

Paradigm Shifts in Contemporary Doctoral Teaching and Learning: Epistemological Perspectives and Examples from Practice

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Abstract

Internationalization and globalization are the two phenomena that have been making particularly strong impact on the U.S. higher education in the past few decades. I have witnessed such impact on the doctoral program in teaching and learning at a Midwestern university where I teach foundational and research courses. Our program went through several revisions in order to adjust to the needs of our students and to the changing national and global trends in higher education. In this presentation, I provide an overview of paradigm shifts in conceptualizing the nature of our program through its transition from face-to-face to blended and online delivery modalities. I showcase the students' work that demonstrates various epistemological profiles (e.g., post-positivist, constructivist, critical, and non-Western) based on their own perspectives and professional practice. Further, I focus on the nature of inquiry in modern education and ways in which the students' epistemological assumptions shape their research. This presentation is an invitation to scholarly communities to deliberate the questions on the nature and scope of doctoral programs in contemporary education and the impact of epistemological assumptions on educational research and practice, as well as on the students' learning outcomes as they venture on their dissertation journey.

Keywords: the nature of inquiry; paradigm shifts; epistemology of teaching & learning; multiple ways of knowing; student learning outcomes.