Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) Annual Conference:

2023-2024 Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Research Fellow

DE'AVIN MITCHELL, MA

(PRONOUNCED: DEE – AY – VEE – IN)

PH.D. CANDIDATE

EMAIL: MITCHELL.1852@OSU.EDU

Using the Fellowship

▶ Used this time as an opportunity to continue theorizing an approach to explore these curiosities.

  ▶ Consulting my AAAE mentors

▶ Connect my fellowship project to my dissertation work

| Mid-Oct 2023	• Received Fellowship (Yay! Okay, so what now??)
Nov-Dec 2023	• Introduction to mentors • Discuss w/ mentors fellowship proposal, mentorship styles, and questions about the field and their expertise
January 2024	• Discuss w/ mentors possible important considerations and possible methods for completing the project.
February 2024	• Continue working on and finalize methodology, including questions for research participants.
March 2024	• IRB Approved by home institution. • Sent out Call for Participants through AAAE listserv • Begin data collection, interviews

Motivations and Curiosities

- 2020, as a phenomenon that impacted perceptions of institutional equity
  - Equity, internal operations, and internal stakeholders
- Thinking beyond the advocacy of equity initiatives, and exploring their conceptualization/emergence and sustainability
  - Policy, equity, and language
    - The relationships between text, intent, and interpretation
- The interdisciplinarity of the field of Arts Administration
  - Interests in the potential of arts and creativity in this body of research

Research Question

▶ In what ways do multidisciplinary arts organizations design, communicate, and operationalize their commitments to equity and justice for their internal stakeholders?

Question Components

Design

Communication

Operationalization
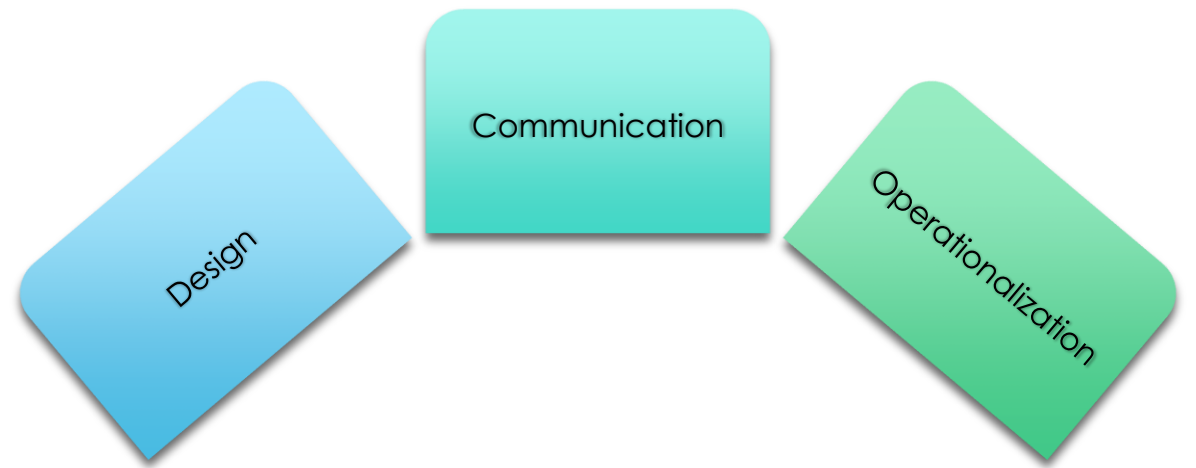
Sub - Questions

How are those involved in decision-making processes in multidisciplinary art organizations **accessing the landscape of knowledge present in their institutional environment** to make and communicate choices concerning equity and justice?

What are **contemporary institutional practices** that multi-disciplinary arts organizations **edify and believe are feasible** in their attempts to counteract inequity and injustice?

In what ways **can art and creativity be used to collect data** on arts administration practices?

Methodology

- Ongoing data collection
- Participants:
  - Individuals working within multidisciplinary arts organizations
  - Individuals who self-identified as leaders or decision-makers within their organization.
- 3-Step Reflection Process

Interview

Poetry Writing

Survey

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews (90 minutes)

- Participants were prompted to reflect on:
  - Their understanding of equity and justice, as ideal concepts and in practice
  - How it has or hasn't manifested in their respective organizations
  - Challenges and successes in implementing equity initiatives
  - Additional questions about their personal experiences, their career path, navigating the workplace, thoughts on hiring, accessibility, decision-making, and more.

Methodology (cont.)

Post-Interview Poetry Writing Activity

▶ Participants were given a two-week window after the interview to continue the questions, ideas, words, and experiences discussed during our interview

▶ Participants were encouraged to consider the poetic form, points of emphasis, word choice, lingering thoughts, personality, specificity & broadness

▶ Encouraged to keep to a length of 1 page or less

"… for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, nameless and formless-about to be birthed, but already felt."

-- Audre Lorde, in "Poetry is Not a Luxury" (1985)

Methodology (cont.)

Post Poetry Writing Survey

▶ Participants shared their experience crafting their poem

▶ Participants were asked if the poetry activity:

  ▶ Helped them think more about how to consider equity in their role

  ▶ Helped them think more about how their organization's approach to equity

  ▶ Had specific challenging aspects they wanted to share

Data and Emerging Findings

In the interview:

- Participants described <u>varied and complex interpretations of equity and justice</u>, and how the concepts may manifest within organizations

- Participants have also <u>described numerous challenges</u> faced in the process of developing and implementing internal equity and justices-oriented initiatives within their organizations

Data and Emerging Findings

Some Challenges Mentioned:

Stifling power structures	Toxic leadership	Fear of retribution
Limited resources	Non- & inconsistent communication	Lack of vision
Competing visions of a course of action	Lack of internal focus on equity	low-bar satisfaction

Data and Emerging Findings

In the poetry and survey

- ▶ Participants used the poetry activity to continue to ruminate on the interview and the topics of the study, creating diverse creative works

- ▶ Participants shared that the activity helped them reflect on their role and their workplace

- ▶ Aspects of the activity participants noted were challenging were:
  - ▶ Being creative
  - ▶ Being vulnerable
  - ▶ Identifying appropriate language
  - ▶ Selecting a topic

Quotes for the survey

- "I thought about the metaphors and the specificity of language as it pertained to my interpretation of arts admin and equity. Working back and forth between idea and word required that I focus and clarify my understandings."

- "[The activity] forced me to deconstruct equity. To view it as a perpetuating idea that turns into tangible actions as opposed to an idea that I'm detached from"

Prairie Dog Stance

Proud prairie dog stands on the plain;
always alert, straight, and tall.
While others join him from time to time, he will remain
standing longer than all.

What does he wait for,
or contemplate,
or ignore,
or relegate.

He's brave as can be
when there's no one to strike.

Both wind and silence are strangely the key
to alert prairie dogs alike.

Then he runs away scared and hides in his mound,
fearful to pop out until no one's around.

Untitled

I've sat with the Idea's of Dr. Heidelberg - "Theorizing Street Cred" - for some time now… up until and after the interview.

I've finally grasped the truth that the experiences of an adolescent Black boy, with gold teeth and tattoos, from the South side of [my city] are being put into practice at an R1 institute / NOT the PhD, NOT the institutional knowledge that comes along with it, NO, but the street cred - the knowledge in practice, the embodied skills from navigating an unjust and inequitable society. / The lessons from "lesser" public schools and HBCU's are filling the manuscript that I'm writing with no pen and no paper, but with labors of love.

The "expert" of arts equity, and social justice, and organizational policy is that same boy navigating this system with street politics. / The same way I looked out for those underserved, while being underserved, is the same way I'm forcing the university, the institution, the organization to look out for those.

The only thing that separates me from the homeboys is that my street cred became a PhD.

Continuing the Work

▶ Interviews will continue beyond the timeline of the fellowship

▶ Once interviews are completed, case studies will be conducted with two arts organizations, Providing an opportunity to go in-depth with an organization's practices.

  ▶ The case study data and interview data will complement one another

Select References

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Thank You ☺

▶ **Email: mitchell.1852@osu.edu**

▶ **If you know a great potential research participant share this link:**

  ▶ **https://u.osu.edu/mitchell-1852/**