentored eight psychology students as they develop research topics that they will ultimately present at a professional conference in April. Further, I have observed numerous elementary school classrooms and have designed a course on moral development and education that I would be able to teach upon obtaining a faculty position. During my graduate studies, I have learned what successful teaching entails, both through theory and example, and I am prepared to extend my knowledge and experience into a faculty position.

Throughout my doctoral experience, I have been preparing myself for active participation in the scholarly community. As you will see in the following pages of this portfolio, I have strengthened each of the four components through my involvement in teaching, research, and service. As I work to complete my dissertation and my doctorate, I feel competently prepared to assume my role as a scholar and continue the work of those before me.