DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Chair
Shannon Navy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies
College of Education, Health & Human Services
Kent State University

Members
Bridget Mulvey, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies
College of Education, Health & Human Services
Kent State University

Jennifer Schneider, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Teaching, Learning and Educational Sciences
College of Education and Human Sciences
Oklahoma State University

Graduate Faulty Representative
Tricia Niesz, Ph.D.
Professor and Program Coordinator
School of Foundations, Leadership & Administration
College of Education, Health & Human Services
Kent State University

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education, Health & Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

of

Kristin DeLong Clark
For the Degree of
Doctor of Education
Interprofessional Leadership,
Foundations Leadership Administration

BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: A STUDY ABOUT LIVED EXPERIENCES

October 12, 2023
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Zoom: Click here to join
Kristin DeLong Clark
Bachelor of Science, Middle Childhood Education
Ohio University, 2004
Masters of Arts, Education Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University, 2008

Kristin DeLong Clark has worked in education for 19 years, holding positions in both K-12 and non-profit settings. Currently, she is the Elementary Coordinator of Teaching and Learning for the Lakewood City School District. Prior to her role in Lakewood, Kristin was an instructional coach for the Shaker Heights City School District. Kristin’s career began as a middle school math and science teacher and then she went on to pursue her first leadership role working as the Directory of Community Based Programming for a non-profit organization.

Kristin began her passion for providing high quality professional learning for educators through her work as an instructional coach and continues to advocate for the importance of professional learning in her current role as a coordinator. Kristin values collaboration with a variety of roles and leaders in order to provide support for all educators, and ultimately, making an impact on staff and students.

Abstract
Although the majority of individuals in education fields are women, very few educational leadership positions are held by women. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of women in educational leadership positions. The study aimed to explore women educational leaders’ lived experiences, how they navigated barriers and opportunities, and how a community of women educational leaders provided unique support to one another.

This study utilized narrative action research to investigate the stories of five women educational leaders who held leadership positions ranging from teacher leader, building principal, and curriculum specialist. Members of the study participated in interviews, observations, reflections, and focus group sessions. The study uncovered the importance of community and mentorship on women leaders and ways structures could help grow those concepts in a school or district setting. Additionally, the study highlighted the value of collaboration to navigate barriers and provide opportunities.

The study justified how community and mentorship could be accomplished through collaboration. Women in educational leadership can impact a school or district and this study offered a call to action to dismantle oppressive structures in order to support women in furthering their leadership careers.