

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION TITLE: Creative Pedagogy: A Qualitative Study of Immersive Learning at the Center for Information and Communication Sciences (CICS)

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The Center for Information and Communication Sciences graduate program commenced at Ball State University in 1986 with a specific focus to train graduate students to be leaders in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry. The Center is the manifestation of a vision birthed out of creativity and resourcefulness. This study examined the creative pedagogy approach at CICS based on instruction, social learning culture, professional development, academic achievements, and collaborative interaction among students, faculty, alumni, and colleagues in ICT industries. The distinctiveness of this graduate program that combined in-class and out-of-class learning experiences was the focus of this study.

This study employed a qualitative method, specifically a descriptive case study design with the intent to understand and explain the academic, social, and cultural phenomena of the graduate program at CICS. The central research questions of this study focused on the impact of the teaching, learning, social and leadership outcomes of the

program. The data collection methods used for this inquiry were semi-structured interviews in combination with evidence from archival document data. The twelve participants were selected through purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

The data analysis consisted of open coding techniques that produced eight themes. The findings were organized in relation to the study's three central research questions and indicated that the educational, technical, and social learning experiences of the masters program at CICS impacted the current students and alumni in a variety of ways. All the participants considered the program intense and comprehensive. They also agreed that the program was built around professional development. The existence of elements such as, the Student Social Learning Program (SSLP), teamwork, group projects, close-knit alumni community, well qualified faculty members, enrollment diversity, and student-centered immersive learning made CICS distinct from other programs.

The educational philosophy used in the program was described as effective, deliberate, consistent, clear-cut, invasive, multidisciplinary, integrated, and a culture of success. Key recommendations for further studies include study on the feasibility of replicating the success of CICS by adopting their pedagogical philosophies and practices and a comparative study of similar programs.