Heuristic understanding as a component of collaborative, interdisciplinary, social justice advocacy research

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ABSTRACT This article describes the experiences of three university colleagues with a common interest in, and commitment to, the retention of students from traditionally underserved populations including those who are racial/ethnic minorities or first-generation college. Using Moustaka's (1990) phases of heuristic understanding as an organizational framework, we discuss our use of autoethnography to arrive at new understandings of ourselves as researchers and our area of inquiry. Consistent with social justice advocacy research, this research collaboration has the potential to inform efforts to empower traditionally underserved college students and to facilitate transformational change in an institution of higher education.

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Interdisciplinary Research Leaders Fellows challenge themselves to apply their expertise and outside-the-box thinking to making their communities healthier and more equitable. No matter what their background, training or discipline, they play a crucial role building a Culture of Health. They stretch beyond their daily work and collaborate with leaders from many other fields—building their leadership skills and creating change in their community and beyond. Teams. Using the Structured Dialogue Model as a Model for Violence Prevention and Health Promotion. Young, Unsheltered and in Harm’s Way: Promoting Health and Development through Disentangling Youth Violence, Homelessness, and Criminal Justice. Towards an Understanding of Interdisciplinarity. 151. The study is particularly important because while some attention has been given to restructuring of the professions (Broadbent et al., 1997) few studies focus on restructuring of universities to support interdisciplinary research (National Academy of Science, 2004). These conditions led funders of academic research and policymakers to support interdisciplinary research as a means of dealing with the complex problems facing society (Fayard, 2010). In turn, these funders and policymakers have increasingly called upon universities to produce collaborative, interdisciplinary research focused on larger societal needs (National Academy of Sciences, 2004; Rhoten, 2003). Theoretical Considerations. Our joint interdisciplinary program has the goal of achieving the second level of integration: interdisciplinary research. The project seeks to create graduate-student research teams with the following characteristics: (1) students and their major professors interact with other team members throughout the life of the project; (2) the teams develop a common research problem and mutually define a conceptual framework consistent with the multiple epistemologies potentially represented within the team; (3) teams coordinate research questions, methods, and scales into. Table 1 serves as a heuristic tool to summarize the relative differences across the spectrum of integrated research in general.