

Dissertation Influences and Processes: Ed.D. vs. A.B.D.

by

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ABSTRACT

This study identified the influences and processes of the dissertation completers, currently enrolled students, and non-completers of four cohorts (59 participants) in the Ed.D. administration program. The research questions sought answers as to why some students completed their dissertations and why some did not, the processes in completing a dissertation, and what should be included in a doctoral guide for completing the dissertation. The participants of this study were Ed.D. administration doctoral students in the field of educational leadership from a southwestern university. The job titles of the participants ranged from teacher to superintendent. The participants started the three-year doctoral program in the years 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007. They were between the ages of 24 and 63. Survey Monkey provided the opportunity to request answers to different questions depending on the dissertation status—enrollee, completer, or non-completer. This study entailed interviewing seven doctoral completers, five enrollees, and four non-completers. The significance of this mixed method study was to compare influences and processes to determine suggestions for a study guide that could be used by future doctoral students, chairs, programs, and universities to help students complete their dissertations and become successful graduates. Recommendations are made (a) to recruit more African Americans and men into doctoral programs and the education field; (b) non-completers be invited to finish their dissertations with interventions and an accountable chair; (c) chairs provide his or her best help to meet the student half-way; (d) the department and university provide accountability measures and incentives for both the student and the chair; and (e) provide specific lessons that include finding a topic, researching a topic, and interacting with the chair; and (f) it was determined that non-completers were not

timid as suggested in the literature but were found to have either changed their desire or fulfilled their desire by obtaining a promotion. In summary, a nurturing chair and a strong support system were found to be two major factors in determining the difference between doctoral completion and non-completion.

I would like to dedicate this paper to my three family members
who passed just prior to or during this doctoral process:

To my husband, Gary Irvine

To my father, Forrest Hardy

To my brother, Dan Hardy

I would also like to recognize my daughter, Jill Correll,
for modeling a nurturing mother during this time with her three newborns:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Non-completion Rates

Non-completion rates of doctoral students vary from 40 to 70% (Burkholder, 2012). More than 43% of doctoral students become non-completers (Ampaw & Jaeger, 2012; Cassuto, 2013). Although most of the research on non-completion rates has been done with Ph.Ds, or a combination of disciplines, approximately 50% has been routinely reported (Johnson-Motoyama, Petr, & Mitchell, 2014; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Naylor & Sanford, 1982; Sells, 1975). Ed.D.s' non-completion rates are similar. In a study done by Kittell-Limerick (2005), the Ed.D. non-completion rates for men and women combined reached 59%. Over the past 40 years little has changed as to non-completion rates for doctoral students in the United States.

Non-completion rates are a problem for the global community of universities also. Research by Schoot, Yerkes, Mouw, and Sonneveld (2013) as well as Vassil and Solvak (2012) revealed that delays and non-completion rates of doctoral studies are a problem in the Netherlands as well as the Baltic region of Estonia in Northern Europe. Identifying reasons for non-completion are of universal concern for many educational institutions that have global outreach programs.

When Program Exits Occur

Bowen and Rudenstein (1992) found that 30% left the doctoral program within the first three years and approximately 20% or more left during the dissertation phase. Nerad and Cerny (1991) found that 24% stopped in the first three years, 10% stopped

after candidacy, with 8% pending during the study. A.B.D. (all but dissertation) is an acronym often used by students who refer to themselves who become non-completers. Research provides many reasons why this occurs but few suggestions are offered to change the non-completion situation during the dissertation process. However, Bowen and Rudenstein (1992) also explained that once a doctoral student has completed the first three chapters, the student has approximately an 80 to 90% forecast of completion. Possible doctoral non-completion is worrisome not only for the many students taking a long time to complete a dissertation but also those who associate with them.

Involved Members

Non-completion has been a concern for universities, departments, committee chairs and committees, families of the graduate student, and the graduate student. While each member may have a different concern, the loss of the potential research, qualified talent, time invested, cost, and stress of non-completion is monumental (Smallwood, 2004).

Predictors of Non-completion

Why does non-completion occur when the students selected in the doctoral program have similar potentials according to qualifications used to identify doctoral students? Lunneborg and Lunneborg (1973) examined junior and senior undergraduate GPAs (grade point averages) and found GPAs did not affect the non-completion outcome. Muhic (1971) reviewed whether the number of years taken to get a master's degree had an effect and found that did not appear to be a factor in non-completion. DeStigter (1983) reviewed the relevance of the time between the bachelor's and master's degree and did not find this to predict non-completion. Even though achievement, as

demonstrated in the past, did not seem to be a problem for these students, what has caused non-completion in the universities to occur? Smallwood (2004) concurred that test scores and prior grades have little value to understand non-completion of doctoral students. Lovitts (2001) suggested student program compatibility be assured to prevent non-completion.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe why some completers, enrollees, and non-completers complete and others do not; to describe processes that work and processes that do not; and to provide suggestions for a study guide to be used by the university, department, the chair, and students. Although there are varying studies that contain recommendations to support and guide those (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, advisors and others) who participate in a doctoral program, little has changed. The results of the scholarly literature validate the importance of continuing the emphasis on reducing doctoral non-completion rates and increasing completion rates.

Prior research has looked at predicting completion based on selection criteria, personality types, and factors affecting doctoral student completion, while little has been identified as doctoral processes. Prior studies, such as those by Johnson, Green, and Kluever, 2000; Yeager, 2008; and Harsch, 2008, have examined the factors of completers and non-completers. This research was designed to add to the conversation of doctoral processes to increase the completion rate of doctoral students. This study was done to understand the *all but dissertation* (A.B.D.) situation and provide suggestions so that students will become valued doctorates who increase the knowledge base by

contributions to the scholarly literature of education while promoting individual and collective worth.

There has been very little research done with newly established cohort doctoral programs. Little scholarly research was found regarding Ed.D. cohort programs and their non-completion rates, processes, or suggestions. Strite (2007) examined an Ed.D. cohort in regards to learning strategies. The study that I have done takes the research further by examining processes that need to be in place to get work accomplished. These processes were identified from the needs of members attending a southwestern university Ed.D. cohort program. Thus, this study expands the literature regarding specific cohorts. This study provides suggestions not only for the Ed.D. doctoral student but also for the university, the departments, the chair and committee members, and others involved.

The information from this study contributes to the scholarly field of research by identifying processes that work and those that do not. Also, empirical research findings were added to the field of knowledge by identifying why students complete or do not within a small Ed.D. cohort program in the southwestern part of the United States, and adds to the research in the area of suggestions for a study guide.

The goal of the study was to describe completer, enrollee, and non-completer influences and processes of a doctoral student and to examine why some complete while others do not and to gather recommendations for a study guide for doctoral students and others who interact and influence doctoral completion. Differences and similarities of completers, enrollees, and non-completers were identified by examining internal and external influences and processes. These areas were organized under the sections of (a) internal influences of characteristics such as energies, emotions, thoughts, feelings,

desire, and belief; (b) internal processes including time management; and (c) external influences including unexpected life situations and support; and (d) external processes including resources, and interventions. The following sections explain more in depth the purpose, the problem, and the significance of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Doctoral non-completion and the A.B.D. phenomena plague many individuals and universities. Non-completion was estimated to apply to 50% of the doctoral students (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Naylor & Sanford, 1982; Sells, 1975). The problem is that throughout the educational system 50% of doctoral students are becoming non-completers rather than completers; this research was done to explain the reasons and find processes and suggestions for an improvement in completion rates.

In order to explain the A.B.D. phenomena and look for ways to change the situation, this study was developed. This mixed-mixed study provided explanations as to how successful Ed.D. doctoral completers in a cohort doctoral program completed their dissertations and compared the findings to the enrollees and non-completers. This study had three goals. The first goal was to examine non-completers and completers of an Ed.D. doctoral program and explain why some students complete and others do not. The second goal was to determine the processes that work and those that do not. The third goal was to share the information by suggesting this information be included in a study guide for future doctoral students and as a guide for all associated with doctoral students.

Type of Study

This research was a mixed method explanatory study to describe why some students completed the doctoral program and others did not, what processes worked and

what processes did not, and to gather suggestions for the success of Ed.D. doctoral students in administration. A mixed-methods approach was used for this study. It included a quantitative portion of the study using a survey of the doctoral population and a qualitative phenomenological portion of doctoral completers, enrollees, and non-completers. It was an empirical interpretive inquiry of the students' development or non-development of study processes based on personal reflections. This phenomenological portion of the study was an inquiry that provided individual real-life views that explained personal experiences. Beyond what this researcher planned, using the mixed-methods approach provided a fine tuning of the information to determine if different processes were needed.

Gathering Data Stages

Three stages occurred while gathering the data for this study. The first stage was the literature review, the second was the survey stage, and the third was the interview stage. During Stage 1, I first reviewed the literature and identified influences that contributed to completion and non-completion. During Stage 2, I then created a survey that mirrored the findings of the literature and included additional areas to cover the areas found lacking. The areas included in the survey were internal and external influences of desires, beliefs, emotions, feelings, thoughts, characteristics, well-being, relationship support, and life situations. I also included process questions relating to emotions, thoughts, motivation, maintenance, skills, time management, committee interaction, dissertation events, dissertation processes, resources, and interventions. In addition, I also added questions as to what suggestions the participants might have to include in a study guide.

Next, I did a pilot survey and then made adjustments to the survey. I then surveyed 59 participants out of approximately 80 students who had attended four cohort years of a newly established cohort program. The received information was used to offer suggestions for a study guide in order to identify which areas needed further study to determine influences and dissertation processes that worked and those that did not.

Two pilot interviews were conducted in Stage 3, from which I finalized the interview questions based on the results of the pilot interviews. Then I interviewed a stratified random sample of the same population to gain more detailed descriptions of the survey results to validate the responses. I then compiled the results.

Method of Analysis and Reporting

I compared the successful completer findings with that of the enrollee and non-completer for the survey. I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and graphs. Then I did a pattern matrix for the interview data. Next, I triangulated the research by completing a multi-convergence table to compare the survey and interview data with the literature. Then I wrote the conclusion comparing the results to my theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Definition of Terms

These are terms that I used throughout the dissertation, which I used consistently as defined below:

Chair: The chair who is also sometimes called an advisor was the faculty member who was “responsible for guiding and encouraging the candidate’s design and execution of an original, high quality, doctoral-level research project” (Guidelines for Dissertation Committee Service, 2013, Roles of the Chair, p. 1).

Cohort: A cohort is a group of students who started together in the same year and took classes together.

Cohort year: The cohort year is the year a group of students started graduate studies.

Completer: A completer is a student who has graduated.

Non-completer: A non-completer was a graduate student who did not graduate and is no longer in the program.

Enrollee: The enrollee is the term used for the currently enrolled student.

Limitations

Limitations are considered those things the researcher is unable to control and are known as weaknesses of the study (Simon & Goes, (2013). The first limitation was the researcher as the participant. At the beginning of this inquiry, I was a participant in my fourth year of an Ed.D. graduate program. Being a doctoral student and researcher in the same program as the study participants, I had knowledge of some of the factors that influenced the participants' study processes. Also as the researcher and a fellow graduate student, it was possible that there could be a bias of conducting a study with the program of which I was also a participant. To offset a possible bias and enhance the credibility of the findings and results, I used a mixed method data collection procedure incorporating a survey and interviews to use as cross checks with a general to specific data collection. I also triangulated the research by comparing the literature study, the survey, and the interview responses.

A second limitation was that of past experience. It was possible that since time had elapsed, the participants would tend only to remember positive or negative things;

therefore, the answers to the questions would not be as accurate as they would have been at the time of the occurrence. To reduce this, I asked the participants to think of situations first, then feelings, and then reactions before answering the questions.

A third limitation was that of limited views. It was also important to keep in mind that the information provided by the participants stemmed from their views. Different perspectives of a situation may have been provided by professors, advisors, family members, or anyone involved.

A small sample size was the fourth limitation. A small sample size could have been more biased than a larger sample size. To reduce a possible bias, I used a stratified random sample by randomly selecting people from each of the cohort years to vary the sample and, likely, the views. Also, when new information was obtained during the third interview of one of the groups of non-completers, enrollees, or completers, I interviewed one more in that group. This process continued until I did not receive new information from a group, or there were no more accessible participants within a group, or I had interviewed 12 within the group.

Delimitations

Delimitations are those things the researcher can control and were relevant to the scope of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The delimitations of this research were two-fold; this study was of one specific southwestern university of the United States during the 2011-2012 academic year. Within the university the study consisted of one set of the Ed.D. cohort groups. These students worked full time while attending the university, most holding positions within the educational field in public education. Although this research contains factors found to influence other populations, this empirical research

provides baseline data from an initial use of survey and interview questions. This research was also held during a specific time period with a specific set of cohort members, therefore, the results may or may not generalize to subpopulations, other locations, or other time periods. However, a comparison to the existing literature in a triangulated multi-convergence analysis provided a broader view.

Assumptions

Assumptions are those things the researcher believes are true but cannot necessarily validate (Simon & Goes, 2013). The following assumptions of the study were made:

1. The participants had the intent to stay in the program and complete the doctoral program at the onset of the program.
2. The committee members, chairs, or others involved with the program did not intentionally hold back any student from completing his or her dissertation.
3. The information received from the participants was accurate and honest.
4. The quantitative survey method would help to uncover key questions to include in the interview process and identify appropriate areas to ask the study participants.
5. The participants' dissertation writing experiences were typical of experiences of other doctoral students.
6. The qualitative method of study was the best procedure to uncover the process students use when writing a dissertation.
7. The phenomenological approach was the best approach to uncovering a student's difficulties in completing the doctoral program.
8. The sample population reflected the United States doctoral population's diversity.

9. The summation of the material was accurate, honest, and without bias.
10. That even though the numbers in a group were small, the comparisons of data were best accomplished by using percentages because each group had different total responses.
11. Descriptive statistics including central tendency and dispersion provided the best way to analyze the data.

Significance of the Study

The grand significance of this research was to improve the global condition by increasing academic research to increase the knowledge base. The scholarly significance of this research was to fill a gap in the literature regarding the processes used in successful completion of the dissertation. After reviewing the available research, a limited amount of specific literature as to processes related to completing a doctoral program was found.

There was a social justice significance. Different students may need different help depending on their prior skills, influences, and their understanding of the dissertation and the program. The suggested contents for the study guide help to create equal opportunities by providing insights as to how to increase leverage to complete the dissertation. The outcome of this research was that social justice was enhanced. By providing a list of influences, processes, and suggestions, students of different mindsets may have a better understanding of how to overcome interfering influences when going through the dissertation process.

The practical significance was that this study provided suggested ways to improve the completion rate and lower the non-completion rate of the Ed.D. doctoral students in

administration by addressing suggestions for stakeholder groups. Based on suggestions found in the research, synthesized from surveys, and gleaned from interviews of Ed.D. cohort students, the expected benefits of this research are the following:

Ed.D. administration doctoral students would have suggestions so they may plan and implement processes to self-regulate and support their endeavor and thus improve their likely success in the doctoral program. Completing the doctoral program may lead the students to being able to achieve higher salaries, better jobs, and more respect.

The faculty and committee members would have suggestions to support and regulate the students to become successful completers.

The department or program administration personnel would know and have suggestions as how to support and regulate the faculty and committee members involved.

The university administration personnel would have suggestions as how to support and regulate the department or program. Lower non-completion rates may lead to positive opinions about the university and in turn raise enrollment.

Summary

This mixed method research study examined the completer, the enrollee, and the non-completer of an Ed.D. administration cohort located in the southwestern part of the United States. This research provided a comparison of the similarities and differences found in the literature to the empirical data received from 59 surveys and 16 interviews. Internal and external influences and processes were reviewed and suggestions for a doctoral study guide were provided to help improve the non-completion rate of doctoral students.

The importance of this study was that it provided an explanation of processes that worked and did not work for students with suggestions for the university, the department, the chair, and the student. This research contributed to the circumventing of the possible loss of valuable research, cost, time, and the students' self-efficacy if failure to complete the doctoral program were to occur.

This dissertation contains five chapters. Within the first chapter, the introduction contained an overview describing the phenomenon supported by credible sources illustrating the need for this research and supporting literature indicative of discourse and research conducted thus far relevant to dissertation completers and non-completers. Chapter 2 provides a background of the problem and the theoretical and conceptual framework used, and themes related to the research. Chapter 3 contains descriptions of the mixed-method design, the sample descriptions for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies, and the data analysis process. Chapter 4 depicts the quantitative and qualitative findings and results of the descriptive data findings. Chapter 5 consists of the conclusions; a summary; and implications for research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Many students complete their coursework, but some do not complete the dissertation process to achieve their doctorate degree. This literature review was to determine the extent of this problem and to determine what is needed next.

This study of the Ed.D. completer, the A.B.D. (all but dissertation) individual, and the non-completer begins with the section titled Dissertation Background that includes a brief history of dissertation requirements. Next, I discuss the non-completion rate, the A.B.D. label, the stages of completion, and the impact on students as to costs and losses due to not finishing the doctoral program. Then I reviewed the specific potential problem of the possible non-completion rate of the doctoral program. After that, I provided the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that I used when analyzing the research. Finally, I provided the themes relevant to doctoral completion and non-completion that I used in the categories of an overview, influences, processes, and suggestions relating to the research questions.

Dissertation Background

In the United States, Harvard University introduced the first Ed.D. degree in 1921 (Toma, 2002). Writing a dissertation was a requirement in most Ed.D. programs. The dissertation, a written document that proves competency in the field of literature by contributing to the existing knowledge of theory or practice, has often been the final requirement for the doctoral degree. The doctoral degree is a revered accomplishment, which signifies that the person who has a doctoral degree is an expert in his or her field of

study. Only 4% of the United States population has achieved this status according to the College Board (2013).

Doctoral Non-completion Rate

About half of the doctoral students do not finish the program to get their degrees (Hawley, 2003; Lovitts, 2001, Sternberg, 1981). In a study done by Sternberg (1981), it was revealed that non-completion of graduate students was as high as 75% and that the A.B.D. occurrence accounted for 25% of the non-completers. Cook and Swanson (1978) found many students were leaving doctoral programs after coursework. After coursework and before dissertation writing was found to be a critical time for possible non-completion (Williams, 1997). However, the actual information to confirm accurate figures has been difficult to obtain (Garcia, 1987) since universities seldom report non-completers or when students become non-completers (Golde, 2005).

ABD Label

Although no time is a good time to drop out, the A.B.D. student will have invested more time and money into the degree program than those who have dropped out earlier. Some will have invested tens of thousands of dollars or more. It intrigued me to want to find out what would have deterred some from their plan of graduation and what has sustained others.

The loss of the graduate student at the dissertation stage is such an issue that the occurrence has been named in many studies as A.B.D.; however, the definition of A.B.D. is not always the same. In some cases, the studies include those who are still enrolled (enrollees) but have finished the course work as A.B.D. Other studies refer the A.B.D. students as those who have completed both their coursework and their comprehensive

exams; whereas, yet another group of studies refer to A.B.D. students as those who have completed the first three chapters. The research reviewed does not often give a clear delineation of percentages or views specific to stopping points. Having so many different A.B.D. definitions, I used the term *non-completer* for those who have left the program at any stage beyond the course work.

Stages of Completion

The doctoral programs usually consist of separate stages: beginning of the program, core coursework, writing the proposal, proposal, dissertation research and writing, and dissertation defense. Research has shown that students abandon doctoral programs during these different stages. The most common time found by Bowen and Rudenstein (1992) was within the first three years during coursework. However, after coursework accounted for 20% of the 50% who did not complete.

Impact of Non-completion: Costs and Losses

Students in graduate programs who have left the program at the final stage have invested effort, time, and money to no avail. Non-completers have dedicated prior years of study into a program without compiling a finished product. That could be interpreted by some as failure that may lead to identity or self-esteem issues (Sherizen, 1973).

The non-completer's potential progress to careers that require a doctorate is often lost (Garcia, 1987; Ramos, 1994; Wasson, 1992; Yeager, 2008). The income that comes with doctoral degree careers is also lost. If a student does not complete the doctorate, his or her salary is likely to be within the master's degree range (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). That is an overall median salary loss of \$17,800 per year for men and \$17,200 for women (see Table 1). A doctoral student in the age range of 40 to 50 years would have

approximately 20 more working years and if the student becomes a graduate or not the earning potential or potential loss of expected increases over 20 years would amount to about \$356,000 for men and \$344,000 for women (Baum et al., 2013). With a doctoral degree women tend to still receive less than a man with a master’s degree. This makes it even more important for women to achieve the doctoral status in order to approach a more comparative salary.

Table 1

Earning by Education Level vs. Gender

	Data for Chart			Data Labels		
	25 th percentile	50th-25 th percentile	75th-50 th percentile	25th percentile	Median	75th Percentile
<i>Female</i>						
Less than a HS diploma	\$15,800	\$4,900	\$6,400	\$15,800	\$20,700	\$27,100
High school diploma	\$21,100	\$8,900	\$10,500	\$21,100	\$30,000	\$40,500
Some college, no degree	\$25,200	\$9,400	\$12,400	\$25,200	\$34,600	\$47,000
Associate Degree	\$26,900	\$12,400	\$14,100	\$26,900	\$39,300	\$53,400
Bachelor's Degree	\$35,100	\$14,000	\$19,900	\$35,100	\$49,100	\$69,000
Master's Degree	\$44,600	\$15,700	\$21,100	\$44,600	\$60,300	\$81,400
Doctoral Degree	\$53,100	\$24,400	\$31,500	\$53,100	\$77,500	\$109,000
Professional degree	\$54,100	\$26,600	\$60,300	\$54,100	\$80,700	\$141,000
<i>Male</i>						
Less than a HS diploma	\$19,900	\$7,400	\$12,900	\$19,900	\$27,300	\$40,200
High School Diploma	\$27,300	\$13,100	\$16,100	\$27,300	\$40,400	\$56,500
Some college, no degree	\$31,700	\$15,400	\$20,100	\$31,700	\$47,100	\$67,200
Associate Degree	\$36,000	\$14,900	\$21,000	\$36,000	\$50,900	\$71,900

Table 1 (continued)

Earning by Education Level vs. Gender

<i>Female</i>	Data Labels			Data Labels		
	25 th percentile	50th-25 th percentile	75th-50 th percentile	25th percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Bachelor's Degree	\$43,900	\$22,300	\$33,800	\$43,900	\$66,200	\$100,000
Master's Degree	\$56,600	\$26,400	\$42,000	\$56,600	\$83,000	\$125,000
Doctoral Degree	\$65,200	\$35,600	\$49,200	\$65,200	\$100,800	\$150,000
Professional degree	\$71,700	\$47,800	\$50,500	\$71,700	\$119,500	\$170,000

Note. Median, 25th percentile, and 75th percentile earnings of full-time year-round workers ages 25 and older, by gender and education level. Adapted from *Trends in College Pricing, Table PINC-03*, by U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a. Retrieved Sept. 1, 2013, from https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc03_000.htm

The average yearly cost of a doctoral degree program in a public in-state program is \$9,539 per year according to The College Board Trends in College Pricing (Baum & Ma, 2012; see Table 2).

Table 2

Average Charges for Tuition and Fees

Carnegie classifications	Tuition and fees			
	2012-13	2011-12	\$ Change	% Change
Public Doctoral In-State	\$9,539	\$9,126	\$413	4.5%
Public Master's In-State	\$7,606	\$7,207	\$399	5.5%
Public Bachelor's In-State	\$6,718	\$6,433	\$285	4.4%
Private Doctoral	\$35,660	\$34,230	\$1,430	4.2%
Private Master's	\$25,997	\$24,903	\$1,094	4.4%
Private Bachelor's	\$27,482	\$26,427	\$1,055	4.0%

Note. Average published charges for full-time undergraduates by Carnegie classification, 2012-13, Enrollment-Weighted. Adapted from *The College Board: Trends in College Pricing*, by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b, 2013. Retrieved from <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/college-pricing-2012-full-report-121203.pdf>; <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/college-pricing-2013-full-report.pdf>

Payment continues until the student graduates. This particular southwestern university studied allows up to 10 years to complete the program. This continued cost could be at a minimum of approximately at \$1,778 per year after the first three years. This would add an additional \$12,446 for the remaining seven years after the first three years of tuition.

If the non-completion rates were available for all programs, a school's reputation might possibly be affected by the statistics of the number of completers and non-completers in comparison to other school's programs. At present, much of this influence is communicated by word of mouth. With each loss in a doctoral completer, the community loses credentialed individuals to perform research (Garcia, 1987).

Specific Potential Problems

In answering the demand for dynamic educational leadership, education administration doctoral programs have emerged. This southwestern university program was still considered to be in the infancy stage, having started in 2001; however, during this research study the program ended. The A.B.D. occurrence was not identified as a major issue; however, when researching non-completion in a larger context, particularly with social science doctoral programs, it was estimated that approximately 50% of the students had not graduated (Sternberg, 1981). Therefore, an understanding of the potential problems and precautions can help universities, departments, committees, the students who are currently enrolled, and the students who may enroll in a similar program at the southwestern university studied. In Chapter 4, I show an analysis of the Ed.D. administration cohorts' data of completers, enrollees, and non-completers of the

dissertation process. In Chapter 5, I explain the comparison of the completion and non-completion sample statistics to the general population statistics of over 50% expected non-completion. The non-completion rate of this southwestern university for doctoral students was not available in the literature. An estimate of the non-completion percentage by dissertation stage and overall, based on the empirical evidence sample, are explained in Chapter 4.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Quantitative

Decisions to leave or stay alter a person's environment quickly. Leaving the program is a decision that some doctoral students choose while in the doctoral program. Do we make decisions based on habit of pre-ingrained responses, purposeful thinking and willpower, or persuasion from outside influences? If, according to Aristotle and Maslow, we have a drive to obtain our full potential, what stops us from obtaining what we set out to do? These underlying questions drove this research in a quest to search for ways to help the adult learner to stay the course and follow his or her dreams of becoming a doctor of education. This section explains the theoretical lens used for analyzing the results of this study.

Evolution of the Social Cognitive Learning Theory

Bandura's Social Cognitive learning theory was developed from the empiricism stance that knowledge comes from experience. The Greek philosopher Socrates (470-399 B.C.) determined that what constituted a good life begins by knowing one's self. He surmised that a person will align his/her dreams to possessed abilities and will not knowingly cause self-harm. He held that a goal of self-learning provides the foundation

for becoming successful whereas an individual who lacks self-knowledge may unravel security and structure of the good life he/she tries to build. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) surmised that reaching one's aspirations leads to a contented life. Assuming that the doctoral student's goal of achieving a doctoral degree was aligned with the doctoral student's purpose in life, why would the student leave the program? Did the student not know his or her capabilities, his or her situation, or his or her aspirations when starting the program?

Although nativism, knowledge based on instincts or innately known, as proposed by Plato, may explain some behaviors, several English philosophers studied empiricism, knowledge that comes from experience. John Locke wrote an essay regarding how frequency of thought and associating a person or situation with a judgment produces a connecting link that forms a memory or habit of mind. Modern theorists such as Kurt Lewin from Germany took this further by explaining that the influences within a person's environment cause different reactions when two people are faced with the same situation or decision (Lewin, 1951).

Of the three forms of psychology, there was psychoanalysis founded by Freud and behavioral conditioning founded by John Watson, later developed by B. F. Skinner through his studies of mice and humanism. The optimal choice of alignment with this study was the third form of the humanistic perspective pioneered by Abraham Maslow in 1954 regarding the needs of the learner. He surmised that the learner's needs must be met in order for self-actualization to occur.

The Social Cognitive Learning theory was developed from empiricism and has humanistic connotations. Albert Bandura (1977) developed the Social Learning Theory

and later added a self-efficacy component. His premise was that self-efficacy increases by achieving goals and that helplessness is a learned behavior that he referred to as “reciprocal determinism.” He stated that students learn by watching others vicariously, through reading and other symbolic forms, and by direct instruction with a teacher modeling cognitive thinking. To enhance learning, Bandura also found three processes that were instrumental: goal setting, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Bandura further held that self-efficacy is achieved or lost by previous successes or failures, bodily reactions, and others’ verbal influences (Bandura, 1997).

The external influence is achieved through modeling or vicarious learning and is reinforced positively or negatively through interactions with others involved. The internal influence is acquired through symbolic investigation through media or written form. Internalized thoughts are internally initiated and reinforced through positive or negative feedback.

The social cognitive learning theory was appropriate for this mixed-method research study because the elements of the learning models, the self-efficacy, and the self-regulation processes provided the lens for analyzing the data retrieved for this study. The premise is that the typical doctoral student will go through the following processes as they complete their Ed.D. program:

The goal: I called this the desire, the reason, for the degree. This might be evidenced in the form of long- and short-term goals, with objectives, deadlines, accomplishments, and rewards.

Self-efficacy: I call this the belief in completion. This is measured by perseverance and effort over time. To explain the belief system, I looked for and listened to see if their

beliefs in their goal faltered or changed; and if so, was it because of internal or external influences. Next, past experiences of similar successes or failures were identified. Then signs of personal well-being (emotional stress, energy, uplifting encouragements, discouraging thoughts, and characteristics of perseverance or shyness) were reviewed for a possible explanation of self-efficacy.

Self-regulation: I looked at what the person did and if they used processes of self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. These might be in the form of a journal, checklists, self-reflections, time-lines, plans, and adjustments.

This study investigated the role of personal variables regarding student completion and how the processes they used facilitated the learning. The self is often the first place to look for answers; and being a student, I decided to base this study on students' responses. My intent was to find suggestions for improvement to the doctoral dissertation process rather than accepting a fate of being a victim or blaming a villain. I believe that all students may become victors. It may just be a matter of time before all who have tried will succeed. My ultimate goal was to make that journey easier and faster and provide a way so that the participants were able to feel the accomplishments similar to the feeling developed by the quote from Julius Caesar, "I came, I saw, I conquered" (Julius Caesar, n.d.). This conceptual framework was used throughout my research as a focus for explanations of my research questions. Next, I reviewed the literature as it applied to the research questions.

Qualitative Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework was built on Bandura's Cognitive Learning Theory. It included the processes of goal setting, self-efficacy, and self-regulation, but puts them in

a different order and gives them a different attribute name so that the perception of the dependent variable, the person and or a new belief, can be conceptualized in a different way.

My perception was that an individual has a desire to attain and has the belief that it can be attained. I call this the belief activation process. Outside influences either support or interfere while inside influences accept or reject influences and maintain, modify, or eliminate internal thoughts of desire. During this inception time of the desire, self-regulation processes may be put in place to solidify the desire's value and priority in the form of goal setting, vision, and mission. Self-regulation employs techniques in the form of taking stock of abilities, short comings, energy levels, well-being, and resources, thus plans reactions to influences to secure a safe environment. The getting started stage of the dissertation is the task analysis stage, including the setting of objectives and sub-objectives, the timeline, and determining the rubric for self-evaluation, monitoring, adjustment, and reward. The maintaining stage is the discipline of following the plan, documenting the accomplishments and changes, and allowing for regroup time as to insight. Once the desire is attained, the belief is more fully formed or altered based on the findings. If this process is cut short and a belief is altered by influence that is not conducive to our pattern, we may become farther away from who we truly are thus forming a disconnect in our mind. If the cycle is faster and we find that these processes are not needed, perhaps we inherently know how to stay the course, blaze our way through, and attain our desire. This cycle would be applicable for modifying thoughts, ideas, and research questions also.

Themes Relevant to Doctoral Completion and Non-Completion

The literature reviewed was in the areas of doctoral completion, A.B.D., and time to completion. Within the research studied, most of the research can be grouped into three categories: Influences (internal and external), interventions, and suggestions. Little was found on processes. According to Williams (1997), the students will come to know their dissertation completion process when they are done.

Overview

This overview section contains information that led to my research questions. In this section I have included demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity); time-to-degree; non-completer forecasting; Ph.D. vs. Ed.D.; hard science vs. soft science; and cohorts. These were areas that I did not purposefully include in the empirical research; however, these were areas of awareness to provide an overall picture of the doctoral degree completion view.

Demographics. The demographics are descriptions of ourselves that are often unchangeable. A few studies have investigated to see if demographics were a factor in who will complete their dissertations and who will not. Others, such as Varney (2003), chose not to research the demographics. Although I did not purposefully seek out this information, I included what I found in my search. The few demographic elements that were found in the research related to the dissertation and the doctoral degree included age, gender, and ethnicity.

Age. Age does not play an important factor in doctoral completion (Pogrow, 1977, Valentine, 1986; Wright, 1991). Specifically, Campbell (1992) performed an Ed.D study and did not find that age affected non-completion or completion.

Gender. Gender differences signify different needs.

Fewer men enroll. Fewer men enroll in doctoral programs than women. Shaw (2006) conducted a study where 35% of the sample were men. However, this percent may be comparable if compared to the percent of men in the education field.

Men are more likely to complete and women are more at risk. Men have a graduation ratio of 1.5 to the graduation rate of 1.0 for women (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Men are more likely to complete the doctoral program (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Mooney, 1968). Women in the educational doctoral programs have more success than in other fields (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Women have more difficulty selecting a topic for their dissertation (Smith, 1983).

Ethnicity. Few studies have researched the influence of ethnicity (Lemp, 1980; Pouncil, 2009; Valentine, 1986). More non-completers were minorities according to Smallwood (2004). Hesseling (1986) found that in previous years, students of international origin had a high success rate; however, this rate has been lessening.

Only a small percentage of doctoral completers are African American. In Pouncil's (2009) study, he interviewed three African American male completers. Pouncil (2009) found that in 2001 only 6% of the doctoral completers were African Americans. When considering that 12% of Americans were African Americans in 2000, this group is under represented by 50% (U.S. Census, 2000).

Time-to-Degree. Those who take longer are an indication that interventions are needed.

Those who take longer are more at risk for leaving the program. According to Dickson (1987), a student who takes longer to complete may be at more risk of non-

completion. Tierce (2008) found the average time-to-degree for Ed.D.s working in the field of Education Administration in Texas was four years. In 1999, the average time to complete was from seven to nine years (Bair & Haworth, 1999). More research is needed in this area to determine actual baseline data and change over time.

Men take less time to get their degree. Men take less time to finish their degree than females (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973).

Pre-enrollment Completion Forecasting. Forecasting completion prior to enrollment is inconclusive. Lunneborg and Lunneborg (1973) looked at several entrance variables and did not find any of them to be significant. They did, however, find that a student's first year GPA was an indicator of future attainment. GRE as a pre-determiner of success rate has not been established (Garcia 1987; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973). Sells (1975) found that even though students may have been rated highly when allowed into the graduate program, approximately 40% of them would drop out. There was a slight increase in non-completion for those who were not rated as high. With the entrance variables being similar among the participant groups, this would indicate that there are other variables to consider that may account for non-completion.

Ph.D. vs. Ed.D. similarities and differences. Interventions may be needed for the Ed.D.

The Ed.D. has an older working population. Even though the Ed.D. has become similar in nature to the Ph.D., the difference is in the population (Kelly, 2008). Both the doctorate of philosophy and education administration degrees usually require writing dissertations. Often the research of Ed.D.s and Ph.D.s are combined when determining completion and non-completion rates and barriers. The education degree was

considered more of a practical degree but with the dissertation requirement, research has become a part of the degree and the connotation is changing from a lesser degree to more of an equally competent degree status (Kelly, 2008). The usual difference in the degrees is that the Ph.D. is generally pursued by younger students who have just completed a master's degree without job experience outside of the education setting; whereas, the education doctoral degree is pursued by educational career people who work while going to school (Kelly, 2008).

Ed.D.s take less time when writing a qualitative study than the Ph.Ds. The qualitative design method takes an Ed.D. student less time to complete than the Ph.D. student; whereas the Ph.D. student takes less time to complete a degree using the quantitative design study. Ed.D. students using a qualitative design took about a year and a half less time-to-degree than Ph.D. students. Ed.D. students using a quantitative design took about a year longer than Ph.D. students using the same design (Kelly, 2008). A qualitative dissertation takes about eight months less than a quantitative study for the Ed.D. student (Tierce, 2008).

Ed.D.s are not as familiar with the writing process as the Ph.Ds. Another difference found, was about the recall of the writing process. Because the younger Ph.D. students usually obtain their Ph.D. right after completing their master's program, they usually have a better grasp of the writing process because they have been writing steadily in their classes (Kelly, 2008). The Ed.D. and the Ph.D. have been considered similar degrees; however, the Ed.D. includes a specialization in education including applied and professional training; whereas the Ph.Ds have been trained to complete research experiments, to reason, and solve problems (Kuther, 2014).

Hard science vs. soft science. The influence of hard science versus soft science toward degree completion is inconclusive. Hopwood, McAlpine, and Harris-Huemmert (2008) and Tinto (1993) suggested that departmental disciplines influence degree completion.

Cohorts. Cohort programs promote less time-to-degree. Cohort students are more likely to complete their degree in a little over a year sooner than non-cohort doctoral dissertation program students (Tierce, 2008). Students in cohort groups tend to help each other finish (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000; Grasso, 2004). Strite (2007) found that 95% of the participants claimed cohort support to be a major contributor to success.

Summary

Predetermining success prior to enrollment in a doctoral program has not been found reliable to forecast success. Age has not been determined as a factor of completion. Although fewer men enroll, men tend to complete more than women. Women have more difficulty with the doctoral process than men. African Americans are underrepresented in doctoral programs and in doctoral degrees. Studies vary in regards to the success of minority completion. However, students who take more time are subject to being more at risk of non-completion.

Ed.D.s are a working population and have quicker completion times writing a qualitative dissertation than a quantitative dissertation, even though they have not had continuous writing classes due to being out of school for years prior to enrolling in the doctoral program. Cohorts provide an environment where students mentor and help each other get through the process.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, How do we explain the differences between students who complete the dissertation and those who do not?

Similarities. To answer this question, I will first explain what I found as to completers and non-completers being similar, not necessarily affecting completion. Then I will explain what the research says about influences that put students more at risk, and then I will explain the completer and the non-completer.

Doctoral students have a desire to finish what they start and say that they usually do (Campbell, 1992). More than half of the non-completers, enrollees, and completers experienced progress being slow due to anxiety (Malmberg, 2000). When students switch from classes to independently working on their dissertations, they often feel alone (Strite, 2007).

Stress stifles energy and blocks progress. Completers (Franek, 1982) and non-completers (Bridgmon, 2007; Malmberg, 2000) sometimes felt anxiety from stress that slowed or stopped progress. Most students in Strite's (2007) study of completers experienced a blocked time not knowing how to proceed.

Life events can slow the process. Greater than 50% of the participants in a study of completers done by McCormack-Weiss (2003) had one major event that impacted progress, including personal illness, family illness, death in the family, or becoming a caregiver. All of the participants in Strite's (2007) study experienced factors such as loss of job, death, illness, and family events that slowed their progress. In Malmberg's (2000)

study, family commitments were found to affect progress of enrollees and completers. Obligations interfere with time for the dissertation (Wagner, 1986; Williams, 1997).

Job interferes with progress of the non-completer and completer. Having a job while working on the dissertation was considered an obstacle by non-completers (Campbell, 1992). Malmberg (2000) found that the requirements of a job interfered with working on a dissertation.

Non-supporting partner interrupts progress. Another non-supporting influence that devastated some students and impeded their progress was the non-supportive relationship partner (Franek, 1982).

Non-supporting chair relationships hinder progress. A major obstacle for some students was having a non-supporting, conflicting advisor who did not provide timely feedback or help (Green & Kluver, 1996). Delays from a lack of advisor compatibility may occur to a completer or non-completer. How the student deals with the situation may make the difference of completion or not. When students feel that they do not have control over their dissertation or the process, they may have difficulty completing (Wagner, 1986). Poor advisor support is a reason to change chairs.

Disagreeing committee members can impede progress. Non-functioning committees were noted as a major interference factor stalling progress (Hagedorn & Doyle, 1993; Lenz, 1995; Ross, 2009). In Williams' (1997) study three women expressed anger and frustration from difficulties working with committee members.

Committee change slows progress. Williams (1997) and Malmberg (2000) found committee changes to be an impediment to the dissertation process, which occurs with most doctoral students. Malmberg (2000) found that four out of four of all of the

non-completers had changes to their committee; whereas, 24 out of 44 (55%) of the completers had changes.

Summary

The similarities of the completer and non-completer were as follows: they have a desire to finish what they start, and at times they experience anxiety and a block in writing. They experience a slowing of the dissertation process due to life events, obligations, family commitments, and job interference. Some completers and non-completers experience having a non-supportive partner, a non-supportive chair, and disagreements as well as changes among their committee members.

Completer. The supporting traits of a completer include a desire for career advancement, high self-efficacy, emotional stability, being able to maintain even if a major life situation occurs, supportive relationships, a supportive chair, and participation in peer mentoring.

Desire for career advancement has more of a direct impact on completing sooner (Strite, 2007).

Having a desire to obtain a doctoral degree for personal reasons or for others indicates that the time-to-completion may be longer according to an Ed.D. research study. Strite (2007) explained that in Group A 73% of the participants wanted to pursue the doctoral degree for career possibilities, and in Group B, 89% of the participants wanted the degree for reasons that satisfied themselves or for others. Of Group B, 90% of the five-year completers claimed personal and altruistic desires. When comparing completers, Group B was found to have taken from one to six years longer to complete

than Group A. External pressures to complete are placed on the student who seeks the degree for personal reasons (Tluczek, 1995).

Self-efficacy influences completion of tasks. Self-efficacy and an advisor's support are a completer's successful combination (Shaw, 2006).

Characteristics have an impact on completion. As stated by Kittell-Limerick (2005), "Psychological barriers have the greatest influence on degree completion and personality traits have a tendency to be predictive" of completion.

Tenacious, persevering, self-directed, resilient, determined, extremely motivated, hardworking, bold, and having initiative and integrity are characteristics of a completer. Being tenacious, persevering (Franek, 1982; Karolyi, 1993), and disciplined, having the ability to work alone, being self-directed, and resilient define the completer of a dissertation (Strite, 2007). Yeagar (2008) also admitted that it takes self-direction to prioritize time to complete a dissertation. Being determined and extremely motivated were characteristics of a completer found by Shaw (2006). A qualitative study of African American women who completed their dissertations described the participants as having integrity and having the trait of being hard working (Thurston, 2002).

Self-advocacy is needed for getting topics and research accepted. Wendover (2006) found that self-advocacy was required in early advisor contacts to ask for assistance regarding the topic. Self-advocacy is also required when working with the committee. Boldness was found by Hawley (2003) as being important to success (Williams, 1997). Using a self-reported resilience survey, Blue (2008) studied 26 participants and found a difference in initiative between the completer and non-completer. Blue (2008) explained initiative as being a determinant of persistence.

Emotional stability is needed to complete. Sternberg (1981) and Strite (2007) discussed an association of the emotions and the intellectual ability of a student. Emotional stability that includes characteristics of being self-directed, self-controlled, and self-reliant contribute to completion of the dissertation (Strite, 2007). According to Goleman (1995), emotional aptitude is an explanation as to when two have equal intellectual abilities, why one will do well and another will not do well due to having emotional turmoil that stifles work.

It is important to have a balanced schedule for the varied activities in life to maintain a healthy willingness to continue the dissertation process (Malmberg, 2000). Being able to balance obligations is a major factor in completion (Hagedorn & Doyle, 1993, Tluczek, 1995).

Early topic choices that are workable and enticing provide more promise (Williams, 1997).

Strong chair support was instrumental in facilitating completion of doctoral students (Malmberg, 2000; Shaw, 2006; Strite, 2007; Wendover, 2006).

Completion could be because of the advisor selected. Only a few advisors are repeatedly reported as being instrumental to the student's completion (Shaw, 2006). Greater than 92% of the completers in Shaw's (2006) study claimed their advisor was key to their success. The advisor is a major influence toward continuance (Campbell, 1992; Gell, 1995; Lovitts, 2001; Mah, 1986; Malmberg, 2000; Yeagar, 2008). Advisor selection connects with completion (Golde, 2000; Green, 1995; Tinto, 1993).

Change in chair can sometimes lead to success. Three students were stalled for two years and then changed their advisor (Strite, 2007).

Strong supporting collegial relationships help. Faculty associations (Johnson, 1997; Norquist, 1993) and peer relationships enhance completion (Bruce, 1995; Hobish, 1979; Williams, 1997; Yeager, 2008). In a cohort sample of 198 participants mentoring relationships with an interaction to the research is a key factor in completion (Ross, 2009). Those with knowledge of the dissertation protocol were most needed as relationship support for women (Williams, 1997).

Instrumental completion resources include faculty, doctoral program, and the library. University resources such as; program layout, professor input, and the library; were recognized by completers as invaluable (Shaw, 2006).

Constructive committees helped the completer finish. Campbell's (1992) study revealed that the completers were able to get things accomplished with their committees. Malmberg's (2000) study revealed that the committee was instrumental in the progress of approximately 80% of the participants.

Summary

The completer has a desire to get the doctoral degree for career advancement, personal, or for altruistic reasons. The completer characteristics are of having self-efficacy, being tenacious, persevering, self-directed, resilient, determined, extremely motivated, hardworking, bold, disciplined, determined, bold, and a self-advocate having integrity and the ability to work alone. The completer is also emotionally stable, and balances their personal schedule. The completer chooses a workable topic early, has a strong nurturing chair for support who has a record of getting doctoral students through the program. The completer has a constructive committee and develops mentoring relationships.

Non-completer. Some non-completers lost interest in finishing (Campbell, 1992). Characteristics of being timid, passive, and a perfectionist influence a non-completer. Characteristic descriptors that do not work well and may halt or slow the dissertation process include being timid and passive while boldness can resolve difficulties and be more convincing (Hawley, 2003). Pursuing perfection slows the completer's progress (Yeager, 2008) and sometimes becomes a barrier for the non-completers (Lenz, 1994; Malmberg, 2000; McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Emotional turmoil, negative feelings, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed influence longer completion time or non-completion of the dissertation. Goleman (1995, p. 36) referred to conflicts of the mind that interfere with focusing and thinking. Negative feelings are likely to cause the student to drop out of the program rather than experience these feelings for a longer time (Ramos, 1994). Students sometimes get frustrated and quit because of the magnitude of the dissertation (Goodchild & Miller, 1997). Campbell's (1992) study showed that non-completers felt the dissertation was too long of a project; they felt intimidated by it while the completers did not. Claimed by non-completers in Wagnor's (1986) study, intensity of the dissertation was the major reason for dropping out.

Health issues sometimes cause non-completion. Some non-completers experienced medical problems (Campbell, 1992). Health problems accounted for a major reason for non-completion (McCormack-Weiss, 2003). Personal health was a factor that interfered with progress for two out of four, half of the non-completers (Malmberg, 2000). Most of the participants in Williams' (1997) study reported that non-completion was only due to difficulty with their health.

Taking time off from working on dissertation causes risk to completion

(Miller, 1995). After classes end and the dissertation writing stage began was a critical juncture for students. Williams (1997) stated that there was not a continuance of classes during the dissertation writing process and that the majority of participants in her study took time off after classes. Miller (1995, p. 46) made an analogy to a student's energy as having a consistent direct current, an inconsistent alternating current, or a weak battery as indicative of the non-completer. In a study done by Nettles and Millet (2006) of 10,000 doctoral students, of those who were non-completers over 50% had taken a year or more off before starting their dissertation; whereas, less than 20% of the completers took time off of a year or more. Tired and taking time off from a dissertation can lead to non-completion. Some non-completers were tired after the classes ended and did not start the dissertation process after taking time off. Not knowing how to begin, they became A.B.D. (Campbell, 1992).

The life situation of divorce or separation was interference for two out of four, half of the non-completers (Malmberg, 2000).

Non-completers claim non-supportive advisors stall process. Adversarial conflicts, non-supportive, and slow feedback are difficulties non-completers had with advisors (Green & Kluver, 1996; Ross, 2009). Non-completers identify advisors as a strong non-completion reason (Campbell, 1992; McCormack-Weiss, 2003). Advisors stress student responsibility for non-completion (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Advisor and student relationships can be made strong or fragile due to the imbalance of power and the emotional upsets can be harmful for both (Goleman, 2006). Emotions of worry, apprehension, helplessness, and lack of self-efficacy are felt by A.B.D. students who may

not ask for help because they feel it may be construed as being too demanding or may feel that the advisor just does not care (Ramos, 1994).

Changing Chairs can be emotional and if not changed when needed may lead to non-completion. Non-completers tended to have difficulty with keeping the same advisor or getting a different advisor if needed. If relationships are an important factor in one's life, because of their characteristic values of relationships, it may be difficult to sever an advisory relationship even if there is not a match between the student and the advisor. A student with a strong tendency to hold onto a relationship, even if it is not working, will go through emotional turmoil when considering changing advisors. The relationship-oriented student may choose to not finish rather than end the student-advisor relationship (Strite, 2007). One of Williams' (1997) participants chose to not meet with her committee due to conflicts. Jacks, Chubin, Porter, and Connolly (1983) found that difficulties with the advisor relationship was a major reason for becoming a non-completer.

Uncooperative committee. Campbell's (1992) study revealed that the non-completers were not able to get things accomplished with their committees.

Lack of mentoring influences non-completion. Miller (2013) conducted a mixed method study to understand factors associated with the non-completion of doctoral degrees and found one key factor related to non-completion was the lack of mentorship.

Summary

The non-completer sometimes loses interest in finishing. The non-completer has characteristics of being timid, passive, and a perfectionist. Emotional turmoil, negative feelings, frustration, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed can interfere with focusing and

thinking. Emotions such as apprehension, helplessness, and a lack of self-efficacy influence non-completion. Major reasons for becoming a non-completer are health issues and lack of advisor support. Other reasons for non-completion are not starting after taking time off and not knowing how to begin. The non-completer does not always change his or her chair selection when the relationship is not working. Non-completers also lack mentoring relationships.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, how do we explain the students' processes used to complete or not complete?

Processes that work. The following ten points are descriptions of processes of completing a dissertation.

Self-regulation of motivation may be enhanced through job opportunities, small rewards, and chairs' (advisors) guidance. In a Ph.D. and Ed.D. program, job opportunities that having a doctoral degree might provide was a motivational factor for some students to complete their degree quickly (Franek, 1982; Strite, 2007).

Completion of tasks promotes belief in self. Belief in self motivates a drive toward completion of tasks in a study of enrollees (Varney, 2003). Wendover (2006) found that advisor support of writing through modeling and student application practice along with understanding expectations led to self-efficacy.

Being focused. The first step to getting started was identified as being focused (Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Strife, 2007; Thurston, 2002).

Having research self-efficacy is often due to having nurturing committee and advisor relationships. Supportive committee and advisor relationships promote self-efficacy feelings toward research (Faghihi, 1998).

A timeline and regularly scheduled advisor meetings accelerate work. Completers, when first starting, quickly initiated contact with the advisor, used a timeline, and held regular meetings following an agenda (Strite, 2007).

Same gender relationships are more productive. When selecting an advisor, choosing one having the same gender as the student seemed to provide more “comfort, interaction, and support” (Berg & Ferber, 1983; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988). Choosing the same-gender advisor may be difficult for females because there are often more male faculty than female (Hagedorn, 1993).

Advisor emotional support fosters success. The supportive advisor helps the student to emotionally cope with moving towards success (Kluevar, 1995). Chairs can squelch self-doubt by being more “attentive and sympathetic” (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Good relations among advisee, advisor, and committee members promote success (Williams, 1997) along with active involvement and care (Malmberg, 2000).

Interventions showing completion success provide a process model. The research supervisory system consisted of weekly meetings with the supervisor, which showed evidence of required action toward the completion of the dissertation. This increased the student’s level of concern (Knowles, 1980). Figueroa (2003) studied the MIS, Make it So, doctoral group. They were a group of students and a faculty member that met together periodically throughout the process to help each other with the dissertation process by listening, modeling, suggesting, and encouraging each other.

Figueroa (2003), found that the students were guides to each other as they shared their experiences and reviewed each other's work.

The behavioral research supervisory system that was instituted and researched 29 psychology students at the master's and doctoral level of Western Michigan University by Garcia (1987) showed that those who successfully stayed in the program completed in a shorter amount of time than a control group who did not have the amount of supervision nor the incentives, such as letters of recommendation and impunities, such as loss of credit provided by the supervisory program. The quality of their dissertations was similar according to evaluators. An odd finding was that those in the supervisory system had a lower mean cumulative GPA.

Successful interventions include study partners, mentors, and cohorts. Some completers in Wendover's (2006) study used the interventions of a dissertation partner and mentors in the work place. In Williams' (1997) study, the women participants claimed that having a mentor was a major help. Receiving advice from fellow students helped to remove hesitancy in getting started. In a study done by Figueroa (2003) it was found that a student who had not made progress in the first year after classes was able to get started after receiving advice from fellow students.

Multiple reviews make defending successful. In the study done by Figueroa (2003), it was found that when several people reviewed the dissertation, the defense became a discussion and acknowledgment of scholarly research.

Summary

Although these processes could be expanded upon, there was some evidence of processes found in the literature that work. Processes that work involve increasing

motivation through self-regulation rewards, increasing self-efficacy through a nurturing chair, choosing a compatible nurturing chair who guides and models the process, and setting up mentoring situations.

Processes that do not work or processes that were not found in the literature.

The following sixteen points address processes that did not work or were not found in the literature.

Motivation decreases with faculty turnover. High departmental faculty turnover relates to high student non-completion. Nelson and Lovitts (2001) found a relationship between student non-completion and departmental faculty leaving.

No processes found for maintaining desire or dealing with pressure affecting desire. Some students get involved with other things. This could cause a change or postponement of their desire to finish and a reprioritization of their interests. In a study done by Solomon and Rothblum (1984) they found that over 60% of the time, students dropped out due to other obligations.

Lack of dissertation process training. A student is likely to not make adequate strides toward dissertation completion if they feel little confidence due to inadequate training during classes (Varney, 2003). Most students were not prepared for the independent nature of the dissertation. Varney (2003) found that lack of knowledge of how to perform research impeded progress. Greater than 50% of the students felt the classes needed to provide more training in the dissertation process (Strite, 2007). Lack of structure of the dissertation process contributed to non-completion or a slowing of the process (Bauer, 1997; Franek, 1982; Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Mah, 1986; Tluczek, 1995; Williams, 1997). In a study done by Solomon and Rothblum (1984) over 30% of the

students became non-completers because of being unsure as to what contents to put in the dissertation.

Perceptions of lack of intellectual ability bring about doubt and lack of progress (Karolyi, 1993; Mason, 2006; Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Wagner, 1986). Self-doubt is an obstacle for women students (King & Bauer, 1988). Williams (1997) found self-doubt to be related to the use of statistics.

Emotions/feelings/thoughts. There was a lack of process information as to how the doctoral student in the program can learn reaction techniques. Goleman (1995) explained that rather than having negative response habits, emotional intelligence can be retaught to handle such things as stress (p. 44). Lack of decision-making can develop a stalemate (Nickolich, 2005). There was a lack of process information as to how a person who leaves the program may be helped to cope with the situation. Women, more than men, feel the pain of not having closure of the program when they did not complete (Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Lenz, 1995).

Energy (well-being). There was a lack of process information as to how to increase energy when health issues or other life situations occur, nor was there a process found as to how to unblock the mind. No process was found for an alternative to taking time off after classes so that the students continued to feel connected; to help students deal with life situation interferences; or to help family, friends, and coworkers understand how to support the doctoral student.

No processes were found for working with the chair, the committee, or writing centers. There were no processes found to maintain advisor contact. Campbell (1992) found that it was important to have advisor contact to continue progress.

No process was found regarding how to change chairs.

Advisor support not equitable between genders. Advisors/chairs provided more support to males than females (Hite, 1985).

Co-advisors can cause difficulties. Those who had co-advisors in Franek's (1982) study of counseling candidates experienced difficulty with disagreements.

Slow advisor feedback delays progress. Some students had difficulty getting prompt feedback that delayed them from moving on (Strite, 2007). Only one third of the students have their proposals approved after the expected time of completion of the dissertation. This puts them way behind schedule (Garcia, 1987).

Non-working or no topic selection promotes non-completion. Selecting a topic and finding participants seems to be more of a problem for women (Smith, 1983). Not finding a workable topic accounts for 32% non-completion (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). In an all male study of completers and candidates of a Ph.D. program in Education Administration, Yeager (2008) found that selecting a topic was the most difficult for candidates and completers. The topic changed for two participants (8%) in a study done by completers who completed in six semesters or less by Shaw (2006).

Not understanding event requirements and dissertation structure prevents some students from completing. Over half of the students reported difficulty in the proposal process, the starting of the research process, and the literature review process of limiting the subject even though there were thorough details (Strite, 2007).

Research skills affected the progress of most in Malmberg's (2000) study of completers, enrollees, and non-completers. Over one half of the students in a study of completers reported difficulty with starting the research process (Strite, 2007).

Independent writing skills and research skills were needed. Advisors felt that poor writing skills and limited research skills were an obstacle to getting the dissertation completed (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Writing skills were noted as important by over 80% of the non-completers, enrollees, and completers in Malmberg's (2000) study.

Scholarly writing is often not taught. Teaching scholarly writing by direct instruction is often overlooked by the professors of Ed.D. students. It is assumed that these students know the conventions of this type of writing even though they may have been out of formal school for many years. In a study done by Gibbs (2013) a Flesh Kincaid grade level was used to measure doctoral students' writing. It was found that the average level of writing for Ed.D. students was at the second year undergraduate level. Gibbs recommended that writing courses be taught at the doctoral level.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis process skills were needed. Over 50% of the participants in Strite's (2007) study were unsure how to or had some trouble with coding the data. In Williams' (1997) study, statistical analysis was troublesome for the students.

Summary

Processes that do not work include changes in faculty, losing sight of the desire to get the degree, having a lack of training or knowledge of the dissertation process and skills needed, lack of dissertation structure, self-doubt, having negative response habits, having anxiety over difficulties without getting them resolved, slow advisor feedback, and not finding a workable topic.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, How do we explain what would be helpful to include in a doctoral guide for completing the dissertation?

University. The suggestions for the university revolve mainly around accountability, communication, creating courses, and eliciting and implementing feedback.

Maintain a doctoral student database. Having a database that includes contact information and status of students (Malmberg, 2000; McCormack-Weiss, 2003) will provide more accurate records of baseline and current data that can be reviewed, which can result in plans being made to improve the graduation rate (Smiley, 2007).

Require yearly status updates of doctoral students from department programs. The department/program would conduct at least one review of each student's progress and determine interventions or resources that might facilitate the process (Strite, 2007).

Provide a message board for doctoral students. A message board would provide a place for students to seek and provide help for each other regarding the dissertation process (Williams, 1997).

Provide an advisor selection course. Advisor selection can be so important to completion that one school provided a course in advisor selection (Madsen, 1992). Concerns and characteristics were two areas that should be matched between advisor and advisee (Goodchild, Green, Katz, & Kluever, 1997; Strite, 2007).

Survey students for recommendations to reduce time-to-degree (Tierce, 2008).

Provide mentoring centers (Miller, 2013).

Department Program. The suggestions for the department revolve around creating systems, such as counseling, mentoring, interactive participation, documented evidence, establishing roles and responsibilities, and creating examples and rubrics of expected work, courses, chair and committee training, and orientations.

Maintain a collegial department. Build a sound academic and interactive department that both students and faculty enjoy (Nelson & Lovitts, 2001).

Set up a counseling system for enrollees. A counseling system should be set up for the enrollees so that directions are communicated and interventions put in place as needed (McCormack-Weiss, 2003). Have faculty members counsel students in their first semester and beyond to lessen alone feelings (Nordquist, 1993).

Provide a mentoring system with training. A student in Campbell's (1992) study referred to mentoring as being important in helping the student finish the dissertation. Mentors provide enforcement of timelines, timely responses, and suggestions, and are accessible to the student (Varney, 2003). Mentoring is another means of help (Strite, 2007). Mentors are assigned to provide both practical and theoretical guidance through an emotional endeavor (McCormack-Weiss 2003; Strite, 2007). Long-term faculty and students who have achieved milestones are suggested to be assigned as mentors (Dorn, Papalewis, & Brown, 1995; Malmberg, 2000). Successful mentoring would include educational, emotional, and relationship support (Varney, 2003).

Require documentation of advisement from advisors and students. The parties involved in the dissertation process should communicate regularly. This may be facilitated by a systematic submittal of status and communication summary (Strite, 2007).

Establish roles and expectations of the advisor and student. Ramos (1994) indicated that advisor and student roles work better when set up early in the program rather than during the dissertation process.

Provide writing process structure. A.B.D. students in Campbell's (1992) study suggested adding program structure in the writing process. An intervention that Figueroa (2003) found during a group meeting attended by students was from a professor who shared a dissertation structure with substructure details.

Make resources available. "As less than one percent of the people in the world have earned doctorates . . . [they] should be given every opportunity and resource known to make the pursuit attainable" (Shaw, 2006).

Provide a means to match chairs with students. To promote a better working relationship, the matching of students with advisors should be according to their time expectations, their psychological characteristics, and their understanding of situations and influences (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Both non-completers and completers in Campbell's (1992) study suggested a process to start was by continuing advisor and advisee contacts and provide meet-and-greet sessions for advisor and advisees.

Provide training for chairs. Training could focus on strategies to help students who face situations that interfere with completion (Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Ramos, 1994).

Provide a doctoral program orientation. An orientation program could be created that explains the roles of the advisor and advisee (Brawer, 1996; Ramos, 1994)

and introduces the people the student may need to contact for support (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Provide an orientation booklet for the doctoral student. The orientation booklet would contain common questions the doctoral student may have, addresses financial aid, and provides information about advising (McCormack-Weiss, 2003). Acknowledging and providing examples of obstacles to completion in an orientation booklet may help to reduce non-completion (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).

Provide a writing course at the doctoral level (Gibbs, 2013).

Provide a required dissertation course for students. A required dissertation course is suggested that includes how to create the proposal and dissertation and makes it mandatory for the student to view defenses of a proposal and a dissertation (Malmberg, 2000). Wendover (2006) suggested providing a “dissertation boot camp” to do research. A faculty member in Strite’s (2007) study referenced a supportive course held one Saturday a month for three hours for students who were working on the dissertation.

Provide dissertation experience in coursework. Both statistical analysis and interview analysis assignments with formatting incorporated into required courses would help to prepare the students for writing the dissertation and help build their self-confidence (Varney, 2003) Projects build self-efficacy (Wendover, 2006). Strite (2007) found that over 50% of the participants claimed that more development was needed in the areas of application of theory, proposal writing, literature review, empirical research, interviewing, coding, analysis, and writing. Yeager (2008) suggested having a class for developing the topic and the first three chapters of the dissertation.

Provide support for the finishing of the proposal prior to the ending of classes. Opportunities for the proposal to be completed as part of the classwork assignments would help to prepare the students and also provide structure (Varney, 2003).

Chair. Recommendations for the chair include tracking student progress, providing guidance and structure, emotional support, and after-hour availability.

Track progress regularly. Progress should be monitored by advisors through regular phone calls, emails, meetings (Malmberg, 2000; Wendover, 2006), fax, and mailings (Malmberg, 2000). A timeline that serves as a checklist, could be created to prevent stalling due to not knowing what to do or not knowing how to address possible obstacles (Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Most of the students in Franek's (1982) study claimed that short-term task support to meet deadlines would be a major help.

Provide guidance and structure. Advisor interface should provide guidance and structural support to the student (Ramos, 1994).

Provide emotional support. Provide student's emotional support to help students work out the emotions encountered while being in the dissertation stage (Ramos, 1994).

Provide evening hours for advising meetings. Plan for optional regular meeting times for students who work (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Student. The suggestions for the students include knowing your needs and skills, setting up a communication schedule, change chairs if needed, establish committee with chair, maintain relationships, start topic selection and research early, read dissertations to get familiar with the process, use available resources, save work, and track progress.

Know your academic and emotional skills prior to going into program.

Students' academic and emotional skills go together to complete the dissertation so the student will need to know, understand (Sternberg, 1981), and prepare for their needs prior to starting the program.

Communicate with advisor regularly. A.B.D. students suggest more quality communication with advisor after classes and beyond (Campbell, 1992). Advisors feel that students should initiate contacts (Green & Kluver, 1996; Kittell-Limerick, 2005). Ross (2009) suggested video conferencing when in-person meetings are not feasible. Monthly meetings were a norm in the cohort that Ross studied.

Change chairs if there is a mismatch. The advisor relationship is necessary to complete. If it is not working out, follow protocol to change chairs so your progress does not stall (Fitzpatrick, Secrist, & Wright, 1998; Strite, 2007).

Work with advisor to put together a compatible committee. A committee that works well together can agree to what is needed and be supportive (Brause, 2000). It can be helpful to ask your advisor for help when putting together a committee. The advisor will know which professors work best together (Madsen, 1992). Ross (2009) suggested that the committee relationship falls under the role of the advisor who sets the roles of the committee members and resolves disagreements.

Maintain relationships with others. During the dissertation process, relationships may become fragile if contact is reduced. Built relationships are needed so care should be taken that they are not severed (Strite, 2007).

Start the first year of the program doing research for your topic. Advice provided by a student in Strite's (2007) study to finish the doctoral program in less time

was to do research on the chosen topic for assignments. Campbell (1992) recommended that students start on the topic early and recommended that they do not take time off.

When stuck, read completed dissertations. A student in Strite's (2007) study gave the suggestion of referring to how others did their dissertations when unsure.

Use available online resources (Malmberg, 2000).

Hire a proofreader. Having a proofreader is recommended (Malmberg, 2000).

Use a dissertation progress log. By preparing a dissertation progress log (Hanson, 1992) the student may become more reflective in how his or her time is spent.

Save copies of your articles. Organize and make available the research used for writing the dissertation (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Summary

This study of the doctoral completion and the A.B.D. situation began with an explanation of the background of the doctoral degree that includes a brief history of the dissertation requirement. Next, I explained the non-completion rate and the impact of students not finishing the doctoral program. Then I reviewed in the section titled Specific Potential Problems of the possible failure rates of the education doctoral program. After that, I provided the theoretical and conceptual framework that I used when viewing the research. Lastly, I provided the themes from the literature that related to the research questions.

The main results of the literature explained that there is an average of 50% non-completers. Twenty percent of the students leave after the first three years. The completers have been found to have the characteristics of being persistent and disciplined, self-directing, and a self-advocate. They have clear thinking because of

emotional stability. Their job could slow their progress, but they had proactive advisor relationships and positive peer relationships. The non-completers had characteristics of being passive and timid. They had conflicting thoughts and experienced negative feelings. Non-completers had more health issues and had less support from their partners. Little information was found for processes. Suggestions were given for the university, the department, the chair, the committee, and the student. These suggestions include more support and additional classes in dissertation writing and understanding the writing process. The main outcome of this chapter was the literature found and the selection of information to compare with the empirical research. Table 6 provides the form that was used for comparison.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methods used to conduct this study are provided in this chapter with details and planned tables. This study was designed to explain why some students graduated from a doctoral program and some did not and to compare the literature with the data from the doctoral completers and non-completers. The cohort data provided empirical research that was added to the existing explanatory research.

This chapter begins with a detailed restatement of the problem and a description of the research questions that drove the inquiry. Next, I explain the research design and procedures. Then I briefly explain the research design methodology and the use of the mixed-method approach. After that, I include an explanation of the population, the sampling procedures, and the settings of the survey and interview. I then provide an explanation of the instruments used and the data-gathering procedures. Then I explain the data analysis, and lastly I provide a brief summary of this chapter.

Restatement of the Problem

Doctoral non-completion and the A.B.D. phenomena plague many individuals and universities. Non-completion was estimated to apply to 50% of the doctoral students (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Naylor & Sanford, 1982; Sells, 1975). The problem is that throughout the education system doctoral students are becoming non-completers rather than completers; this research offered reasons and found processes and suggestions for an improvement in completion rates.

In order to explain the A.B.D. phenomena and look for ways to change the situation, this study was developed. This mixed-method study provided an explanation as

to how successful Ed.D. doctoral completers in a cohort doctoral program completed their dissertations and compared the findings to the enrollees and the non-completers.

Research Questions

The literature review provided a general baseline to compare the Southwestern university cohort. The literature study revealed a gap in the area of processes that led to the formulation of three research questions. This study focused on these three major questions regarding the dissertation process:

1. How do we explain the differences between students who complete the dissertation and those who do not?
2. How do we explain the dissertation and the students' processes used to complete or not complete?
3. How do we explain what would be helpful to include in a doctoral study guide for completing the dissertation?

In order to develop insights into the specific problem of the Southwestern university cohort, I followed the following procedures and methodology.

Mixed-method Research Design

The research design had seven main parts and is outlined on Table 3. The first part consisted of reviewing the literature. The literature was found on ERIC, Illumina, and Proquest using the terms *dissertation completion* and ABD. Additional research in areas related to the study was done to supplement the review. After I completed the review, I identified the major findings of the research. I followed the Areas of Study Alignment (Table 4) and wrote the literature review in Chapter 2. Then I finished a draft

of the first three chapters and had a proposal meeting and passed the comprehensive exam. Next, I wrote the IRB application including attachments.

The second major part of the study started with obtaining approval from the Internal Review Board (Appendix A) and revising the first three chapters of the dissertation and receiving approval for the proposal. The next step included acquiring a list of cohort members. After receiving the contact list, I sent a pilot survey to two students from my cohort, and they reviewed the survey and provided feedback for suggested changes. This validated the study and provided a form of reliability. The suggestions were reviewed and the survey was altered as needed. Then I sent out the survey. After the surveys were returned, I did the data analysis and statistics. From the results obtained on the survey, I determined areas of possible importance that I wanted further information and those changes were incorporated into the interview document. I then followed the Information Reporting Procedure (Table 5) and wrote the results.

The third part of the Research Design Flow started with identifying the interview participants. I did pilot interviews with two people from my group, Cohort 6, who were randomly selected. I received feedback from them as to what should be changed. Changes were then made to the interview form. After that, I interviewed seven completers and four non-completers. After the fourth interview of completers or non-completers, because I was still receiving new information from the completers, I interviewed two more participants. While still receiving new information, I continued interviewing until I had completed seven completer interviews and four non-completers. I also interviewed five enrollees to determine their tendencies toward completion or non-completion. Afterward, I did a matrix of the common themes for each group. I followed

the Information Reporting Procedure (Table 5), wrote the results, and then did the fourth major part by completing the Multi-Method Convergence Form (Table 6) along with writing the summaries, findings, and conclusions of the data. The completed version of Table 6 can be found in Appendix I. The final part of the study is described in Chapter 5. It consists of writing recommendations based on the findings for future research, writing the implications, and summarizing the study.

Table 3

Research Design Flow

Steps in the research design

1. Completed literature review
2. Identified major findings
3. Developed and followed the Areas of Study Alignment (Table 4)
4. Wrote results
5. Wrote rough draft of chapters 1, 2, and 3
6. Held a proposal meeting and passed comprehensive exam
7. Wrote IRB application
8. Obtained IRB approval
9. Revised chapters 1, 2, and 3
10. Received proposal approval
11. Identified survey participants
12. Completed pilot surveys
13. Adjusted survey as needed
14. Sent out surveys
15. Completed data analyses and statistics
16. Adjusted interview questions as needed

Table 3 (continued)

Research Design Flow

Steps in the research design
17. Followed Information Reporting Procedure (Table 5)
18. Wrote results
19. Identified interview participants
20. Completed pilot interviews
21. Adjusted interview questions and protocol as needed
22. Interviewed participants
23. Completed matrix of common themes
24. Followed Information Reporting Procedure, (Table 5)
25. Wrote results
26. Completed Multi-Method Convergence Form (Table 6)
27. Wrote result summaries, findings, and conclusions
28. Wrote recommendations
29. Wrote implications
30. Summarized the study

Note. Following are the research process steps that I followed.

Table 4

Areas of Study Alignment

Area of Study	Answers Research Question	Survey Sections and Questions	Interview Question
Overview of Problem	1	- Demographics: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - Profiles Description: 16 - Time-in-program: 6	1 1, 6, 16 9
Internal Influences	1	- Desires: 13 - Beliefs: Emotion/Feelings/Thoughts: 15, 17, 18, 19 - Well-being: 14	2,7 3, 5, 8 17
External Influences	1	- Relationship support: 7, 12, 25 - Life situations: 9, 11, 12, 25	19, 21 1, 8, 14, 19
Internal Processes	2	- Emotions: 15, 17, 23, 24, 25 - Thoughts: 18, 19, 23, 24, 25 - Motivation: 20, 23, 24, 25 - Maintenance: 22, 23, 25 - Time-in-program: 6 - Skills: 8e-I, 14h - Time Management: 11, 12, 21, 23, 24, 25	3, 5, 8, 13, 18 13, 17, 18 11, 14, 16 12 9 20 10, 14
External Processes	2	- Chair and Committee: 7d-e, 8a-d, 15 a-b, 23, 24, 25 - Dissertation events: 25 - Dissertation process: 8, 12, 15c, 23, 24, 25 - Resources: (added to interview) - Interventions: 10, 12	14, 21 14, 15 7, 14 20, 22
Doctoral study guide	3	- Suggestions, 25, 26	23

Table 5

Information Reporting Procedure

Research Question	Sources of Information	Reporting Procedures
RQ1 1. How do we explain the differences between students who complete the dissertation and those who do not?	Literature review: Dissertation completion and ABD status; overview of the problem, and internal and external Influences	Summary narratives
	Survey Questions: 1-19, 25	Summary descriptive statistics Inferential statistics Visual displays
	Interview Questions: 1-9, 14, 16-17, 19, 21	Matrices and summary narratives
RQ2 2. How do we explain the dissertation and the students' processes used to complete or not complete?	Literature review: Dissertation Completion, ABD status, and supporting literature in the areas of Processes and Energy Control	Summary narratives
	Survey Questions: 7-8, 10-12, 14-15, 17-25	Summary descriptive statistics Inferential statistics Visual displays
	Interview Questions: 3, 5, 7-8, 10-18, 20-22	Matrices and summary narratives
RQ3 3. How do we explain what would be helpful to include in a doctoral study guide for completing the dissertation?	Literature review: Dissertation completion and ABD status in the area of help for a doctoral study guide	Summary narratives
	Survey Questions: 25, 26	Summary descriptive statistics Inferential statistics Visual displays
	Interview Question: 23	Matrices and summary narratives

Table 6

Multi-Method Convergence Form

Factor	Literature	Survey	Interview	Convergence
Research Question 1				
Profile				
Internal Influences				
Desire				
Time in				
Program				
Belief				
Well-being				
External Influences				
Life Situations				
Research Question 2				
Internal				
Processes				
Emotions				
Thoughts				
Motivation				
Maintenance				
Skills				
Time				
Management				
External Processes				
Chair				
Committee				
Dissertation				
Events				
Dissertation				
Processes				
Resources				
Interventions				
Research Question 3				
Study Guide Suggestions				
University				
Program				
Chair				
Student				

Research Design Methodology

A mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative processes was used with this explanatory research study. The mixed-methods approach allowed for a triangulation of the data (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) by converging the results of the quantitative statistical survey and the qualitative phenomenological approach of the interviews with the literature. The mixed-methods approach also provided breadth and depth to the study and allowed for new research questions to arise from one method so that they could be incorporated in the next method (Green et al., 1989). Because part of this study was a quantitative study of specific cohorts, if the data were much different than that of the literature, I asked interview questions that would seek to find a control variable that may have caused the differences (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). This study provided a general and a specific view of the graduate and the A.B.D situation.

Population, Sample, and Setting

Population. The participants of this study were Ed.D. administration doctoral students from a southwestern university. They were educated people in the field of Educational Leadership. Most of the students worked in public education in a leadership capacity. They were considered to have a socioeconomic status of low-middle to a middle economic status. The salary range for the various jobs they held was, as a low estimate, \$40,000 to \$100,000. The job titles of the participants ranged from teacher to superintendent. The participants started the three-year doctoral program in the years 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007. They were between the ages of 24 and 63. They were a homogenous population due to the fact that they were all Ed.D. students. Homogeneity

provided for more generalization of the results (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) as it would apply to the Delta Doctorate cohort population.

Seventy-six students were identified at first as being the total population of Delta students in Cohorts 3 through 6. Of these, 59 responded by completing the surveys. Out of those who responded 16 were interviewed providing views of seven completers, five enrollees, and four non-completers. I used the three-interview structure (Seidman, 2006) as modified to fit into one 60-minute interview and up to two 30-minute follow up interviews for clarification and for a review of the document. Both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through the use of the survey and interviews in this mixed-methods approach.

Sample. The survey participants were selected from a list of cohort members from the program start years of 2004 to 2007. A detailed cohort list from those starting the doctoral program in the years 2004 through 2007 was requested from the college and a partial list was received. It was decided that the first two years, 2002 and 2003, of the program would not be included in the sample because the start-up years may have different factors causing success or failure.

It was estimated that approximately 76 total students were in the population. Five students opted out of the survey. The sample size, the number of participants, for the surveys was 59. Because the cohort members contact information was sparse, those listed that could be contacted with email addresses were sent the survey. There was an expected low rate of return because many of the emails received were work emails and some may have changed jobs, changed names, and others may have retired.

For the interview process, a stratified random sample was used. This provided students from each cohort that could be identified an equal opportunity of being selected. I randomly chose one completer and one non-completer from Cohorts 3, 4, 5, and 6. If I needed to select more students, I selected one from the next group on the list. The maximum number selected from any one cohort was two completers and two non-completers. As a back-up plan in case I could not get in touch with some of the members of the cohorts, I equally distributed the number of participants from each cohort as much as possible. If new information was received during the fourth interview of the completers or non-completers, two more students were selected. If new information was still being received, I interviewed one more. This process was used for the completer group that ended up having seven interview participants. An example of the selections that I planned from each cohort is listed in Table 7. This provided a stratified random approach. Table 8 shows the actual interview sample by cohort.

Setting. The participants who took the survey did this online within the setting of their choice on their own time. Those who were interviewed were given their choice of where to meet. Most chose to meet at a coffee shop while a few chose their work or home.

Table 7

Planned Interview Sample

Cohort #.	Cohort Year	# of completers	# of non-completers
Cohort 3	2004-2005	1 completer	1 non-completer
Cohort 4	2005-2006	1 completer	1 non-completer
Cohort 5	2006-2007	1 completer	1 non-completer
Cohort 6	2007-2008	1 completer	1 non-completer

Table 8

Actual Interview Sample

Cohort #.	Cohort Year	# of completers	# of enrollees	# of non-completers
3	2004-2005	2	0	1
4	2005-2006	1	1	1
5	2006-2007	2	2	2
6	2007-2008	2	2	0

Instrumentation, Materials, Equipment, and Data Collection Procedures

Survey

I reviewed the literature and developed a survey that would ask if the students had the same influences as the students in the literature. I also asked questions about processes and energy that I had not found in the literature. The quantitative survey was sent to the population of students in Cohorts 3 through 6. This survey (Appendix B) was attached to an email called the Information Letter for the Survey (Appendix C) requesting their participation. The survey was designed on-line by the researcher through the Survey

Monkey program. The data were gathered on Survey Monkey and then transferred to Microsoft Excel. It was then statistically analyzed and reorganized. The results were later reviewed for convergence with the literature data.

If the surveys were not returned within a week, I sent an email or a letter called the Survey Recruitment Informed Consent Cover Letter/Email, if I had their address, as a reminder (Appendix C). A week after that, if I still had not received a response, I made a phone call if I had their number and asked if I could ask the cohort member the survey questions on the phone using the Survey Recruitment Informed Consent Phone Message (Appendix C). As an additional back-up plan, if I had not received enough responses from completers and non-completers, I changed the study to include the students who were still in the doctoral program. The survey as designed separated the groups into the three categories: completers, enrollees, and non-completers. Because the enrollees were an integral part of the cohort groups, I decided to include them in the study to determine if they were showing tendencies similar to the completer or non-completer.

The survey instrumentation, Dissertation Influence and Processes Survey Questions (Appendix B) contained various Likert scales (similar to: *very much*, *somewhat*, *slightly*, *not at all* or *N/A*). The rating scales were specific to the questions. There were also multiple choice and open-ended questions.

The survey was designed through the web program Survey Monkey. The survey automatically moved to the related questions designed for the completer and the non-completer groups. The participants who were in the groups of those that were in graduate classes and those that were working on the dissertation completed the question on the survey related to their dissertation status. If the response from the survey was lower than

20%, I planned to change the study to include enrollees. Survey Monkey provided the opportunity to request answers to different questions depending on the dissertation status.

The survey participants' status of completion was not known prior to sending the survey making it difficult to only send the survey to the non-completer and completer groups. Although the response was greater than 20% without including the enrollee group, I decided to include it because I thought that this group will at one point join one of the other groups, and this group's patterns of behavior may shed light on outcomes that could still be altered.

To establish validity and reliability, I sent the survey to two of my fellow cohort Delta students who then completed the survey and provided feedback. With their responses, I made appropriate changes and then sent the survey to the identified cohort population through email. This provided evidence of validity and reliability.

The actual survey responders were 59 out of 76 to 87 providing a 67 to 77% response rate. The actual number of the total population of these cohorts was not known. Although there were five that opted out of the survey, these were also considered as a response, although slightly, making the response rate 64 out of 76 to 87 or 74 to 84%. This was considered an adequate response rate. Of the 59 who participated in the survey, 39 or 66% were completers, 13 or 22% were enrollees, and 7 or 12% were non-completers.

This study entailed interviewing seven doctoral completers, five enrollees, and four non-completers. The interviews were scheduled, and then they were conducted. At the beginning of the interviews, I asked each of the participants to sign the Interview Informational Consent Letter (Appendix D).

I used the three-interview structure (Seidman, 2006) as modified to fit into one 60-minute interview and up to two 30-minute follow up interviews used for clarification and/or a review of the documentation. During each interview, I observed and noted the participant's body language and comfort level. I first asked life history questions and then asked experience and reflection questions in the following categories: portrait, internal influences, external influences, internal processes, external processes, and doctoral study guide suggestions. The experience questions drew out information as to the doctoral experience and the processes the participants used to complete their dissertation. The reflection questions provided the participants' motivation responses and how they felt in answering the questions. The interview questions in the order asked may be found in Appendix E.

I had originally planned to have interviews on the campus, but this was seldom convenient for the participants. So I allowed the interviewee to choose the meeting place, such as a coffee shop, work place, or home in addition to the campus. Thus, the interview took place in an environment chosen by the interviewee.

Interview

The interview was conducted with the first two participants selected from my group, Cohort 6. Their views about the clarity and relevance of the interview questions and protocol for completing the interviews was requested and the interview was modified per their suggestions. The gathered forms of data are stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office at the university for three years and will then be destroyed. The items placed in storage included the literature and survey data, the interview

transcribed data, and the student contact lists. This pilot review provided evidence for content and validity.

Once the interview started, I asked about the participant's background. Then I asked about his or her research and for a description of the story behind their research. I asked what drove them to choose their research. I listened and watched for emotions and feelings. I listened for the passion that drove the research. I then asked the participant about how he or she started working on their research and what motivated or detracted him or her from working on the dissertation. This process continued throughout the 23-question interview.

During the interview, and later while analyzing the data, I looked for comparisons and contrasts of the data among the seven completers, the five enrollees, and the four non-completers. Often, the participants would tell a story that explained their responses. As they did this, I listened for habits, deterrents, and what helped them work. I looked for patterns of behavior. During the review process, I searched for new learning and I sought to find influences and processes that were not obvious.

In summary, the interview protocol consisted of the following:

1. I randomly selected the participants from each of the cohorts in Years 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007.
2. I emailed to request an interview using the Interview Cover Letter/Email (Appendix D).
3. If I did not get a response and I had the person's phone number, I called using the designed Interview Arrangement Phone Message (Appendix D).

4. The participant and I met, and I provided the Interview Informational Consent Letter (Appendix D).
5. Two more interviews were scheduled as needed to review the interview transcript or to ask clarifying questions.

Materials and Equipment

The gathered forms of data were stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office at ASU for three years and will then be destroyed. The items placed in storage included the literature and survey data, the interview transcribed data, and the student contact lists.

I typed the responses to the interview on my laptop. I brought two laptops in case one did not work. There were two times when neither computer worked during part of the interview. I used a digital tape recorder. I brought two recorders with me to the interviews and used both in case one did not work. I found that I only needed one tape recorder. As another backup, I recorded the interviews using Garage Band software on my MacBook Pro laptop. I also sometimes transcribed the answers by hand when my computer went down, so I took a pad of paper and a pen.

Data Analysis Procedures

In general, I collected the literature, created matrices of the data, and completed the literature review. Then I obtained IRB approval, sent out the surveys, reviewed and statistically analyzed the data, and made adjustments to the interview questions. Then I analyzed the data from the interviews by identifying common themes and developed a matrix. I used simple statistics of mean, median, or mode, and range. I also used graphs such as pie charts, bar charts, line graphs, or stacked bar charts.

The Research Design Flow (Table 3) shows in detail the steps that were taken. Table 4, Areas of Study Alignment, was designed to provide a match-up from the literature to the types of data collected. This helped in the organization of the material. The Information Reporting Procedure (Table 5) provides a focus on the types of data and the different types of reporting that needed to be appropriately assigned. Lastly, a Multi-Method Convergence Form (Table 6) of the data was used to compare the three sources: the literature review, the survey, and the interview. The convergence table provides a visual representation of the major findings in the areas of study to easily compare the results.

Summary

This chapter explains the methodology and the processes used to assure validity and reliability of the instruments used. Chapter 4 provides and discusses the findings of the three triangulated sources of data: the literature review, the survey, and the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter contains a review of the plan used to describe the doctorate degree completion problem. This chapter describes the quantitative and qualitative findings and results of my research and it references a completed multi-convergence table comparing the research findings to my survey and interview findings. I created profiles of the likely characteristics of a completer and non-completer and also listed the characteristics they have in common. I also created process tables identifying what processes work and what do not. The findings from the interview data (Appendix F) and survey data (Appendix G) are attached in the appendix.

Discussion of Study

To review the problem of doctoral non-completion, I surveyed and interviewed participants to examine why some students became non-completers and others did not, what processes worked and those that did not, and provided suggestions for a study guide for improving the rate of completion. Descriptive statistics of nominal and ordinal data and participant comments were used to explain the data.

Study Participants

Fifty-nine members of the Ed.D. administration doctoral program from Cohorts 3, 4, 5, and 6 who also worked full time were surveyed. Of the 59 members, 16 were interviewed. Of those surveyed, 66% were completers, 22% were enrollees, and 12% were non-completers. Of those interviewed, 44% were completers, 31% were enrollees, and 25% were non-completers. This is for informational purposes only (see Table 9).

Table 9

Participant Percentage of Instrument by Group

	Completers		Enrollees		Non-completers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Survey Participants	39/59	66.1%	13/59	22.0%	7/59	11.9%
Interview Participants	7/16	44.0%	5/16	31.0%	4/16	25.0%

Survey and Interview Results

Research Question 1: Who were they? Internal Influence

What they have in common. The survey indicated that the three groups all had these positive characteristics in common: self-controlled, self-disciplined, determined, persistent, hard-working, focused, and enjoyed school. The three groups all had these lesser characteristics in common: overwhelmed, stressed, and perfectionists.

How they were different. The completer did not procrastinate, while the enrollee and the non-completer did. The non-completer felt blocked. The enrollee and non-completer doubted their ability. The completer felt in control. The completer and enrollee expected to complete.

The interviews showed that three-fourths (75%) of the non-completers procrastinated, were curious, and were hard-workers. Fifty percent indicated they were caring and needed deadlines. The completers indicated that four out of seven were persistent and tenacious. The enrollees (3/5) stated they too needed deadlines; their families' first language was not English and they were their family's first generation college students. Both the non-completer and the enrollee interviewees had

approximately their first and second chapters completed. Three out of seven of the completer interviewees procrastinated while little procrastination was indicated from the survey completers.

Desire. They all desired to complete. The survey completer mainly wanted to complete for personal reasons. They had a 54% desire for job promotions and a 90% desire for personal development. The enrollee had an 85% desire for job promotion with a 92% desire for personal development. The enrollee had a 71% desire for job promotion and a 100% desire for personal development. The interview indicated that three-fourths of the non-completers were interested in the program to obtain a job promotion. Two of the four did get promotions while being in the program.

Belief. Fifty percent or more of the survey enrollees and the non-completers had doubts about their abilities. Four out of five of the interviewed participants believed that education was extremely important, and they wanted to get as much as possible.

Well-being. The non-completers and completers seemed to have similar health profiles, while the enrollees seemed to be less healthy. All three groups had stress. The non-completer got more sleep than the enrollees and the completers. The interviewees did not indicate that they had health problems at the time of the interview. However, one of the non-completers did go through surgery while in the program.

Thoughts. Most of the completers used mantras for motivation. The enrollees and the non-completers used descriptors. One enrollee used a guilt mantra of “Don’t let others down!” Table 10 lists positive and negative mantras that some completers and some enrollees used.

Table 10

Positive and Negative Mantras

Positive Mantra	Negative Mantra
I have to do this for my children and our future.	Why can't I just get this done?
I don't want to continue to spend money.	Tired.
Get this done!	I hate this!
This is the most difficult life accomplishment!	No time! (Enrollee)
Others completed.	No control! (Enrollee)
The creator is with me!	Little guidance! (Enrollee)
Stop resisting chair!	Little support! (Enrollee)
I am a role model	
Done!	
I am fulfilling my calling.	
I finish what I start.	
I can do it.	
God, please give me the strength to finish.	
I am unwilling to give up.	
It is manageable.	
Need to get it done, more things a coming.	
Don't want to be known as A.B.D.	

Emotional reactions. The non-completers had difficulty understanding the dissertation process. Eighty-six percent of them indicated that they very much or somewhat had difficulty understanding the process, which caused them to slow down or stop. Three out of four of the non-completers (75%) felt frustration from not completing. None of them felt good about it. They all still had the dream to finish and believed that

one day they would get their doctorate. The non-completers all would like to finish the program if given the opportunity to return.

Internal difficulties. The completers' emotional state was good to excellent in the areas of committee and chair reactions. They also did fine with research and navigating their personal life situations. The enrollees had some difficulty with communication with the chair and the life situations they encountered. The non-completer had a good response to research and committee communication. The interviewee non-completers experienced a mismatch with their chairs. They could not establish a workable topic or get feedback to continue the process.

Feelings over the years. Both non-completers and completers started out with the same feelings. In their second year, they had feelings of perseverance, being faithful, being inclined to accomplish, hold on to their belief that they could finish, and were passionate. The third year the soon-to-be non-completer started to feel embarrassed, depressed, and stressed. The fourth year, the projected non-completer becomes regretful and also dispirited. The non-completer usually left the program the second year after the classes end. The enrollee had feelings of being stressed their second year.

Research Question 1: External Influences

How they were different: Survey. The non-completer did not have a support system as the enrollees and completers had. The completers had more support from their chair and committee than the enrollees had. The enrollees had multiple life situations and difficulty with research. The enrollees and non-completers had difficulty with statistics, writing, and working alone (see Table 12).

How they were similar: Survey. All of the groups had life situations and job responsibilities. The open-ended positive response to Question 12 showed a combined support system of family and cohort members for the enrollee and completer of 50% or more. There were three new areas of positive influence indicated: spiritual, cohort completer mentor, and alignment of classes to the dissertation. Listed in Table 11 are the positive influences indicated from Question 7.

Table 11

Positive External Influences on Completion

	Completer	Enrollee	Non-completer
Spouse	78% (E & G)	54% (E & G)	-
Family	90% (E & G)	77% (E & G)	-
Friends	95% (E & G)	77% (E & G)	-
Chair	92% (E & G)	-	-
Committee	84% (E & G)	-	-

Note. E = Excellent, G = Good

Interviews. The interviews of completers showed agreement to the open-ended responses of the survey. The completers (4/7) had positive support from spouse, family, and cohort members combined.

Research Question 1: Negative External Influences

Survey responses. To determine the negative influences for each group of participants, Question 8, 9, and 11 were reviewed. The responses to open-ended Question 11 as to influences indicated 50% or more of the enrollees listed job obligations as slowing their performance. All groups showed approximately 25% as to the influence of

life situations in their open-ended responses. Responses to Questions 8 and 9 are combined and listed in Table 12. Only those showing greater than or equal to an amount of 50% or more are listed.

Table 12

Negative External Influences on Completion

	Completer		Enrollee		Non-completer	
	Survey	Interview	Survey	Interview	Survey	Interview
Job			75%, (SW & VM)	80% (4/5) Y	57.1% (VM)	75% (3/4) Y
Finances			58% (SW & VM)		57.1% (VM)	50% (2/4) Y
Divorce				60% (3/5)		
Chair				80% (4/5)	57.1% (P)	100% (4/4) Y
Not understanding the dissertation process				60% (3/5) N	86% (SW & VM)	N
Writing difficulties			85% (SW & VM)	N	71% (SW & VM)	N
Statistics difficulties			50% (SW & VM)	N		
Working alone			58% (SW & VM)	N		
Research			50% (SW & VM)	N		

Note. SW = Somewhat, VM = Very Much, P = Poor, N = No agreement, Y= Yes

Interviews. Of the non-completers interviewed, 75% stated they were confident in their writing ability. This did not agree with the 71% difficulties listed in the survey. The interviews revealed that four out of five (80%) of the enrollee participants had their chair changed two or more times. Because the program was dismantled, the chairs were not only reassigned but some of them resigned from being chairs. While talking with the non-completers, 75% of them had not established committees. I also found that five out of seven (71%) of the completers were promoted while working on their dissertation. Finances for two of the enrollees was a major factor. They lost or quit their jobs and took out large loans so they could work on their dissertation full time. Job difficulties for enrollees and non-completers were confirmed. Non-completer finance difficulties were confirmed.

Research Question 2: Processes Used

How they were similar. The non-completers and completers both set goals and used drive and desire for motivation.

How they were different. The non-completers tried regular study times but the study times did not work for them. The completers and enrollees used a self-actualization and goal setting process. The completers listed the following time-management processes at greater than 50% as excellent or good: (a) timelines, (b) checklists, (c) balanced time, (d) prioritizing time, and (e) goal setting. Also at greater than 50% excellent to good ratings, the completer used the motivational processes of self-talk, forming study habits, having others ask their progress status, and having regularly scheduled chair meetings. The completers' ranking of process importance was as follows: (a) time management, (b) support, (c) internal control, (d) dissertation skills, and (e) study location.

Internal processes that worked and did not work. Table 13 lists the internal processes the completer found that did and did not work, and Table 14 lists the external processes the completer found that did and did not work.

Table 13

Internal Processes the Completer Found That Did and Did Not Work

Processes that worked	Processes that did not work
Learning to focus	Eating while stressed
Visualizing completion	Severe anxiety
Scheduled writing time	No prioritizing of time
Balancing responsibilities and schedule (Interviewee Completers)	Reading without writing
Schedule time at night to study (Interviewee completers)	Small timeframes
	Lack of organization
	Procrastination
	Trying too much too fast

Table 14

External Processes the Completer Found That Did and Did Not Work

Processes that worked	Processes that did not work
Having a dissertation example	Expecting chair to initiate contact
Studying off site to find a quiet place	Waiting for the university
Getting time off work to write	Not changing chairs when needed. (Interviewees realized this (75%))
Cohort Support	Cohort group study (5/7 interviewee completers did not recommend this.)
Cohort Group Study (worked for some)	

Table 14 (continued)

External Processes the Completer Found That Did and Did Not Work

Processes that worked	Processes that did not work
Regular scheduled chair meetings	
Working with committee	
Skills training in writing, researching, and statistics	
Chair feedback to provide motivation (interviewees said this worked)	

Research Question 3: Suggestions for a Study Guide

All of the groups made suggestions relating to time management, topic selection, and support. The enrollees and the completers also made suggestions regarding internal motivation, knowing methods of learning, and more topics related to how to write a dissertation.

Multi-convergence Input from Survey and Interview Data

Ph.D. vs. Ed.D.

The Ed.D., an older working population. The range of the population of the Ed.D. administration cohorts was from 24 to 63. All the participants worked full time.

Ed.D.s took less time when writing their dissertation using a quantitative study than a qualitative study. The type of study was not included as a survey question; however, during the interviews, this information was revealed. Those that did qualitative studies took longer than those who did quantitative studies. There was no convergence with the literature.

Table 15

Type of Study vs. Length to Degree

Method influence	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
3 years			Ron (1)
4 years	Vivian, Pamela (2)	Travis (1)	
5 years		Cathy (1)	
6 years		George, Joanne (2)	
Mean	4 years	$(4 + 5 + 12)/4 = 5.25$ years	3 years

Hard Science vs. Soft Science

This empirical research added to the literature of the soft science research.

Non-completion Rates: Time

Non-completion rate for cohort was less than average. When reviewing the fourth-year graduates of the sixth cohort, I found that there were only 47% of the cohort's students who completed; however, there were 47% still enrolled and 6% who were non-completers. Looking at the earlier cohorts' completion rates after having up to four years or longer to complete, the completion rates were above 70% and the non-completion rates go as high as approximately 20% for the earliest cohort that still had one remaining enrollee. However, when averaging these rates together, the completion rate was 66%, the currently enrolled rate was 22%, and the non-completion rate was seven out of the 59 (12%). The graduation rate had a potential of going up to 88% and the non-completion rate had a potential of being 34% (see Table 16).

Table 16

Non-completion vs. Completion Rate Data

Cohorts	3		4		5		6		Total	Avg. %
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Completed	11	79	8	73	12	71	8	47	39	66
Enrolled	1	7	1	9	3	17	8	47	13	22
Non-completed	2	14	2	18	2	12	1	6	7	12
Total	14	100	11	100	17	100	17	100	59	100

Non-completion mostly occurs after coursework. In relation to when students drop out of the program, this study showed that most students drop out after classes. The survey indicated that 7 out of 59 (10%) dropped out after classes; whereas, one out of 59 (2%) dropped out during classes. None had dropped out of the program after successfully completing comprehensive exams and the proposal (see Table 17).

Table 17

Percentage vs. non-completion stage

Participant status	N	%
Left program during coursework.	1	1.7
Left program after coursework.	6	10.2
Current enrolled student working on proposal.	9	15.3
Left program after successfully completing comprehensive exams and proposal.	0	0.0
Current enrolled student having completed comprehensive exams/proposal and working toward finishing dissertation.	4	6.8
Completed	39	66.1
Total	59	≈100

Note. Percentages total approximately 100% due to the rounding of decimals.

Time-in-program. The non-completers' average time in the program was five years. The enrollees' average was five-and-a-half years while the completers' average years in the program were four and a half years.

Table 18

Length of Time in Program for Each Group

Length of Time	Average	Range
Non-completer	5 years	2.5 to 6.5 years
Enrollee	5.5 years	3.5 to 7.5 years
Completer	4.5 years	3.5 to 7.5 years

Average time-to-completion of this program's completers was four-and-one-half years. The average time for the 66.1% of the Ed.D. administration graduates was about four-and one-half years. Twenty-two percent were still in the program as enrollees. Once they complete or their time is up, the results would need to be entered into the average time to graduation, which would extend the time beyond four-and-one-half years. The enrollees' average time in the program at the time of the study was 5.6 years; and if this group took the maximum 10 years to complete, the overall average-time-to completion for the Ed.D. administration graduates participating in this study would have the potential of a six-year overall time-to-completion.

Table 19

Additional Data of Time to Completion

Time-to-degree	Survey Completers	Survey Enrollees	Interviews
4 years	13 x 4 = 52		3 x 4 = 12, Vivian, Travis, Pamela
5 years	11 x 5 = 55	8 x 5 = 40	1 x 5 = 5, Cathy
6 years	4 x 6 = 24	3 x 6 = 18	2 x 6 = 12, George, Joanne
7 years	2 x 7 = 14	1 x 7 = 7	
8 years	1 x 8 = 8	1 x 8 = 8	
N/A (3 years)	7 x 3 = 21		1 x 3 = 3, Ron
Mean	$(52 + 55 + 24 + 14 + 8 + 21)/38 = 4.6$ years	$(40 + 18 + 7 + 8)/13 = 5.6$ years	$(32)/7 = 4.6$ years
Combined	$(174 + 73)/51 = 4.8$ years		
Potential	$(174 + 13 \times 10)/51 = 6.0$ years		

Non-completion Rates: Ethnicity

Only a small percentage of doctoral graduates are African American when comparing to the United States African American population. Only 6.8% of the Ed.D. administration population was African American. When comparing the percentage of African Americans in the Ed.D. administration program to the United States population, it appears that the African Americans are under represented by almost 50%. However, when considering the state population of African Americans is 4.5%, the Ed.D. administration population shows almost double African Americans represented in the cohort population. So when comparing these figures, African Americans are under-represented in the state's population and in the Ed.D. administration program assuming that all states take an equal ethnic responsibility for educating the U.S. population. On the other hand, because this is a state university it is just as plausible that the percentage of

representation should be near the state’s population within 5%. In this case that would amount to plus or minus three students of the 59. Using the logic of comparison to the state’s population, all of the ethnicities were within a 5% margin and considered reasonably represented (United States Census Bureau, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/04000.html>).

Table 20

Ethnicity Representation in the Doctoral Program vs. the State

Ethnicity	U.S. population	South-western state’s population	Cohort survey	< or > 5%		% Change	
				US	A Z	US	One south-western state
Caucasian	63.0%	57.1%	35/59 = 59.3%				
Hispanic or Latino	16.9%	30.2%	15/59 = 25.4%	8.5% more		(25.4/16.9)100 = 150%	(25.4/30.2)100 = 84%
Black or African American	13.1%	4.5%	4/59 = 6.8%	6.3% less		(6.8/13.1)100 = 51.9% almost 50%	(6.8/4.5)100 = 188% almost double
Mixed race	2.4%	2.5%	3/59 = 5.1%				
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.0%	5.3%	1/59 = 1.7%				

Age did not appear to be a factor. The average age of the non-completer, enrollee, and completer was within a four-year window.

Table 21

Age vs. Completion

Age	Non-completer	Enrollee	Completer
24-33	2	4	13
34-43	1	4	14
44-53	3	5	11
54-63	1	0	1
64-73	0	0	0
Mean	$(28.5 \times 2 + 38.5 \times 1 + 48.5 \times 3 + 58.5 \times 1)/7 = 41.9$	$(28.5 \times 3 + 38.5 \times 4 + 48.5 \times 5)/13 = 39.3$	$(28.5 \times 13 + 38.5 \times 14 + 48.5 \times 11 + 58.5 \times 1)/39 = 38.5$
Median	44-53	34-43	34-43
Mode	44-53	44-53	32-43
Range	63-24 = 39	53-24 = 29	63-24 = 39

Non-completion Rates: Gender

Fewer men enroll. Of the Ed.D. administration cohorts' survey population, only 32.2% (19/59) were males.

Men were more likely to graduate and women were more at risk. Men at 73.7% have an 11.2% higher initial graduation rate than women at 62.5%. Men in the Ed.D. administration cohorts' population had a potential of 79% graduating while the women had a greater graduation percentage potential of up to 92.5%. Most (92.3%) in the enrollee category of the Ed.D. administration cohorts' population were women. More women were in the enrollee category and may take longer to finish or drop out. The enrollee category is the at-risk population with the potential of either not completing or completing. Men have a tendency to complete or not complete.

Table 22

Gender vs. Completion

Gender	Non-completer	Enrollee	Completer	Overall	% of gender graduation	% of possible completion or non-completion
Men	4/7 57.1%	1/13 7.70%	14/39 35.9%	19/59 32.2%	14/19 73.7%	1/19 5.3%
Women	3/7 42.9%	12/13 92.3%	25/39 64.1%	40/59 67.8%	25/40 62.5%	12/40 30.0%

Men took less time to get their degree. Men average 4.5 years’ time-to-degree while women average 4.9 years. Because there were more women in the enrollee category, it was likely that the average time-to-degree for women would be much higher, making the difference in time-to-degree between men and women more pronounced.

Table 23

Gender vs. Time-to-Complete or Time-in-Program

Gender	Completer’s average time-to-degree	Non-completer’s average time-in-program
Men	$((3.5 \times 4) + (4.5 \times 4) + (5.5 \times 2) + (6.5 \times 1))/11 = 4.5$ years	$(4.5 + 5.5 + 6.5 + 6.5)/4 = 5.75$ years
Women	$((3.5 \times 9) + (4.5 \times 7) + (5.5 \times 2) + (6.5 \times 1) + (7.5 \times 1))/20 = 4.9$ years	$(2.5 + 5.5 + 5.5)/3 = 4.5$ years

Women experience more pain in lack of closure. While all four of the non-completers interviewed experienced frustration and disbelief in not completing, the two women indicated that they also felt hurt when others asked about their doctorate degree. Suzanne said, “I feel a little bit like a fake. I talk to my students all the time about getting

their education and not to give up even when things are hard . . . this is like unfinished business.” Then she went on to say, “To a certain extent, entering a doctoral program and not finishing is an admission of failure, an admission of professional failure and not all people want to revisit it.”

Women experience more self-doubt would require more study. Self-doubt was listed on the survey and received more responses; however, self-doubt did not come up in the interviews.

Table 24

Self-doubt by gender

Felt self-doubt	Men in survey	Women in survey
Very much		13/37 = .351 or 35.1%
Somewhat	3/19 = .158 or 15.8%	10/37 = .27 or 27%
Slightly	6/19 = .316 or 31.6%	6/37 = .16 or 16%

Non-completion Rates: Reasons

The interviewed participants indicated that they did not get very far in their dissertation. They had not found a workable topic that their chair would agree with, had other obligations, did not know how to start, had financial and advisor difficulties and did not switch chairs to change the situation.

Table 25

Reason for Non-completion Comparison between Surveys and Interviews

Reasons	Surveys	Interviews
Other obligations	2/7 = 29%	3/4 = 75%
Poor Health	0/7 = 0%	0/4 = 0%
Took more than a year off after classes	NS	2/4 = 50%
Could not find a workable topic	1/7 = 14%	4/4 = 100%
Not knowing how to proceed	4/7 = 57%	4/4 = 100%
Finances	4/7 = 57%	2/4 = 50%
Intensity	0/7 = 0%	0/4 = 0%
Advisor difficulties	6/7 = 86%	4/4 = 100%
Change in advisor caused lost and alone feeling	0/7 = 0%	0/4 = 0%
Not getting a different advisor when needed	NS	4/4 = 100%
Department faculty leaving	NS	1/4 = 25%

Research Question 1: Internal and External Influences Encountered**The Influence of Desire**

The survey and interview showed slightly different results. When looking at the responses greater than 50%, the survey indicated that all three groups desired the degree for personal development and job promotion possibilities; whereas, the interviews showed that the enrollee and completer groups desired to get their doctorate degree for personal development and the non-completers wanted their degree for job promotion possibilities.

The survey participants had a mixture of reasons for desiring to have the doctorate degree. Personal development was a favorite reason for being in the degree program by 90% or more of the completers, enrollees, and non-completers (see Figure 1). This did not match the findings of the research.

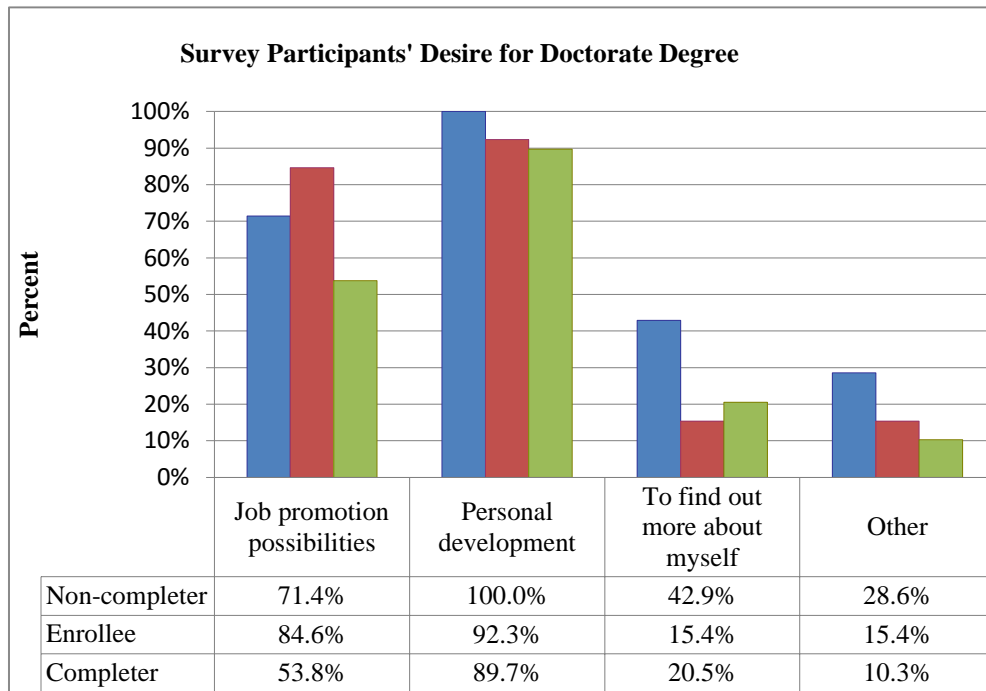


Figure 1. Survey Participants' Desire for Doctorate Degree

Although this question was not asked directly in the interviews, 75% (3/4) of the non-completers said that job promotion was their reason for joining the program while a little over 50% of the enrollees and completers stated the importance of personal development and/or altruistic reasons were their choices. I found this interesting because the two male non-completers got promoted during the program and lost focus on their degree. Their goal had been accomplished. Three of the five enrollees were included in the personal development and/or altruistic category of desire to get the degree. This included Jeanette and Regina who wanted to be role models and Brenda who wanted to

honor her mother by getting her doctorate. Of the seven completers, two (Ronnie and George) wanted to get their degree for their parents. Cathy wanted to be a successful role model, and Pamela wanted to gain life knowledge.

All interviewed still had the same desire of getting the Ed.D. degree. During the interviews I also found that four of seven completers (Cathy, Vivian, Joanne, and Travis) indicated that they wanted to complete what they started. One of five of the enrollees, Jeannette, and one of the four non-completers, Suzanne, also said that they wanted to complete what they started. All of the non-completers said that they would like to finish this doctorate program. None of the non-completers seemed to realize that they were no longer in the program even though they had stopped paying tuition. As Wesley, a non-completer said, “I didn’t have time to think about it. . . I got overwhelmed with work” (see Figure 2).

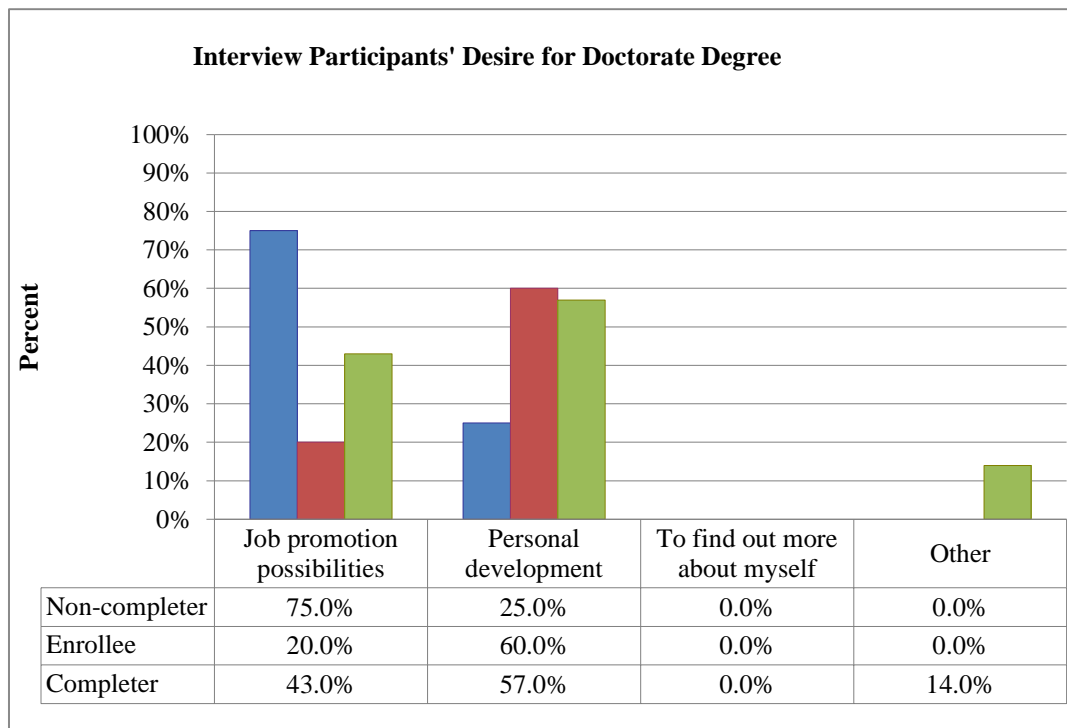


Figure 2. Interview Participant's Desire for Doctorate Degree

Belief in self. The survey revealed that 50% (1/2) or more non-completers believed they were very much determined. They were somewhat self-controlled, self-directed, focused, and perfectionists. Both the non-completers 50% (1/2) and the enrollees >50% (7/13) felt very much overwhelmed, used procrastination, were blocked, stressed, and somewhat doubted their ability.

The enrollees' results showed that greater than 50% (7/13) or more felt very much overwhelmed, procrastinated, stressed, and doubted their ability. Greater than 50% (19/37) or more completers very much believed that they were self-controlled, self-disciplined, determined, persistent, hardworking, and focused (see Figures 3 and 4).

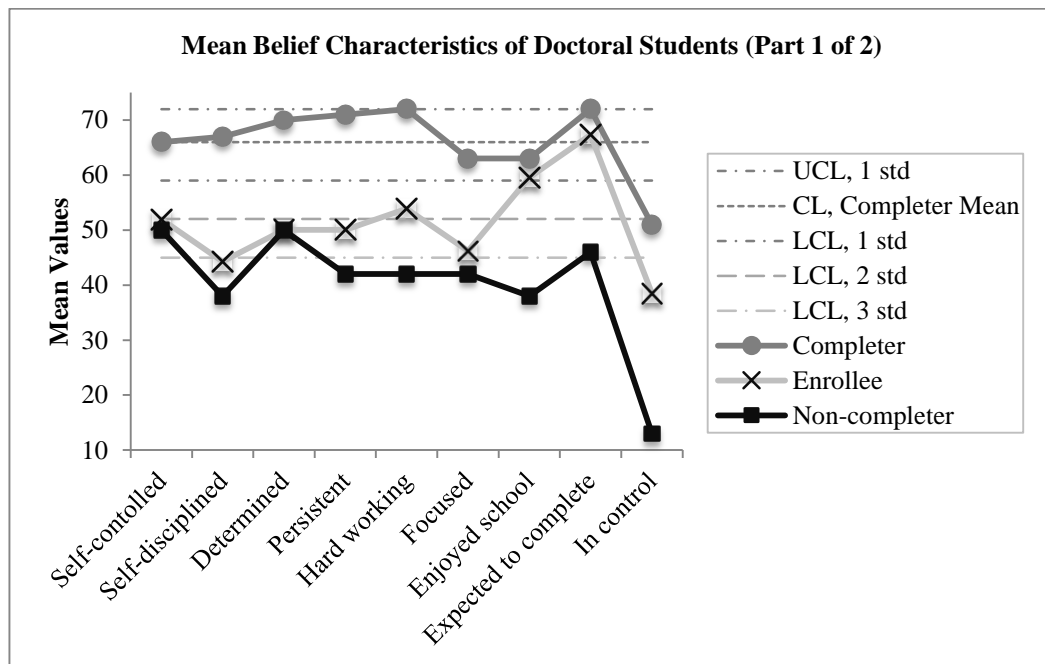


Figure 3. Mean belief characteristics of doctoral students (Part 1 of 1)

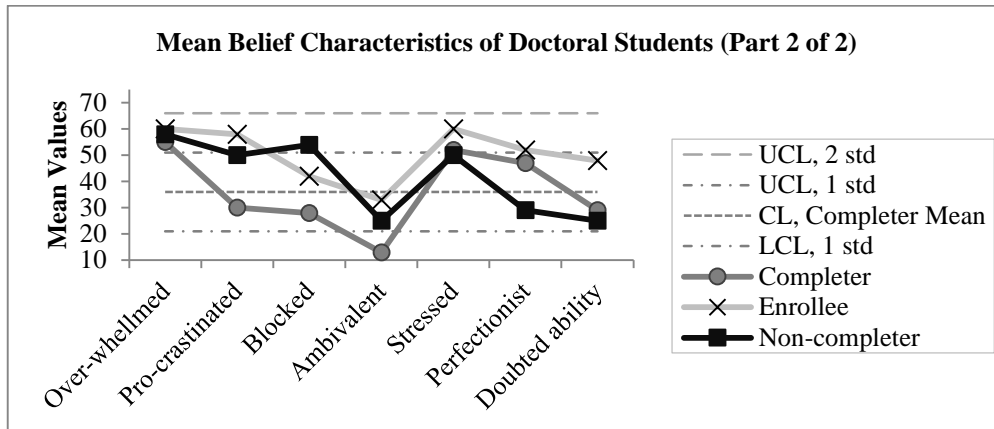


Figure 4. Mean belief characteristics of doctoral students (Part 2 of 2)

Multi-convergence Tables

I completed the multi-convergence tables and compared the research findings to my survey and interview findings. The multi-convergence tables are in Appendix H and are titled as follows:

Table H1 titled as Multi-convergence Table: Literature Review

Table H2 titled as Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 1

Table H3 titled as Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 2

Table H4 titled as Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 3

Table H5 titled as Multi-convergence Profile Table

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, How do we explain what would be helpful to include in a doctoral guide for completing the dissertation? The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The criteria for accreditation policy number CRRT.B.10.010 lists five standards of quality. The first standard addresses the mission statement, the second standard addresses the ethical and responsible conduct of the

university. The third standard references teaching and learning with quality, resources, and support. The fourth standard references teaching and learning using evaluation and improvement; and the fifth standard references resources, planning and institutional effectiveness. The suggestions for the study guide mostly relate to the third, and fourth, standards. The study guide including input from the literature, the survey, and the interview suggestions may be found in Appendix I.

Non-completer, Enrollee, and Completer Multi-convergence Profile Table

The Non-completer, Enrollee, and Completer Profile Table (Appendix H5, Multi-convergence Profile Table) provides the similarities and differences of these participant groups. When interviewing the non-completers, I found out that they did not know they were non-completers. They had hoped they were still in the program. They knew that had not paid and kept up the requirements, but they were hoping that they were still in.

Suggested Study Guide List

The suggestions are labeled by the groups who recommended the suggestions. The legend is as follows: for survey responses: C = completer, E = enrollee, and NC = non-completer; for interview responses: IC = interview completer, IE = interview enrollee, and IN = interview non-completer (see Appendix I).

Summary and Interpretation

In this section, I reviewed the survey and interview data. Then I compiled the multi-convergence tables, the profile convergence table, and the suggestions for the study guide. In this next chapter, I explain my interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I provide a Summary of the Study, Conceptual Framework Theory Analysis, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications based on this study. The Summary of the Study consists of a brief overview of the Purpose, the Literature, the Methodology, and the Data Collection and Analysis used for the study. The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Theory Analysis is reviewed next. The conclusions section involves a summary of the triangulated research convergence or non-convergent findings and conclusions. The Recommendations section reviews the study guide process suggestions for the university, the department, the committee, the doctoral student and provides recommendations for future research. The implication section provides a connection to the significance of this study. Lastly, the main suggestions are provided in the summary.

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to find processes that can be used to promote doctoral completion through the dissertation in order to provide doctoral valued individuals that will increase the knowledge base of education while promoting individual and collective worth. The more specific purpose was threefold: (a) to determine the difference of a particular southwestern university's Ed.D. administration cohort program of students who completed a doctoral dissertation and those who did not; (b) to identify processes that worked and those that did not; and (c) to determine study guide recommendations. These study guide recommendations were designed to guide

universities, programs, committees, and doctoral students toward doctoral completion. Determining differences and similarities of completers, enrollees, and non-completers was done by examining internal and external support through the processes, including energies of emotions, thoughts, feelings, and characteristics.

Literature

With an estimated 50% of doctoral students failing to complete the doctoral program (Naylor & Sanford, 1982), it was noted that there was a need for process research of how students completed their dissertations and a need for a study guide. Williams (1997) found that only the completers developed an internal manual that worked for them. An external study guide based on the perspectives of completers, enrollees, and non-completers of an Ed.D. administration cohort's perspective has yet to be developed and utilized.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study was a mixed methods approach. The data gathering was done in three stages: the literature review, the survey, and the interviews. The data were gathered and triangulated into convergence tables. The main areas of review were desires, beliefs, internal and external supports, and processes used.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was conducted online through emails with a link to Survey Monkey. The survey was sent to non-completers, enrollees, and completers within the Ed.D. Administration Cohorts 3, 4, 5, and 6. Fifty-nine out of 76 past and present students responded. The results were tabulated, graphed, and analyzed. Interviews from the survey sample participants were conducted of four non-completers, five enrollees, and seven

completers. The interviews were transcribed and themes and patterns were identified and tabulated. The results of both methods and the literature review were listed in multi-convergence tables. Similarities and differences of the non-completer, enrollee, and completer of the convergence were described in a Profile Multi-convergence Table.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Theory Analysis

The theoretical framework consisted of a theory that self-efficacy and goal setting provide a foundation for getting the dissertation accomplished. The self-regulation processes of time management fit into the Cognitive Learning Theory designed by Bandura, (1986). Through this research I found that all had a desire to complete the program but not all set out goals, timelines, or checklists that would be included in self-regulation of time-management. Those who did were the enrollees and the completers. The learning processes of observation, modeling, and vicarious learning through reading also were ways some of the doctoral students learned to complete the dissertation. Observations were done by attending other students' events such as defenses to learn the process. They also learned from their study partner as they modeled for each other while the other observed. Many of the completers also had self-efficacy while many of the non-completers had self-doubt.

However, through this study, I learned there were more things that the doctoral student needed to learn. They needed to learn how to plan reactions to situations such as no contact from the chair. They needed to learn the options and interventions for not understanding how to write the dissertation and what should be in each chapter. The students needed to learn how to be a self-advocate for their own process and design the process so that possible adverse situations may be easily overcome. Because of the needs

of the students, I designed a theory that first there is a belief. The belief can be about personal self-efficacy or a hypothesis. Then there is a desire to test the belief. During the process of finding out more about the subject, internal and external influences try to permeate the desire as either being supportive or non-supportive. The person then reacts causing a result of a change in the belief or an acceptance of the belief. Following is a more detailed analysis:

Belief

The belief activation process that I refer to in Chapter 2 was found to be a viable way to explain what goes into a decision of completing or not completing. This conceptual theory was enhanced after viewing the empirical research. The desire is the motivation, the well-being of the individual provides the energy needed to fuel the system, and the input is the research and the writing. The noise influences are the life situations, support or non-support of others, and the internal feelings and thoughts. These noise influences are either filtered or attach themselves to the embodiment of the mind, heart, and body as represented by the belief system, the desire, and the well-being respectively. The belief system is represented by the individual characteristics of the mind, while the heart represents the desire emotions and thoughts, and the well-being of the body represents the energy. Beliefs may be manipulated through attack or reinforcement of character thus causing a change in desire. The desire may be manipulated by justification of failures in the areas of energy or character. Well-being may be altered by an inconsistency of the desire and belief, such as desiring to do something while believing that it cannot be done for various reasons causing stress on the

body or a state of neglect for the desire while other things take precedence. By doing this, it is showing a change in priority of the desire.

Students start the program with a belief that they are able to complete the process. They believe in their own characteristics that have served them well in the past to be able to accomplish tasks. They have developed the well-being and energy that they feel will provide the endurance for the task. Their emotions influence their feelings which develop into a drive to make a change or create an understanding of a topic. Next, their thoughts and reasoning build their topic to be what they consider a viable research study. Then they act on their decision to present their topic for approval and solidify their committee selection. This concludes the first round of the process.

Each of the five rounds follows the same circular pattern. The first performance being that of topic and committee selection, the second round of performance consists of passing the comprehensive exams by providing the first three chapters and gaining committee approval. The third is navigating the Internal Review Board Process of preparing for the research with the chair's approval. The fourth round is the completion of the research, which may include a study of participants. The fifth round consists of providing the results and analysis to the committee at the defense. The contents of these rounds may vary according to the type of dissertation planned; however, this sequence is typical of the Ed.D. administration cohorts' doctorates. Each round starts the same way with the belief, the energy, the desire, the reasoning, and the result. Each round provides an opportunity for self-evaluation. This process is also used within each round to resolve issues that may occur. The CEDAR (Confidence, Energy, Desire, Analysis, Result) Activation Process provides an explanation of how a concept is grown and modified to

reach the result. As each concept flows through this process it matures to either be in agreement or disagreement with the individual's true nature, the person either becomes more adept or adapts to their environment. Adaptation occurs when the person's desire and/or thoughts change.

Completers get into a flow with the feelings that create productive energy. Non-completers never get into the flow of the dissertation. The non-completers' feelings as indicated in the research reveal negative feelings as dominant and the desire and actions are in disagreement. I found this to be the case. This causes a discontentment within them until they justify and accept their decision to not complete.

Desire

The students' reasons for the degree did not correspond with the existing research that students who take longer than average time-to-degree have personal or altruistic reasons rather than desires for a job promotion (Strite, 2007). I considered the longer-than-average-time students to correlate with the enrollee group. I did not consider the completers' length of time to get their degree. This study revealed that the reason for the degree of the completers was for personal reasons. The study also revealed a difference in the reasons between the survey and the interviewed non-completers. It is possible that after the students became non-completers, their desires may have changed from personal development to job promotion. Two of the four non-completers received job promotions during the program. In summary, desire did not appear to be a reason for completion, time-to-degree, or non-completion. However, a desire change may be a more accurate reason for the non-completers.

Belief System Example

Confidence is built or broken down in relation to the desire. The internal and external supports influence the confidence of the belief system of finishing. The internal and external supports may be likened to the legs that walk and charge the belief battery, the charging, or draining of the energy. When the supports start to drain, a choice can be made to reinforce the energy by interventions, or the choice can be made to change the desire, which are ways of coping with the decision of non-completing. One method is easy and the other difficult. The question is which will the student choose or allow to be chosen. A summation of this thinking is described as follows:

When you manage to overcome your own mind, you overcome myriad concerns, rise above all things, and are free. When you are overcome by your own mind, you are burdened by myriad concerns, subordinate to things, unable to rise above. (Shosan, 1579-1655, *Training the Samurai Mind: A Bushido Sourcebook*)

Conclusions

This summary includes the major findings and conclusions of my study's convergence and non-convergence of the literature to the research questions. My conclusions were based on the Ed.D. administration population studied.

Triangulated Research Convergence or Non-convergence Findings and Conclusions

The triangulated research revealed the following:

Non-completion rate differences. The non-completion rate of 50% identified by Sternberg (1981) was not found with the Ed.D. administration cohorts' population. It was possible that not all within the program were identified; however, it was likely that the sample was representative of the population. The non-completion rate was found to be 12% with a possibility of up to 34% if all who were still enrolled within these cohorts became non-completers.

The Ed.D. non-completion rate of 41% found by Kittell-Limerick (2005) was similar to the possible non-completion rate of 34%. However, the figure indicated at this time was 12%, so I would say that there was no convergence. This study did indicate that Ed.D. administration cohorts' non-completion rates were probably less than other programs.

Non-completion stage. In relation to when students drop out of the program, this study showed that most students dropped out after classes. This does not converge with the research done by Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) who indicated that there were more students who drop out during classes. The Ed.D. administration cohorts' survey indicated that 10% (6/59) dropped out after classes; whereas, 2% (1/59) dropped out during classes.

Cohort completion time did not appear to be sooner than non-cohort students' completion time. The average time of completion from Smiley's (2007) study of degree programs in a Southwestern University indicated that four years was an average degree completion time; whereas, the Ed.D. administration doctoral cohorts' average completion time was closer to five years. It is possible that if comparing strictly doctoral degrees, the completion rate may be similar.

Those who take longer are more at risk for non-completion. Three of the five enrollees that I interviewed were stuck and did not appear to know how to move forward. Two were without a chair and were not receiving input from a chair. The two that were moving forward had recently changed chairs. If nothing were to change for the three students, it would appear that they would become non-completers. Therefore, I would agree that those who take longer are more at risk and would need intervention help on how to proceed (Dickson, 1987).

Ph.D. vs. Ed.D. The literature indicated that writing may be a problem for the Ed.D. students because they had been out of the classroom longer than the Ph.D. students. However, writing did not appear to be a problem for the completers. The at-risk students may need writing help. Also the literature revealed that Ph.D. students take less time to do a quantitative study than a qualitative study. This study indicated that the Ed.D. students also took less time to do a quantitative study than a qualitative study.

African Americans are underrepresented. The results of this study were in agreement with Pouncil's (2009) finding if the statistic is compared to the national population statistic. However, the percentage in the population of African Americans within Arizona is similar to the percentage within the Ed.D. administration cohort program. Because the underrepresentation problem is a national situation and students from other states attend this university, I believe that it would be beneficial to recruit and retain more African American students.

Gender. This study supported the findings that fewer men enroll and that women are more at risk. Because valued research and leadership positions are important to the future of education, I feel it would be beneficial to actively recruit more men into the education field. It was found that most of the enrollees who were taking longer were second language learners. These students could benefit from the use of English Language Learning strategies. The use of intervention support, classes, and a nurturing chair would be beneficial for the female students who have not shown timely progress.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 inquired as to why some students do graduate and others do not. Internal supports and external supports addressed this question.

Internal support. Determination, perseverance, and tenacity were confirmed as characteristics of a doctoral completer. Being timid as suggested by the literature was not an indication of this study's non-completers. The situation seemed to be more of a change in desire or a desire had been realized during the program when two of the four non-completers received promotions.

External support. While little was found in the research regarding these areas, the empirical research of this study revealed that the chair, cohort, and family were supportive influences for the completers. Most of the non-completers had lack of support from their chair, family, and friends.

Progress in the program of the non-completers. The literature revealed that most students drop out after classes without doing research. This study revealed that the non-completers of the survey did not get past the initial stage as to the topic of the dissertation. However, from the interviews, I found that the four non-completers got as far as working on research and two were beginning the literature review. One non-completer found that the program she was doing research on was dismantled and that she would need to find another topic. Another student found that he got lost in the literature review process, was discontented with his topic, and needed feedback that he felt he was not getting from his advisor. The other two non-completers had not found a topic that they and their advisors could agree upon. One had done research on an area that she was interested in but her advisor was not. The other non-completer who had done research on a topic had lost his chair and was assigned a different chair, but the student found little common ground with the newly assigned chair and topic agreement did not occur. His focus changed because he met someone in the doctoral program who hired him to start a

new school. All of the non-completers talked about reaching a stalemate with their chairs, resulting in no communication being initiated from either side.

From the interviews, I gathered that the non-completers' rate of pages accomplished per year when they dropped out was less than the average completers' rate because many of the completers did not take much time off writing their papers. The rate of pages could be tracked by the chair as one indicator as to when interventions were needed.

Those who take longer than the baseline of this study (4.5) years would be considered at risk. From the interviews with the enrollees and supported by the survey as well as some of the literature, deadlines can be helpful to this group. The triangulated research was in agreement as to also focusing on the chair and student developing timelines.

Because the enrollees and non-completers took more time off after classes, it would be beneficial to stress with incoming doctoral students that research also supports that taking time off after classes puts a student seriously at risk of non-completion. By providing this information along with giving students deadlines, the completion rate would improve and students would become more focused on getting the dissertation done quickly. This would also minimize the possibility of family becoming non-supportive because their support seems to lessen over time.

The reason the survey and interview participants claimed for getting the degree did not agree with the literature. The literature suggested that those who get the degree for purposes of a job promotion will get the degree sooner than if their reason was for personal development. Therefore, I believe that the reason for getting the degree did not

affect completion or time-to-degree. Many completers also received promotions during their doctoral program, so it also indicates that job promotion may not affect completion.

In regards to thoughts, emotions, and internal difficulties, I found that the second year of classes would be a good time to start keeping track those not completing classes so as to determine who will need interventions, in order to help them make choices that would be beneficial as to completion so they do not fall behind. I did not find evidence for or against this finding in the literature.

From the interviews, I found it interesting that a completer and a non-completer could have the same dilemma (needing a change in chair and not getting anywhere and having family responsibility issues) and the same reason (to be a role model) for wanting to get the degree and yet make different choices. The only two variables that I saw that were different was the lack of family and spousal support and the financial difficulties of the non-completer. The reaction that was different was that the completer pursued changing chairs and the non-completer not knowing that was an option. The non-completer was more at risk when taking into account that this was the non-completer's second attempt at a doctorate degree and a pattern of non-success had been established. If this had been identified early in the program, interventions could have been set up to establish small successes along the way and training provided to learn to overcome possible difficulties by changing reaction behaviors. The cognitive dissonance theory explains how when the mind has conflict, the easiest way to get over a problem is to change the desire. This non-completer reasoned in her mind that because she was not making progress with the doctoral program, it was better to stop the program. What she realized afterward was that she still had the desire to get the degree. The dilemma was

gone, but the desire was still there, causing disgust when blaming herself. She felt like a failure. She had not realized that she was not a failure, but had she made the choice to be a self-advocate, get another chair, and actively persevere in the research, she may have been able to reach her dream of getting a doctoral degree.

Because it was found that families are an influence on the doctoral student, it would be beneficial to include them in cohort activities and trainings so they feel comfortable with the program, understand the requirements, and learn to support their student. Families need to realize that continuous negative comments such as, “Aren’t you done yet?” can be detrimental to a student who is at risk. It is a personal put-down that affects their self-esteem and they begin to doubt their ability.

One completer indicated that she loved the process and had a difficult time letting go of the dissertation so that she could complete. She talked about it as being her baby. She said that she went through a depression afterward and that she was having a difficult time releasing the anxiety she felt from having to get the paper done quickly. These are also areas where counseling may help the doctoral student.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 addressed processes that worked and did not work. What became clear from this study was that seldom did the student explain the process used. An indication of the situation, a feeling, or a characteristic was identified but specific processes did not seem to be a part of their memory. They just wanted it done. One of the researchers said that the manual was not known until it is over. But I find that they used a process to get there, but because it was painful, it was quickly forgotten. I suggest that the processes used and a reflection as to how the processes worked be required to be written

down as a student goes through completing his or her dissertation. If gathered, this would provide evidence of what worked and what did not. I found that process ideas flow when putting deliberate continual focus on the project. It is when the paper is left for a little while it is easy to forget the process used, what needs to be done next, and what the research means.

The main process that the students did seem to remember for the completers was the self-talk mantras they used that helped them get through the dissertation. They found that positive motivating mantras worked the best. Some would remind themselves of the importance of their research and that people believed in their ability to get it done. The completer often found that they needed a quiet place to study and either worked alone or with a cohort buddy. The cohort students were instrumental in providing motivational encouragement and advice to each other. This could account for the low non-completion rate of this program. The students and the research indicated that a nurturing or an assertive chair gets results. The non-communicative chair does not. They agreed with the research that the topic and chair selection were important to completion.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 addressed suggestions for a study guide. It was interesting that the students' suggestions mostly stayed within the realm of the chair and the student. The literature that I read was mostly about the university and the programs. What was mostly missing from the groups was the process suggestions for the student's family, friends, and job supervisors. This study shows that support groups such as these are important for the success of the doctoral student. Although I agree with the research that the chair is key to success, I believe that a general support system is definitely needed for

the at-risk student. Also it was found that little is understood about how to write a dissertation. Some students were given guidelines while others were not.

Recommendations

I recommend that more African Americans and men are recruited and accepted into the doctoral programs consistent with the percent within the education field. Interventions may need to be put in place to retain them as well.

I recommend that counseling be available for the non-completer and that if interventions were not available while they were in the program, they be invited to finish up their dissertations with interventions in place and with an accountable chair. The students would need to show satisfactory progress to continue.

I recommend that self-efficacy confidence levels be monitored and small successes be planned throughout the program. The size of the projects could build over time and the students' assignments during the program could be relatable to their planned dissertation. This would help to improve their chances for completion.

I recommend that the Study Guide, the program, the chair, and the student be reviewed by the university, and be updated yearly to reflect new understandings.

I recommend that the students stay true to themselves, their commitments, and their desires.

I recommend that the chair provides his or her best help to meet the student half way by helping the student put forth a quality effort and product, and adjusts the product based on committee reviews and events that follow. As a chair, a professor, I would not want to find myself stifling a student who sincerely puts forth an effort to gain in his or her personal and professional knowledge while creating new knowledge that they may

share with the world, thus expanding the world's knowledge base. I recommend that the chair be a nurturing teacher at heart and understands, guides, explains the dissertation process, and develops the student's ability to become individually adept in their subject so they may help others do the same.

I recommend the department and university provide accountability measures and incentives for both the student and the chair to succeed in providing measured commitment and quality research.

I recommend that non-completion rates be tabulated and reported by the universities in the categories of those who drop out: during classes, after classes, and after candidacy.

I recommend developing a process for choosing a chair, based on similar research areas and the amount of nurturing the student will need.

I would like to see more specific lessons on the doctoral level that include finding a topic, researching a topic, interacting with the chair, and responding to negative comments as well as processes for developing positive reactions and self-monitoring.

Future Research

Future research suggestions include the following:

1. Although the non-completion rates of this research may not indicate a high percentage of non-completers, I recommend that studies continue to be conducted to determine why so many students do not complete within five years. The fact that it takes students longer than expected indicates that there are reasons yet to be determined that may be examined and plans for change determined.

2. I recommend there be a comparison of Ed.D. non-completion rates compared to other programs to determine possible differences in what works in some programs versus others.
3. Completion rates could be monitored by the chair and submitted to the department or program periodically so that the need for interventions might be detected and offered by the chair and the program.
4. Because it was found that non-completers start to get stressed and frustrated their second year of classes, students' feelings could be monitored through surveys and class evaluations to determine if interventions were needed.
5. A longitudinal baseline study would need to be done to determine if enrollees are more at risk of dropping out or if they just take longer to complete.
6. Compare southwestern university regular doctorate degree completion times with this Ed.D. administration cohort degree completion times.
7. Perform a real-time continuous study of processes used by doctoral students to enhance the processes developed, recommended, or required by the university.

Implications

I predict that the incorporation of the study guide's suggestions for the university, the department, the committee, and the doctoral students will lead to less non-completion and more Ed.D. graduates and a better understanding of issues and roles. These higher graduation rates will then lead to more positive opinions regarding the university. The committee will be more equipped to provide support to the doctoral student and the doctoral student will be able to more readily plan and implement processes that will promote success.

Such student success will provide more confident and competent individuals who will be able to better support themselves and their families through higher salaries and a better understanding of how to succeed even though these students come from different backgrounds and have different mindsets, desires, beliefs, and needs. As these students become more successful and confident they may help others succeed. The suggestions for a study guide provide a more equal opportunity for success that will lead to an increase in valuable research and leadership in the field of Education Administration and thus enhances the global influence on education of the people.

Summary

When reviewing the literature versus the student responses, I realized that the student perspective was limited. The non-completer students did not realize their options, how it could be, or what alternatives they had. They assumed everything would be taken care of for them, that all would be fair, and that everyone would have an equal opportunity to get their degrees. They assumed that those who needed help would get the help or be able to find the help. The problem was that they did not realize they needed help. They thought it was all or nothing, either you get it on your own or you do not. They had not thought that the system might be flawed.

As educators, most Ed.D. students understand that the teacher is responsible for meeting the needs of the students. Even though these are educators who provide interventions for their own students, they set a different standard for themselves. Or does this mean that they perhaps think that their own students should get it or get out?

As an educator, I want to do my part. I want to meet the students' needs and perhaps I may need to meet them more than half way to do this. Each student has areas

that need to be fulfilled or at least addressed or smoothed, so that the student can learn. If something emotional has happened in their lives, they need to make sense of it and put it right in their mind so he or she can learn. Because of this, I agree with the literature, the survey, and the interviews that the students do need a counselor or a chair who can listen, understand, and help them get through life situations. When this is done, that nurturing chair has been a role model, who models positive behavior as Bandura suggested in his Cognitive Learning Theory. As the chair models helpful behavior, they have not cheated by doing this. Expecting the student to get through all the things they go through in life on their own is unrealistic. Only a few can do this without help. Because the dissertation is such a major endeavor and spans over several years, many life situations will occur, and many emotions and reactions will influence the outcome.

If students are left to their own devices to get through the program, are they forever scarred? Do they learn from this tough love, a harsh reality, the best? Few of us will learn by going through the many troubles we have on our own. As we do though, we change our beliefs to meet our newly understood reality as defined using the CEDAR process. It is just as likely that by not helping these students understand things, we are scaring our nation's potential as well.

Rather than fully relying on our creation of our own reality, our own beliefs, as we interact with each other, we help make each other better. We are a reflection at times. The energy of thought often bounces from one to another and grows with new learning as it is passed back and forth.

When completing a dissertation, one has to go global and then specific in detail, back and forth to see the needs and find possible solutions. Everything needs to be in

perspective. It makes sense to me that people think things are their own fault when they do not see the big picture or who the players are. For every test, I believe, there are about six players involved. I have touched a few different perspectives in this study. What perspectives have I missed? What will be taken from this study to help our students achieve high expectations? From which angle will the help come? I hope that it comes from all of the angles. My hope is that all of the players will do what they can to make whatever adjustments to the system they can by creating the processes needed to help every student.

What I suspected and found was that few processes are in place. Few students even know what a process is. They can come up with problems that indicate a process is needed, but to come up with a step-by-step plan to resolve the situation and then explain how they did it is rare.

A thorough analysis is needed to be done on this suggested study guide. It needs to be updated as new issues are found and it needs to be planned and processes explained in detail so that those who make decisions have result data and process data to come up with good sound decisions of how to make the dissertation process user friendly and thus the completion rate higher. Then more sound research will be available to improve our life situations in this world. Why would we not want more qualified researchers who are able to do this after they are taught how?

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APPENDIX A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION LETTER

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Nicholas Appleton
ED

From:  Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 08/04/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 08/04/2011

IRB Protocol #: 1107006674

Study Title: Dissertation Influences and Processes: Ed.D v. ABD

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B

DISSERTATION INFLUENCES AND PROCESSES SURVEY

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

1. Demographic Variables

This survey is to compare Delta students with the literature of doctoral students and to determine what might be needed to help future doctoral students. Your personal information will be kept confidential and will be separated from the responses. The findings will be used in a dissertation regarding doctoral dissertation influences and processes.

1. What is your ethnicity?

- A. American Indian or Native Alaskan
- B. Asian
- C. Black or African American
- D. Caucasian
- E. Hispanic or Latino
- F. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- G. Mixed
- H. Other

Other (please specify)

2. What is your gender?

- A. Female
- B. Male

3. When you first enrolled in the Delta Doctorate Program, in which range was your age?

- A. 24-33
- B. 34-43
- C. 44-53
- D. 54-63
- E. 63-73
- F. Other

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

4. When entering the Delta program, were you married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

5. What is your doctoral program status?

- A. Dropped out of program during course work.
- B. Dropped out of program after course work.
- C. Current enrolled student working on proposal.
- D. Dropped out of program after successfully completing comprehensive exams and proposal.
- E. Current enrolled student and have completed comprehensive exams/ proposal and working toward finishing dissertation.
- F. Graduated. If so, please list the year graduated by the other column.
- G. Other

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

2. External Influences

6. During the dissertation process, how would you rate the following relationship support? (Check all that apply.)

	4. Excellent	3. Good	2. Fair	1. Poor
A. Spouse or significant other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Dissertation Committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Dissertation Chair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment:

7. To what extent did the following possible difficulties slow the progress of your dissertation? (Check all.)

	5. Very much	4. Somewhat	3. Slightly	2. Not at all	1. N/A
A. Committee membership changes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Committee disagreements among members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Disagreement with committee or chair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Slow responses from committee or chair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Not understanding the dissertation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Writing the dissertation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Researching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Working independently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

8. During the dissertation process, did you have any of the following life situations occur within your family? If so, did one or more slow your dissertation progress? (Check all.)

	5. Very much	4. Somewhat	3. Slightly	2. Not at all	1. N/A
A. Marriage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Divorce or relationship breakup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Birth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Death	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Injury	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Major illness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Loss of job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Finances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Move	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K. Community responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
L. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

9. Did you participate in interventions, formally or informally, and if so, how would you describe the effect it had on the progress of your dissertation? (Check all.)

	5. Excellent	4. Good	3. Fair	2. Poor	1. N/A
A. Outside counseling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Coaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Peer Helper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. A helper who previously completed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Student group meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Skill preparation classes beyond the required course work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

10. If you completed your dissertation, what external influences contributed?

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

11. If you did not complete your dissertation, what external influences contributed?

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

3. Internal Influences

12. Why did you choose to get your doctorate degree? (Check all that apply.)

- A. Job promotion possibilities
- B. Personal development
- C. To find out more about myself
- D. Other

Other (please specify)

13. During the dissertation process, how would you rate your well being? (Check all.)

	4. Excellent	3. Good	2. Fair	1. Poor
A. Energy Level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Sleep	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Physical fitness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Cognitive ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Dissertation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

14. During the dissertation process, how was your emotional state in the following areas? (Check all.)

	4. Excellent	3. Good	2. Fair	1. Poor
A. Committee comments to your work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Chair's involvement in your progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. The amount of research involved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Life situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

15. To what degree do the following words or phrases describe you while working on your dissertation? (Check all.)

	4. Very much	3. Somewhat	2. Slightly	1. N/A
A. Self-controlled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Self-disciplined	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Determined	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Persistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Hard working	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Overwhelmed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Procrastinated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Blocked	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Ambivalent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K. Stressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
L. Perfectionist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
M. Doubted my ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
N. Enjoyed school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O. Expected to complete	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
P. In control of the dissertation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

16. If you completed your dissertation, what internal levels of consciousness did you feel you experienced during the process of the dissertation? (Check all.)

	2. Yes	1. No
A. Shame	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Guilt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Apathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Grief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Fear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Desire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Anger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Pride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Courage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Neutrality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K. Willingness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
L. Acceptance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
M. Reason	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
N. Love	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O. Joy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
P. Peace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q. Enlightenment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

17. If you did not complete your dissertation, what internal levels of consciousness did you feel you experienced during the process of the dissertation? (Check all.)

	2. Yes	1. No
A. Shame	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Guilt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Apathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Grief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Fear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Desire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. Anger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. Pride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Courage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. Neutrality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K. Willingness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
L. Acceptance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
M. Reason	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
N. Love	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O. Joy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
P. Peace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q. Enlightenment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. If you completed your dissertation, what internal thoughts contributed?

19. If you did not complete your dissertation, what internal thoughts contributed?

4. Processes Used

A process is a sequence of interdependent and linked procedures which, at every stage, consume one or more resources (employee, time, energy, machines, money) to convert inputs (data, material, parts, etc.) into outputs. These outputs then serve as inputs for the next stage until a known goal or end result is reached. (Businessdictionary.com, 2011)

20. What helpful process did you use for motivation to work on your dissertation? (Check all that apply.)

- A. Goal setting
- B. Drives and desire
- C. Rewards
- D. Approval
- E. Self-actualizing

Other (please specify)

21. When working on your dissertation, did you use any time management processes and if so, how well did they work? (Check all.)

	5. Excellent	4. Good	3. Fair	2. Poor	1. N/A
A. Used a time line	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Created checklists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Balanced responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Prioritized work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Created goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Wrote reflections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. When you worked on your dissertation, what processes did you use to maintain the momentum on your dissertation and how well did they work? (Check all.)

	5. Excellent	4. Good	3. Fair	2. Poor	1. N/A
A. Self-talk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Written self-communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. It became a habit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Others kept asking about my dissertation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Meetings with my chair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

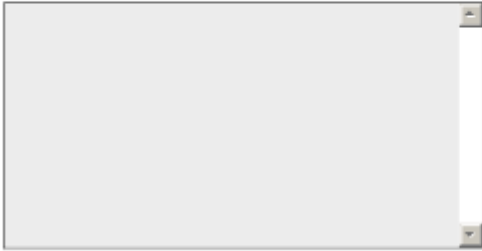
23. When you worked on your dissertation, what processes did you use that did not work for you.

24. When working on your dissertation, what did you find most troublesome?

Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

5. Suggestions

25. What do you suggest be included in a study guide for doctoral students working on their dissertations?



Dissertation Influences and Processes Survey

6. Thank you for your help.

This concludes the survey portion of the study. The next part includes an interview of cadre participants selected at random. If you are willing to be interviewed to help provide a more in-depth understanding of the graduate experience, please send an email with your contact information and the best time of day to call to lirvine@asu.edu or phone (602) 881-2250. This will help assure that if you are selected, I may know how best to contact you.

Thank you again for your input and consideration.

APPENDIX C
SURVEY RECRUITING DOCUMENTS

Information Letter for the Survey

Research Title: Dissertation Influences and Processes: Ed.D. vs. ABD

Date

Dear _____:

I am a Ed.D. graduate student under the direction of Dr. Nicholas Appleton in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at [Arizona State University](#). I am conducting a research study to explain dissertation influences and processes.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve completing an on-line survey that is estimated to take about 20 minutes of your time. The survey will entail answering multiple choice, open ended, and Likert scale questions. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the survey at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Your decisions whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your status with [Arizona State University](#). You must have been a [Delta](#) doctoral student in the past in the Educational Administrative Ed.D. program and be 18 or older to participate in the study.

Although there is no benefit to you possible benefits of your participation are that the research may shed light on the internal and external influences to dissertation completion or non-completion and the processes used that worked and that did not work.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Your participation and insight may help others complete the program and the dissertation process.

You will not be identified in this study and your responses will be anonymous. Names of others included in responses will also be confidential. Your responses will be identified with a number and not a name once they are downloaded from Survey Monkey. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team. As Co-Investigator, I can be reached by phone at [\(602\) 881-2250](#) or by email at irvine@asu.edu. The Principal Investigator, Nicholas Appleton, Ph.D., can be reached by phone at [\(480\) 727-6433](#) or by email at nicholas.appleton@asu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the [ASU](#) Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at [\(480\) 965-6788](#). By continuing with the survey, you are giving your consent to participate in this study. Thank you in advance for participating.

Sincerely,

Linda Hardy

Linda Hardy

[Arizona State University](#)

Survey Recruitment Informed Consent Cover Letter/Email

Dear Delta Cohort participant:

As part of a past cohort, you are asked to participate in a dissertation project to give your input into the Delta Doctorate dissertation process. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and it should take less than twenty minutes of your time.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the problem that not all Delta cohort members graduate. This dissertation is to give your views on the influences to staying in the Delta graduate program and the processes that you used that worked and/or did not work to complete the dissertation process.

Your input into this study will help to create a guide for future doctoral students so that hopefully more students will graduate.

Please complete the attached survey.

Your input to this research is valuable whether you graduated or not.

Your input will be confidential and your name will not be tied to the information given. Your participation in answering this survey will be considered your consent to include the anonymous data provided in this study.

Please consider this request. Your help in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Linda Hardy

Linda Hardy

Cell: (602) 881-2250

Fax: (602) 293-3514

Email: lirvine@asu.edu

Address:

5704 W. Novak Way

Laveen, AZ 85339

Survey Recruitment Informed Consent Phone Message

Hello, this is Linda Hardy. Could I please speak to _____?

I am an ASU Delta Doctorate graduate student and I would like to ask you if you would consider being a part of a dissertation study to help future doctoral students.

As a past participant, your input is valuable and would be very much appreciated.

The problem that I am researching is in regards to the influences that affect the Delta Doctorate student to stay or leave the program. I am also researching the processes that worked or did not work while working on the dissertation.

Your participation is voluntary and I would need to ask you questions that will take approximately twenty minutes. Your information will be confidential and your name will not be identified in the survey.

Do you feel that this is something that you would want to do?

If this is not a good time to go over the survey questions, what date and time would be good for you?

Your input to this research is valuable whether you graduated or not. If you agree, I will first read to you the Informational Letter for the Survey and if you still agree, I will ask the survey questions.

(I would then read the Informational Letter for the Survey and then ask them the survey questions.)

Thank you.

Note: This was modified as the conversation allowed. These were the points that I wished to cover. If they were unable to participate, I thanked them for their time.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW RECRUITING DOCUMENTS

Interview Cover Letter/Email

Dear Delta Cohort participant:

As part of a past cohort, you have been randomly selected to participate in a dissertation project to give your input into the Delta Doctorate dissertation process.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the problem that not all Delta cohort members graduate. This dissertation is to give your views on the influences to staying in the Delta graduate program and the strategies that you used that worked and/or did not work to complete the dissertation process.

Your input into this study will help to create a guide for future doctoral students so that hopefully more students will graduate.

Three interviews will take place within a four-week period: One for 1 hour and two more for ½ hour each. The first interview will be answering approximately 21 questions that include demographics, influences, and strategies. The other two interviews will be to clarify responses and to review and make changes to the written responses per your input.

You will be asked to share as little or as much as you like in the form of documents that helped you or didn't, procedures you used, pictures of your office, or pictures of how you organized your materials. Your input to this research is valuable whether you graduated or not.

Your input will be confidential and your name will not be tied to the information given. More information will be available to you in the form of the consent letter that you will be asked to sign. At the end of the study, you will be provided a copy of this research.

Please consider this request. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

If you are willing to participate, please contact me within one week.

Sincerely,

Linda Hardy

Linda Hardy

Cell: (602) 881-2250

Fax: (602) 293-3514

Email: lrvine@asu.edu

Interview Arrangement Phone Message

Hello, this is Linda Hardy. Could I please speak to _____?

I am an ASU Delta Doctorate graduate student, and I would like to ask you if you would consider being a part of a dissertation study to help future doctoral students. As a past participant, your input is valuable and would be very much appreciated.

The problem that I am researching is in regards to the influences that affect the Delta student to stay or leave the program. I am also researching the processes that worked or did not work while working on the dissertation.

I would need to meet with you to ask you questions that will take three sessions. The first one would be one hour and the other two would be ½ hour to review the documentation. Your information would be kept confidential and would not be linked to your name. You will be asked to sign a consent form that will explain more about the process.

Do you feel that this is something that you would want to do?

We could meet at one of the ASU campuses, your house, at your work, or at a coffee shop. Which would you prefer?

What date and time would be good for you?

Please bring any materials that you think worked or didn't work for you when working on your dissertation. Also any pictures of your office or pictures of how you organized your materials would be helpful.

Your input to this research is valuable whether you graduated or not.

Thank you.

Note: This was modified as the conversation allowed. These are the points that I wished to cover. If they were unable to participate, I thanked them for their time.

Interview Informational Consent Letter

Research Title: Dissertation Influences and Processes: Ed.D. v ABD

Address: 5704 W. Novak Way
Laveen, AZ 85339

Date

Dear _____:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nicholas Appleton in the College of Education at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to research the dissertation process and influences of the successful graduate and of those who are no longer in the ASU Delta program and have not graduated.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve three interviews, one initial 60 minutes interview, a second interview for 30 minutes, and a follow up 30-minute interview. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop the interview at any time. We may meet at campus, your office, a coffee shop, or your home. This is your choice.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must have been a Delta doctoral student in the past in the Educational Administrative Ed.D. program and be 18 or older to participate in the study.

There are no benefits to you. Potential benefits may include receiving information about doctoral students and what processes they use when working on their dissertation. There will be a look at what works and what does not. The research may also shed light on the internal and external influences to dissertation completion or non-completion.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Your participation and insight may help others complete the program and the dissertation process.

To maintain confidentiality, your information will be referred to with a participant number. Once you and I agree to the information you have presented and the principal investigator, Dr. Appleton, approves of the data, your interview will no longer be identified or connected to your name in any way. A new name will be randomly chosen through a random name generator by gender and ethnicity to identify the interview data. Your name will not be released or used to identify you as part of this research.

You will have a chance to review the transcript of your responses and make changes so that I may alter the research to represent your responses as accurately as possible. I may use quotes of yours in the summary of the research using your pseudo name. I ask that you allow me to use your quotes and compile your information with others for use in my dissertation. This review of responses will take place the second or third meeting.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped. You also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The taped interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's ASU office for three years at which time all of the supporting data for the study shall be destroyed. The new name generated will be on the tapes and will not reference your name. Your information presented in this interview process will not be tied to your name.

The results of this study, forms that you created to expedite the dissertation process, or

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Portrait

1. Tell me a story about yourself and your background. Do you have any linguistic differences or difficulties? Do you have any special needs?

Desire

2. Tell me the story behind why you chose to get a doctorate degree?

Belief – Self-Efficacy

3. Think back to your completion or when you decided to drop out and share with me the situation, how you felt, and your reaction.

Completion or Non-completion

4. What was the reason behind your decision to continue or drop out?

Belief – Self-Efficacy

5. How do you feel now about yourself with your completion choice?

Advantages and Disadvantages

6. What advantages or disadvantages have affected you due to your doctoral or A.B.D. status? How has this affected you in the long run?

Desire

7. Tell me a story as to why and how you chose your research?

Perceptions/Feelings – Influencing Reactions

8. Share with me any emotional situations that you had during the dissertation process?

Time to Degree

9. Tell me stories about your experience with the time that it took to write your paper. How many years did you work on your dissertation? Please explain your productivity on your paper during that time.

Process - Time Management

10. Tell me how you organized, planned, and monitored your time. How did it work for you? Do you have any suggestions of processes that worked for you and you are willing to share for time management?

Control - Acceleration

11. Tell me how you got yourself going to work on the paper at the beginning of the process, the middle, and the end. What processes did you use to get started with your work?

Control - Maintenance

12. Once you were working on something to do with the dissertation, how did you maintain the momentum?

Process - Thoughts

13. Did your thoughts change over time regarding the dissertation? What influenced this? Did you deliberately try to change your thoughts? If so, what process did you use?

Process - Challenges

14. What challenges did you face while working on the dissertation chapters? How did you work them out?

15. What challenges did you face in regards to the dissertation events; such as, the proposal, comprehensive exam, IRB, and/or the defense?

Internal Influence - Personality

16. Tell me about you. What adjectives would describe you in regards to getting work accomplished? Tell me about your traits that helped and those that got in your way. Would you give me an example of a time that worked for you and one that did not?

Internal Influence and Process

17. If there was anything about you that got in your way at times to get work accomplished, were you able to change this? How?

Process – Thought Connection

18. What processes did you use to help you think and make connections while working through the dissertation? What other processes helped you complete your work?

External Influences

19. Explain the external influences, such as relationships, that affected your progress of the dissertation positively and negatively.

External Influences

20. Did you have any special resources, skills, processes, or environments that you feel affected your progress? If so, please explain.

External Influences

21. How did your chair and committee positively and negatively affect your progress?

Interventions

22. Did you use any interventions to help you with the research process? What worked, and what didn't? Please explain.

Suggestions

23. What suggestions do you have in regards to the use of any processes and thoughts that you feel would be beneficial for future doctoral students?

Read: Thank you for your time. Your input is sincerely appreciated.

APPENDIX F
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW DATA

Summary of Interview Data

Category	Non-completer	Enrollee	Completer
Characteristics and Skills			
Procrastinates	3/4, Wesley (1), Heather, Suzanne (32)		
Capable	¼, Suzanne		
Self-driven		1/5, Elena	2/7, Cathy, Travis
Dedicated		1/5, Regina	
Maintain self-esteem		1/5, Elena	
Humbled			1/7, Joanne (43)
Ambitious	¼, Suzanne		
Big picture person	¼, Heather		
Long-term planner	¼, Suzanne		
Goal and timeline oriented		1/5, Brenda	
Relationship oriented	¼, Suzanne		
Procedural		1/5, Regina	
Overwhelmed			1/7, Joanne
Stubborn and strong willed		1/5, Regina	1/7, Cathy
Work through hardships		1/5, Elena	
Curious	¾, Wesley, Heather (20), Suzanne	1/5 Elena (31)	
Finish what I start			1/7, Joanne
Motivated	¼, Donald		
Persistent/tenacious	¼, Suzanne	¼, Elena	4/7, Cathy, Vivian, Pamela, Ronnie
Meticulous attention to detail			1/7, Pamela
Perfectionist		¼, Elena	
Skilled worker	¼, Donald		
Professional		1/5, Jeanette	
Get things done by deadlines	¼, Suzanne	2/5, Jeanette, Brenda	1/7, Joanne
Works fast	¼, Donald		
Knowledgeable	¼, Donald		
Compassionate/Caring	2/4, Donald, Suzanne		

Honest	¼, Donald		
Hard on self	¼, Donald	1/5, Regina	
Trustworthy			1/7, Ronnie
Always on my mind			1/7, Travis
Loyal			1/7, Ronnie (24)
Serious student			1/7, Pamela
Hard Worker	¾, Heather, Suzanne, Wesley	2/5, Jeanette, Elena	1/7, Ronnie
Disciplined			1/7, Joanne
Felt inadequate			1/7, Pamela
Creative	¼, Heather		
Confident		1/5, Elena (14)	
Not assertive enough		1/5, Brenda (28)	
Believe it is rude to argue		1/5, Brenda	
Not one to voice opinions		2/5, Brenda, Regina	
Want to complete what is started	¼, Suzanne	1/5, Jeanette	3/7, Cathy, Vivian, Joanne
Needs to be excited about something to get it done	¼, Heather		
Became organized			1/7, Travis
Very organized			1/7, Joanne
Not the smartest (they said)			3/7, Ronnie, George, Joanne (47)
Slower than most (she said)			1/7, Pamela
Needs Deadlines	2/4, Heather, Suzanne	3/5, Jeanette, Brenda, Kayla	
Need the feeling of accomplishment to keep going	¼, Suzanne		
Depressed at not completing	¼, Suzanne		
Chose doctorate program over National Board Certification	2/4, Heather, Suzanne		
Non-completers don't like to talk about it	¼, Suzanne (27)		1/7, Vivian (12)
First generation college student		3/5, Jeannette, Elena, Regina	3/7, Cathy, Vivian, Pamela, Ronnie

Mexican Immigrant		2/5, Elena, Regina	
First language was French			2/7, Ronnie, George
Born in another country, First language not English		3/5, Elena, Regina, Brenda	2/7, Ronnie, George
One parent died while young		1/5, Elena	
Father was a military person, lived on a military base		1/5, Brenda	2/7, Ronnie, George
Emotions			
Excited to get started	2/4, Heather, Suzanne		
Frustration from not completing	¾, Donald, Heather, Suzanne		
Annoyed that it isn't done		1/5, Kayla	
Frustrating lack of contact		1/5, Brenda (19)	
Disappointed for not graduated yet		1/5, Kayla	
Frustrating at times working on the paper. Didn't understand the process.	2/4, Donald, Heather	1/5, Jeanette	
Frustration or struggled with cost	2/4, Donald, Suzanne	1/5, Jeanette	1/7, Pamela
Anger from not completing	¼, Donald		
Shocked at not completing	¼, Donald		
Feel horrible about lack of completion		1/5, Jeanette (3)	
Feels disappointment and like a failure for not completing	2/4, Heather, Suzanne (26)		
Don't feel good from lack of completion	4/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather, Suzanne	1/5, Jeanette (10)	
Feel they will one day get their doctorate	4/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather, Suzanne		

Feel guilt from not putting in the time			1/7, George
Felt committed to my (first) chair			1/7, Joanne
Would still like to finish this doctorate program	4/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather, Suzanne		
Anxiety			1/7, Joanne
In denial of accepting Non-completer status	2/4, Wesley, Suzanne (25)		
Felt alone in the cohort		1/5, Elena	
Feel a lack of control or had to give up control of paper		1/5, Brenda (20)	2/7, Cathy (5), Pamela
Frustrated from no chair contact		1/5, Brenda	
Feel guilt for not being with children as much	1/5, Suzanne	2/5, Jeannette, Regina	3/7, Cathy (2), Ronnie, Travis
Resented having to put personal interests on hold			1/7, Vivian
Wished I could have graduated when my friends did		2/5, Brenda, Kayla	
Often thought of dropping out			2/7, Pamela, Joanne
Traumatized by having to learn Spanish			1/7, Pamela
Felt if I didn't do it now, I never would because of my age			1/7, Pamela
Discouraged		1/5, Elena	
Committee feedback hurt			1/7, Pamela (19)
Forgot to save work on computer			1/7, Ronnie
Wife pregnant			1/7, Ronnie
Sadness from graduating, love being absorbed in study, enjoyed the process more than completing			2/7, Travis, Joanne
Desire			
Promotion	3/4, Wesley, Heather, Suzanne	1/5, Jeanette	3/7, Cathy (1), Ronnie, George

Wants or wanted to finish and did		2/5, Jeanette, Kayla	2/7, Cathy, Travis
Going to finish even if loses home		1/5, Elena	
For mother or father		1/5, Brenda	2/7, Ronnie, George
To finish and move to another state		1/5, Regina	
Want to be a role model	¼, Suzanne	2/5, Jeanette, Regina (30)	1/7, Cathy
Wanted to finish before chair retired			1/7, Cathy
Personal satisfaction			1/7, George
Wanted an answer to the study			1/7, Travis
Belief			
Get as much education as possible/Education is extremely important	¼, Suzanne	4/5, Elena, Brenda, Regina, Kayla	
I expected to complete			2/7, Cathy, Vivian
I believe that life is going to be difficult but you figure it out and go on, don't give up	¼, Suzanne		1/7, Cathy
I owed it to my children to finish			1/7, Cathy
Getting Started			
Don't remember how to get started		1/5, Jeanette	
I just made myself do it			1/7, Cathy
Getting nothing done	¼, Suzanne		
Meeting Process with chair, unclear		1/5, Kayla	
Extra class with clear guidelines helped motivation in the beginning		1/5, Brenda	
Motivation			
Re-started, Intermittent	¼, Suzanne (34)	1/5, Brenda (23)	

Having to pay back student loans and not pay more tuition			2/7, Cathy, Vivian (not pay tuition)
Sideline Cheer leaders helped with motivation later		1/5, Brenda	1/7, Cathy (3)
Reinforcement causing momentum, Feedback causing motivation	¼, Suzanne, Heather, Donald	3/5, Jeannette (26), Elena, Brenda (27)	
Social Justice		1/5, Jeannette	
Helping others by writing about your research topic		1/5, Brenda	2/7, Vivian (16), Ronnie
Words that help internal motivation: It is now or never		2/5, Elena, Brenda	1/7, Pamela
Gaining life knowledge			1/7, Pamela
Just wanted to get done...It was just time			1/7, Ronnie
Momentum maintained with coffee and a lot of prayer			1/7, Ronnie
Just did it			2/7, Cathy, Ronnie
Topic			
Passionate about topic			1/7, Travis
Research			
Finding peer reviewed articles was the hardest part		1/5, Brenda	
Get side tracked		1/5, Elena	
Writing			
Good /Confident	¾, Wesley, Donald, Suzanne	1/5, Elena	
Slow	¼, Donald (7)		
Don't know what all of the chapters should look like		1/5, Jeanette	
Read other's dissertations to get an idea of what should be in each chapter		2/5, Brenda, Regina	

Got chapter outlines from another student		1/5, Brenda	
Didn't know the process for writing a proposal		1/5, Elena	
Didn't know the process of finding a good editor		1/5, Elena	
If I didn't feel like writing, I would do formatting.			1/7, Cathy
Not detail oriented			1/7, Vivian (15)
Writing was humbling and painful			1/7, Joanne (38)
writing is a very lonely and isolated time			1/7, Joanne (39)
Reading			
Good	¼, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda	
Slow	¼, Donald (6)		
Processing Information			
Good analyst or synthesize well	¼, Donald		2/7, Vivian, Ronnie (25)
Walk or hike to process information			2/7, Vivian, Joanne
Transcribing			
Challenging			1/7, Cathy
Made connections while transcribing			1/7, Joanne
Statistics			
Difficulty with statistics			2/7, Vivian, Pamela
Special Needs			
Dyslexia	¼, Donald		
Hard of Hearing	¼, Suzanne		
In the gifted program			1/7, Cathy
Son thinks she is ADD			1/7, Vivian
Life Situations			
Financial support of family member's households	¼, Donald (14)		
Death	¼, Donald (15)		1/7, George
Special needs child	¼, Suzanne		

Child takes time	2/4, Donald, Suzanne	2/5, Jeanette, Regina	1/7, Vivian
Raising a grandchild		1/5, Elena	
New job	2/4, Wesley, Donald	3/5, Elena, Brenda, Regina	
Move		1/5, Brenda	
Lost job		1/5, Elena	
Quit job		1/5, Regina	
Divorce	1/4, Donald	3/5, Jeannette, Elena, Regina	
Birth		1/5, Regina	1/7, Cathy
No family support or increased pressure	3/4, Donald, Suzanne, Heather	4/5, Jeannette, Elena, Regina, Brenda	
Family member ill		2/5, Regina, Kayla	
Marriage		1/5, Kayla	
Adopted foster child			1/7, Vivian
Single mother			1/7, Joanne
Well-being			
Health	1/4, Suzanne (22)		
Environment			
Needs quiet place	2/4, Wesley, Suzanne		
Needed a space set aside to work and organize paperwork	1/4, Heather		
Needed a space downstairs		1/5, Regina	
Created an office space		1/5, Brenda	2/7, Pamela (21), George
Office space at university		2/5, Elena, Regina	
Tried working at university		1/5, Kayla	
Work best at home		1/5, Regina	
Library			1/7, Vivian
Coffee Shop			3/7, Cathy, Ronnie, Joanne
Advantages of program			
Networking/ Meeting people	1/4, Wesley	1/5, Jeanette	
Social Justice understanding		1/5, Jeanette (11)	

Promotion	¼, Wesley		5/7, Cathy, Pamela, Ronnie, George, Travis
Young age helped with studying long hours at a time		1/5, Regina	
You have more authority			1/7, Vivian
“It shows that you have fortitude...seeing things through to the end.”			1/7, George
Financial gains			2/7, George, Pamela
It opens doors, it gets you the interviews.			2/7, George, Joanne
Disadvantages			
The time it takes		1/5, Jeanette (5)	
Loans	¼, Suzanne	1/5, Jeanette	1/7, Cathy
Crimps relationships		1/5, Jeanette	
Severed spousal relationship	¼, Donald	3/5, Jeanette, Elena, Regina	
Lost confidence in myself	¼, Suzanne		
Disappoint family	2/4, Suzanne (33), Heather	1/5, Jeanette (9)	
Sacrificed time while babies were young			2/7, Ronnie, Cathy
New job zaps energy and focus		1/5, Brenda (22)	
Chair			
Chair disconnect on topic	¾, Wesley, Heather, Suzanne		1/7, Joanne (41)
Wanted change in chair	2/4, Wesley, Suzanne		
Did not understand change in chair process or who to contact about this	2/4, Wesley, Suzanne	1/5, Kayla	
Did not know changing chairs was an option	2/4, Heather, Wesley		
Changed chairs two or more times		4/5, Jeanette (1), Elena, Brenda, Regina	2/7, Pamela, Joanne (44)

Has no chair at this time		2/5, Jeanette, Kayla	
None or limited chair contact	3/4, Wesley, Donald, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda (19)	1/7, Pamela (22)
Slow or no feedback	1/4 Donald (11)	1/5, Brenda	1/7, Pamela (18), 1/7 Joanne (49)
Returned work	1/4, Heather (18)		
Needed more chair support and direction	4/4 Wesley, Donald, Heather (21), Suzanne (32)	2/5, Jeanette (6), Elena (12)	
Wondered if chair got many through the dissertation	1/4, Heather		
No reminder from chair to re-enroll	1/4, Suzanne		
Little or no initiated contacts by chair	1/4, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda (19)	
Didn't feel the right guidance was provided		1/5, Elena	
New chair takes time and guides		1/5, Elena	2/7, Pamela, Joanne
Chair did not want contact going to committee members unless directed by chair		1/5, Brenda	1/7, Pamela
Chair wanted to choose committee		1/5, Regina	
A good committee and chair behind you helps out a lot			1/7, Cathy
Had co-chairs, one more helpful than the other			2/7, Cathy, George
Helpful specific feedback			2/7, Cathy, Joanne
Chair was good about having meetings			1/7, Vivian (10)
Chair checked in with me			1/7, Vivian

Disappointed from chair's feedback, thought she was further along than chair thought			1/7, Pamela
Chair was very positive			2/7, Ronnie (27), Joanne
Supportive chair, came to his job and home continually contacting and bringing resources			1/7, George (29)
Chair edited dissertation			1/7, Pamela
Chair helped lay out title and chapters			1/7, George
Chair provided framework for chapter			1/7, Joanne
First chair didn't come to meetings			1/7, Joanne
Committee			
Committee not established	3/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather	1/5, Kayla	
Doesn't know the process of putting together a committee	1/4, Heather		
Committee feedback was specific			1/7, Cathy
Sometimes they will ask you to take something out and then put it back in			1/7, George
Provided theoretical guidance and encouragement			1/7, Vivian
Committee was only involved in the end			1/7, George (34)
Positive committee involvement			2/7, Travis, Joanne
Time off after classes			
Took a year off	1/4, Heather		2/7, Cathy (6), Vivian
Took two years off	1/4, Wesley	2/5, Regina, Jeanette	1/7, George

Lost after classes			
Felt alone/lost	2/4, Wesley (2), Heather (17)	3/5, Jeanette (8), Elena (13), Regina	
Massive project	1/4, Suzanne (30)		
Cost of program			
Misconception of summer class cost	1/4, Wesley (3)(4)		
High in comparison to other programs	1/4, Wesley		
Can't keep paying without getting anything done	1/4, Suzanne		
Cost		1/5, Jeanette (7)	1/7, Pamela
Didn't understand the financial aid process		1/5, Elena	
Didn't want to keep paying			3/7, Cathy, Vivian, George
Intervention			
An extra class but got an Incomplete	1/4, Wesley (5)(6)		
An extra class, not successful		1/5, Kayla	
An extra class, got her started			1/7, Vivian
Took an extra class but it was not what was needed			1/7, Joanne
Needed someone to intervene	1/4, Donald (8)		
Need someone to check-up on me		1/5, Brenda	
Met with a group at the university	1/4, Heather (helped)	1/5, Jeanette (people showed a few times only)	1/7, Vivian (9)
Network of cohort friends			2/7, Cathy (4), Joanne
Professor helped with Statistics			1/7, Vivian
A friend helped clean up the data			1/7, Vivian
Chair helped with theoretical framework			1/7, Pamela

Met with a friend on-line comparing progress			1/7, Pamela
Chair helped with themes			1/7, Joanne
Delta partner reviewed work regularly			1/7, Joanne
Time Management			
Needed more time in the day	¼, Donald		
Unbalanced schedule		2/5, Jeannette, Brenda (21)	
Learned to balance responsibilities and schedule		1/5, Regina	4/7, Vivian, Ronnie, Travis (36), Joanne
Used checklists			2/7, Cathy, Joanne (42)
Block off time during the night			4/7, Cathy, Pamela, Ronnie, Travis
Used calendar with dates of when things should be done			1/7, Cathy
Honored semi-scheduled commitments to self			1/7, Vivian (17)
Used timeline			1/7, Cathy
Took time off of work			1/7, Vivian (8)
Studied early mornings			2/7, Pamela, Ronnie
Studied on weekends			2/7, Pamela, Travis
Manage your time alone			1/7, George (32)
Set deadlines			1/7, Joanne
Worked early mornings before work	¼, Donald (10)		
No time			
Children take time	¼, Suzanne (29)		1/5, Jeanette
Incomplete class	2/4, Wesley, Suzanne		

Support			
Positive Spouse support	¼, Wesley	1/5, Brenda	3/7, Pamela, Ronnie (26), Travis
Supported others rather than receiving support	¼ Donald		
Positive support from family	¼, Heather		3/7, Ronnie, Travis, Joanne
Parents really wanted me to finish			1/7, Cathy
Colleagues and principal were supportive			1/7, Ronnie
Delta cohort members supportive			2/7, Travis, Joanne
Support gone sour			
Spouse/Significant other's comments about not completing hurts	2/4, Heather, Suzanne		1/7, Cathy (7)
Family support comments hurt	2/4, Suzanne (28), Heather	1/5, Brenda	
Felt lack of support from chair	¼, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda	
Your spouse saying, "What is going on?"			1/7, George (33)
Job responsibilities			
Consumed time	¾, Wesley, Donald, Heather	1/5, Jeanette	1/7, Vivian
Promoted while in the program	2/4, Wesley, Donald (12)		5/7, Cathy, Vivian, Pamela, Ronnie, Joanne
New job		1/5, Brenda	
Deliberately did not take promotions so she could finish dissertation		1/5, Jeanette	
Stepped down to take an easier job			1/7, Joanne
Quit work		1/5, Regina	
Lost job		1/5, Elena	

Professors			
Slow feedback on selection of topic	¼, Wesley (6)		
Low expectations of students completing	¼, Donald (13)		
Stopping or stuck place			
Topic didn't work, some had to change topic	4/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather (16), Suzanne (24)	1/5, Jeanette (2)	2/7, Vivian (11), Ronnie
No chair		2/5, Jeanette, Kayla	
Proposal, No chair contact		1/5, Brenda	
Reorganization of university		1/5, Kayla	
Writing: Did not know what to write			1/7, Cathy
Put first topic research in a box and threw it away			1/7, Ronnie (23)
Stuck on chapter 2 and arguments with chair			1/7, Joanne
How much done?			
Research	4/4, Wesley, Donald, Heather, Suzanne (23)	3/5, Jeanette, Elena (15), Regina, Kayla	
Chapter 2, Literature Review	2/4, Donald, (31), Heather (19)	3/5, Jeanette (4), Regina	
Chapter 3, Methods	¼, Donald	1/5, Regina	
Working on proposal		1/5, Elena (25)	
Waiting on proposal meeting for over a year		1/5, Brenda	
Events that went smooth			
Defense – Formality only, approved work prior to event			3/7, Cathy (14), Vivian, Joanne (46)
Events that Slowed or difficulties			
IRB			1/7, Cathy
Proposal			1/7, Pamela
It always seemed like there was another step.			1/7, Pamela
Literature Review			1/7, Joanne (45)

Events that when finished provided confidence			
Comps and Proposal			1/7, Joanne
Ethical or inequitable issue disagreements			
Ghost writers used by some according to:	¼, Donald	1/5, Elena	
Others suggested writing while at work	¼, Donald		
Some delegated their job at work so they could write their dissertation		1/5, Jeanette	
Heard the school now accepts learning the Native American language in addition or instead of Spanish			1/7, Pamela
Another ASU program didn't require testing			1/7, Pamela
Processes that worked			
Didn't enroll for one semester, got back into program		1/5, Regina	
Treat working on the dissertation like going to class		1/5, Kayla	
Focused on research to help with job			2/7, Vivian, Pamela
Setting goals			1/7, George
Get all of your thoughts on paper			1/7, George
Continual focus on dissertation			2/7, Pamela, Travis
Lost job, felt compelled to finish		1/5, Elena (24)	
Tuition pay keeps the work fresh in the mind		1/5, Kayla	
New laptop was motivating		1/5, Regina	
Read several bibliographies of articles to find main authors	¼, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda	

Reviewed others dissertations to get an idea of what should be in each chapter		2/5, Brenda, Regina	
Received chapter outlines		1/5, Brenda	
Schedule writing time on a calendar		1/5, Elena	
Set small goals		1/5, Elena	
Created a timeline and stay focused on deadlines		2/5, Elena, Kayla	1/7, Joanne
To stay focused, create a table of contents and systematically complete the contents		1/5, Elena	
Organizational charts to summarize articles		1/5, Brenda	1/7, Pamela (20)
Brainstorm ideas with graduates		1/5, Elena	
Write literature review from a historical aspect		1/5, Elena	
Write first, edit later		2/5, Elena, Regina	
Excavate, dig deep into the readings, don't look for the obvious		1/5, Elena	
Summarizing on index cards		1/5, Regina	
Reading, writing, and then organizing thoughts while hiking			1/7, Vivian
Working out helps with sleeping		1/5, Elena	
Having a chair that believes in you helps to maintain self-esteem		1/5, Elena (16)	
Go to university to work on dissertation. You will feel more obligated to work		1/5, Elena	
Talking with other delta members		2/5, Brenda, Regina	3/7, Cathy, Joanne, Travis

Wake up in the morning with answers			2/7, Cathy, Joanne (40)
Took sick days off work to write			2/7, Cathy, Vivian
It is the process of relationships, the classes, the comps, the committee members, the communication, the writing, and the editing, if you can get through this process you can get through anything			1/7, Ronnie
It was the hardest thing I have ever done			2/7, Joanne, Ronnie
Did research during classes on topic, negotiated with each professor			2/7, Ronnie, Travis
It is about getting things done, anybody can do it but they have to want to get the work done and do it			1/7, Ronnie
Forced myself to write one page a day			1/7, George
Used maps for planning writing			1/7, Joanne
Did one or two interviews a week, transcribed, highlighted for themes with different colors			1/7, Joanne
Reread each transcription using different (perspectives), then wrote the themes up using codes for quotes, read for coherency of start, middle, and end and then put in the quotes, used writing strategies			1/7, Joanne

Momentum: There were times when I couldn't write. (It was an intrinsic need)			2/7, Cathy, Joanne
Processes that didn't work			
Group study		2/5, Brenda, Kayla	5/7, Cathy, Vivian, Ronnie (28), George, Travis
Got real tired of the topic			2/7, Pamela, George
Relationships suffered			1/7, Pamela
Family asking about dissertation and not understanding	1/5, Suzanne	1/5, Brenda (29)	
Chair's general feedback of "improve content" or put down like, "Is that your original thought?"		1/5, Regina	
Chair held up progress and topic was published by someone else		1/5, Regina	
Interviews difficult to acquire			1/7, Cathy
Making sacrifices to work on dissertation			2/7, Vivian, Pamela
Resources			
Book, "How to complete your dissertation in a year" by Hammond		1/5, Kayla	
Book, "Writing the dissertation."		1/5, Kayla	1/7, Joanne
Book, "Guidelines to finishing your dissertation."		1/5, Kayla	
Book by Ross and Rallis			1/7, Joanne
Used Survey Monkey on-line program			1/7, Pamela

Learned and used SPSS statistical program, SPSS is available for download from the university			1/7, Pamela
Computer broke down three times			1/7, Pamela
Hired an editor			3/7, Ronnie, Travis, Joanne
Suggestions for:			
Students			
Advocate for yourself	¼, Wesley		
Be committed. You don't want to go into it and not finish. The worst dissertation is the not finished one.			1/7, Ronnie
"Do you know what they call the graduated with the worst dissertation in the world? Doctor."			1/7, George (35)
You have to start the process with your people and say, "What sacrifices are you all willing to make?"			1/7, Travis (37)
Regularly save your work on the computer.			1/7, Ronnie
Listen to your body to find your own best time to study.			1/7, Pamela
Know yourself, your learning styles, and what works for you. Identify your weaknesses and seek out ways to compensate or navigate around those weaknesses.			1/7, Joanne
Keep the same topic and look at it from different lenses.		2/5, Brenda, Regina	
Get narrow in focus.			1/7, Vivian

Believe in yourself. Start writing sooner. Don't feel that your work is not good enough. Don't listen to other's views of your lack of ability. Get an editor.		1/5, Regina	
Love yourself, Love your topic.		1/5, Regina	
Mentor another cohort member in a different cohort.		1/5, Regina	
Consider a writing team looking at the same topic from different angles, each writing their own dissertation that will fit together with other's.		1/5, Brenda	
Take notes as you read.		2/5, Elena, Regina	
In literature review write about the most prominent people in the field.		1/5, Elena	
Reach out to people who have completed the dissertation (to get help).		2/5, Elena, Brenda	
Become familiar with others' theoretical frameworks and why they chose it.		1/5, Elena	
Learn early how to use research software like OneNote for citations.		1/5, Elena	
Learn how to pick a chair that will be there for you.		1/5, Elena	
Keep things organized in folders by themes.		1/5, Elena	
Get to know your chair's expectations.		1/5, Brenda	

Keep afloat. Take everything with a grain of salt. There are a lot of things they don't tell you.		1/5, Regina	
The best way to find good sources was to look at the bibliography of other writers.			1/7, Cathy
Work when you feel most comfortable.			1/7, Cathy
Be willing to try. You have to take responsibility for this. . . If some little mishap comes along, (remember that you have invested a lot of time and money).			1/7, Cathy
Learn transcribing, the statistics program, and using the library.			1/7, Pamela
To save hours get an editor.			1/7, George
Need at least 60% to respond to a survey.			1/7, Ronnie
Put everything you read in your bibliography, you can pull it out later.			1/7, George
Have your own room with at least two tables in the house...an office.			1/7, George (31)
Finding the right chair is like a marriage.			1/7, George
Know that a part of your personal life will get put on hold.			1/7, George
Don't take on extra committee work...your plate is full.			1/7, George

Need balance or the mental health suffers			1/7, Joanne (48)
After submitting work to chair work on another section while waiting for feedback.			1/7, Joanne
Have the conference with the chair about when you want to graduate.			1/7, Joanne
Chair			
Have students research topics and include the research as chapters for books that they put together.	¼, Donald		
If you don't like the student, don't agree to be their chair. Tell them nicely to find someone else.			1/7, George
More topic choices that the student can relate to and be passionate about	¼ Heather		
Guide the students through the process.	¼, Donald (9)	1/5, Brenda (19)	
Help students get a timeline and help them stick with it.		2/5, Brenda	
Provide specific feedback in writing.		2/5, Regina, Kayla	
Need to provide scaffolding			1/7, Joanne
Have deadlines for the students.			1/7, Joanne
Let your student know how far ahead of the defense you need to see the paper to provide feedback.			1/7, Joanne
Program			
Explain the program and expectations well for new recruits.	¼, Heather		

Provide teachings on how to input sources into the dissertation.			1/7, Pamela
Provide a course for SPSS.			1/7, Pamela
Start the dissertation process earlier in the program.	¼, Wesley		
Have a checklist for the dissertation process.	¼, Donald		
Have guidelines for deadlines.	¼, Heather	1/5, Kayla	
Organize groups that work and study together.	¼, Heather		
At the beginning, discuss chair and committee lists with current research.		2/5, Regina, Kayla	
Provide more ways for the students and possible chairs to get to know each other.	¼, Heather		
There needs to be one person, other than a secretary that is in charge of seeing the remaining people through the program.		1/5, Jeanette	
Teach how to write a proposal.		1/5, Elena (24)	
Bring back the classes for those struggling.		1/5, Brenda	
Explain program changes and responsibilities to existing students.	¼, Suzanne	3/5, Jeannette, Elena, Regina	
Guide students on how to set up and prepare for the comp/proposal meeting.		2/5, Brenda, Regina	

Set up a dissertation for dummies or don't be ABD monthly class.	1/4, Wesley (continue classes with deadlines during dissertation writing)		1/7, George (30)
Have someone in the Delta program to walk you through the last month of meetings and formatting process.			1/7, George
More support is needed when classes are over and you are on your own.			1/7, George
They need to match the students with the chair better.			1/7, Joanne
Prepare the student earlier.			1/7, Joanne
University			
Waive immunization requirement.	1/4, Donald		
Streamline requirements.		1/5, Brenda (17)	
Unfairness of requirements		1/5, Brenda (18)	
Explain the process of deferment of student loans.		1/5, Regina	
Provide professors that have experienced social injustice.		1/5, Regina	
Analogies			
Marathon		1/5, Brenda	
Balance Time: Swinging pendulum		1/5, Brenda	
Wrong or no guidance: Quicksand		1/5, Elena	
After classes: Floating at sea alone, SOS		1/5, Elena	
After classes is like a child leaving the house for the first time. Some go nuts.			1/7, George

It is just like having a baby with labor pains.			2/7, Pamela, Joanne
Research was like solving a detective story.	2/4, Heather, Suzanne		
Research: Puzzle and learning to ride a bike	1/4, Suzanne		
Denial: Ostrich in the sand	1/4, Suzanne		
Prominent people in the field: Major players	1/4, Suzanne		
Big name authors		1/5, Brenda	
Restarting – reboot	1/4, Suzanne		
Not completing – Unfinished business	1/4, Suzanne		
Arduous process	1/4, Suzanne		
Grueling process		1/5, Brenda	1/7, Vivian (13)
Baby steps		1/5, Regina	
You are holding this “big thing.”	1/4 Suzanne		1/7, Vivian
Limbo land			
Shot down – put it away, chair questioned integrity of the work so much		1/5, Regina	
Working daily, consistency, habit		1/5, Regina	
Limbo land when you don’t hear back from your chair. No feedback		1/5, Brenda	
After classes: It is like that little bird that is thrown out of the nest		1/5, Jeannette	
Program changes in personnel and responsibilities: bounce, bounce, bounce, from one to another		1/5, Regina	

Research Suggested			
Is there a big group of people who have not gotten feedback from their chair so they are stuck?		1/5, Brenda	
Investigate chairs that take more of a personal interest in their students and the students that finish.			1/7, George

Non-completer Comments

- (1) He would still like to go back and finish. He hopes that he could continue in the program or start where he left off. He said, "I didn't like not finishing."
- (2) "It feels like, we will get you to the precipice and there you are...It was frustrating going from coursework to independent research. I don't think it was realistic."
- (3) "I didn't reenroll because either a professor or a secretary told me in one of my classes that I would have to pay \$4500 for the last summer for a one-credit course." This was a misconception. We didn't have to enroll in the summers after classes but we did need to enroll for one credit in the fall and spring to stay in the program. I was personally charged a large amount when I enrolled in the summer program for one credit but later was reimbursed when I questioned it.
- (4) "The cost of the program was a disadvantage. There were other programs within the same university that were half the cost."
- (5) "The class helped me to make progress but not with my chair. It occurred to me that it was dependent on what your chair thought."
- (6) Donald has dyslexia. He learned to read in the third grade using the whole language approach. He now reads slowly and deeply.
- (7) Donald writes slowly. He didn't learn his alphabet until the third grade. He feels this had to do with his dyslexia.
- (8) He said that he needed someone to say, "Donald, there is too much to do. Forget about being a principal and get your doctorate done."
- (9) "The professors should be driving the questions (topic research questions) since they are the researchers."
- (10) Donald also tried working at night but often didn't get home from work until 11 p.m. He said that he really needed to work during the day but that was a conflict of interest with his job.
- (11) "When you are writing you can't leave it for too long because you have lost that train of thought. If you are waiting on the professor again for a couple of weeks...you are lost in 6 to 10 spots. You have 110 pages of writing and none of it blends well together or flows. That added to my frustration. I needed more solid reviews and guidance." He said that he would like the chair to get back with him after 5 pages so that he would know if he was on course.

- (12) Donald said that if he hadn't gotten promoted that he felt he could have completed the program.
- (13) Donald said that professors told them that 50% of them would not make it through the program.
- (14) Donald provided support to three family households.
- (15) Donald lost his mother while he was in the program.
- (16) Needs a deep connection with the topic. Her topic changed because the program she was researching got dismantled and the data was not accessible.
- (17) "Take classes, take classes, then all of a sudden, poof and you are on your own. There was a lot of support and then there was none."
- (18) Her work was being returned several times for revisions. She said that her chair wanted 100 pages on the research.
- (19) She had 50 articles summarized and 30 pages completed.
- (20) Heather likened the research to a detective story and she felt disheartened when she didn't find what needed to be investigated further and felt stuck.
- (21) She said that she felt her chair didn't care about the topic and that the chair was just there to do a job.
- (22) She had an inner ear infection and a broken foot. Her daughter was having seizures and hurt herself. CPS got involved to see if her daughter was safe at home.
- (23) Suzanne had 25-30 articles researched.
- (24) One of Suzanne's principal friends told her that she was a doctorate student in search of a topic. Suzanne said, "It kind of fit. If I could just get started, I know I could get finished." Suzanne had difficulty narrowing down her research she said. This is Suzanne's second attempt at getting a Doctorate degree. She was stopped at the same point both times.
- (25) Suzanne said, "I did not enroll. Honestly, I have done a little bit of an ostrich in the sand routine. I have never received any communication from the school saying, "Sorry, too bad you are gone." I have no idea what my status is. I would like to think that I could still finish."
- (26) Suzanne said, "I feel sometimes a little bit like a fake. I talk to my students all the time about getting their education and not to give up even when things are hard. I tell them they can still pass the class. They just need to put in a little more effort...this is like unfinished business."
- (27) "To a certain extent, entering a doctoral program and not finishing is an admission of failure, an admission of professional failure. And not all people want to revisit it." She said that she doesn't know how to adjust her resume from degree pending to dropped out. She said, "It is like the job you get fired from and you are really not sure how to put that on the resume."
- (28) Suzanne doesn't know how to explain it to her family. Her mom will say, "Are you ever going to finish? You need to finish." Suzanne knows she needs to finish but she feels stuck and doesn't know how to get started again. She says that she hopes and prays that no one brings it up...Suzanne wanted to be a role model for kids by getting her doctorate.
- (29) Suzanne has four children and feels guilty for leaving them to take care of each other while she works on her dissertation.

(30) Suzanne said that in the classes she wrote 15 pages for an assignment and then they would tell her that for the dissertation you are to write a 300-page paper and that they would give us a year to do it. She said, “Maybe it was just like the size of it that was intimidating. I don’t know.”

(31) Donald said that he had 110 pages done but none of it flowed well together.

(32) Suzanne said, “I recognize when I procrastinate, but doing something about it...I have a difficult time admitting when I am struggling...I am the kid that sits in the classroom that struggles but doesn’t ask.”

(33) Family wanted her home more.

(34) Suzanne rebooted due to a change in topic relating to her child and her students’ interest in school.

Enrollee Comments

(1) Jeanette has had two chairs so far. One went on sabbatical. She is looking for her third chair.

(2) “I have changed my focus a few times.”

(3) “As a minority, I would feel like I let others down.”

(4) Jeanette has 16 pages done.

(5) Jeanette said that she had a lack of time commitment.

(6) Jeanette said that she needs her chair to say, “Send me this.” Hold me accountable and be accessible.

(7) She asks herself, “Why have I spent so much money?”

(8) “It is like that little bird that is thrown out of the nest. I am trying to get back into finishing.”

(9) Jeanette said, “In my (Hispanic) culture, you are expected to participate in all these things...you are missed. Why aren’t you the dutiful parent, daughter?” Jeanette said that she has a difficulty saying no to their requests.

(10) Jeanette said, “There aren’t a lot of Latina that are college level or doctorate. There are no college graduates in my family.”

(11) “The Social justice spurred me. I am not the kind of person that just wants to let things happen. I want to help all kids. I want to be a person that when I pass I leave a legacy.”

(12) Elena said, “I didn’t convey that I needed more help than I got. I felt like I was in quicksand.”

(13) “I felt like I was floating at sea alone, SOS.”

(14) “I look at things from a wider perspective (now). It was from the heart before.”

(15) “Researching has not been an easy job.... You go through blocks and emotional drains.”

(16) Elena said, “Your chair has to want you to finish as much as you want to finish.”

(17) Brenda said, “The number of hoops to go through seems silly. You have to play the game. I waiver. Sometimes I push forward and the further away I get.”

(18) “I heard that for Delta Cohort 9, they didn’t have enough chairs. They are writing a final paper. A capstone paper. They don’t have to defend...they also reduced the amount of course work that they had to do to finish.”

- (19) “The most frustrating for me is the lack of contact. I need to get going again. I need a mom, a mom chair. I need positive reinforcement. The lack of communication is more of a negative for me. I tried asking for a timeline.”
- (20) “In a funk, in the blues. It is not happening in a timely manner. A control issue. I have no control as to what, where, when, or why...I remember one of my professors in the master’s program was ABD. I thought, ‘Why don’t you just get it done?’ Now I am in the same boat.”
- (21) “Real life takes over...Work has become more of a priority. I need to find a happy balance.”
- (22) “A disadvantage was switching jobs...moving into a new home, starting a new job, learning all new systems at school has impacted my energy and focus.”
- (23) Brenda got a spurt of “mental energy” to restart because of a mandate relating to her topic that may be enforced on students entering schools.
- (24) “Honestly, what propelled me was I lost my job...Here is a do or die situation...get real. I am going to finish even if I lose my home.”
- (25) Elena said, “They could have taught us that process. How to write a good proposal.”
- (26) Jeannette said, “When I did have some momentum it was because my chair said, “Send me this.” “He was perfectly accessible. When you can’t have that consistency, that is when I falter.”
- (27) Brenda said, “Any kind of reinforcement and feedback is a motivating feature to keep working.”
- (28) Brenda said, “I can be (assertive) but I guess it is that honorific value. I was a rule follower...to challenge a professor, that was much more difficult...the most assertive that I have gotten with my chair was when I said, “If one of them (my parents) would die during this process, (before I graduate), I am holding you personally responsible.”
- (29) Brenda said that she had to ask her family not to ask about her dissertation anymore. She felt pressure from them and she feels frustrated. Their comments just hurt more. She said that other Delta members understand the process and give better support.
- (30) Regina said, “My daughter, I want her to be something . . . If I want her to be an educated person, I have to be an example.”
- (31) Elena said, “I love research, I am a nerd.”

Completer

- (1) Cathy said, “I just wanted it so I would be more marketable.”
- (2) Cathy said, “I was breast feeding. That was really emotional for me, the whole family piece, being away from my husband and son...the guilt was more of a reason why I had to work (on the dissertation).”
- (3) Cathy said, “I had friends that checked on me and held me accountable.”
- (4) Cathy said that they had a network of people that shared resources and other dissertations. They emailed each other back and forth.
- (5) Cathy said, “I gave up and let go of anything I was holding on to and I said to my committee, “Just tell what to do and I will do it.”...I just had to give in.”
- (6) Cathy said, “I just wanted to have a life.”

- (7) Cathy said, "Sometimes my husband would get mad and he would say, "Sometimes, I think you are using the dissertation as an excuse."
- (8) Vivian said, "I just found that being a parent and a principal I had to sleep. I had to live my life, so, I had to figure to leave my life."
- (9) Vivian said, "On the lit review, I met a friend and we made a schedule. We went to the library and worked."
- (10) Vivian said that at first she met with the chair every two weeks. She said, "I felt like in a small way, I was doing something."
- (11) Vivian said, "I spent a year studying a topic that I couldn't do a dissertation on."
- (12) Vivian said, "A year ago...I would have told them...don't talk to me about it ever again."
- (13) Vivian said, "Each chapter was like chopping my thumb off. That was how painful it was for me." She said that when she was not finished she would tell people not to talk to her about it.
- (14) Cathy said, "My committee would not let me go to a meeting not ready."
- (15) Vivian said, "Once I figured it out, I don't feel like I should have to explain it..."
- (16) Vivian said, "Thinking about (the data) and using that to support kids was motivating for me. Being able to apply that in real time and by thinking about what that meant to me, to teachers, and kids kept me going."
- (17) Vivian said, "If something happens you have to tell yourself, I am not going to be able to work on this right now, but in April I will and even if then isn't opportune, then try four hours. Then put it away... If you leave it open-ended, it stays open ended."
- (18) Pamela said, "There was one point when I had to wait seven weeks for a rewrite on the comps. She kept telling me, don't make changes until you see my revisions. That just drove me crazy."
- (19) Pamela said, "Two members on the committee actually told me that I wasn't good at making connections because I am so detail oriented."
- (20) Pamela said, "...I would take my own notes on it (the article) and then I would put it in a spreadsheet. Then I would weed out the ones (the articles) I wasn't going to use. I had a folder for each article. ...I would look at the references to see which ones I should check out. Every folder had the assignment summary or article I chose. I crossed off those I didn't use. Then I marked it with tally marks the number of times I referenced it. I had notes like that sheet for the defense."
- (21) Pamela said, "I was lucky to have that one large room to myself.. I could just leave piles on the floor...soft music."
- (22) Pamela referenced difficulty with contacting and receiving contact from her first chair.
- (23) Ronnie said, "I threw the first topic box away."
- (24) Ronnie said, "If I am going to do something, I am loyal about it."
- (25) Ronnie said, "I drew a lot of pictures."
- (26) Ronnie said, "I had good support. I think that is key. That is what I tell every candidate. That was the biggest thing."
- (27) Ronnie said, "Everybody left me alone. I would take some of it, and use some of it."
- (28) Ronnie said, "Waste of time to meet with others in the group. I would of gotten others work done for them. I decided early on, I would not do that anymore."

- (29) George said, "It is hard to sit across from someone and say you are not doing anything. She took a legitimate interest...(by asking) "What can I do to help?""
- (30) George said, "If the Delta program could just put together a class to just lie out your chapters...I believe that if (the student) is paying for one credit, (he/she should) take a class...meet with a dissertation expert to motivate...make the class mean something...(have them) answer ...questions of what was completed in the last two weeks. (It is important) to know you are not in the boat all alone. You (can) feel like a loser...and beat yourself up with no end in sight if you are struggling. Knowing someone else was having problems may have cut down the time (to completion.)"
- (31) George said, "...any time you have to pull out and clean it up that takes an hour each time. Then you still lose stuff."
- (32) George said, "Manage your time alone or your job, your family, and your life will fill in the spaces very fast. When you decided to get your doctorate degree, you gave up time somewhere. So that time gets filled up right back in. It is like trying to plug a hole in the ocean."
- (33) George said, "That piece can be detrimental too. I don't know if there is an answer to that. It can motivate you both ways."
- (34) George said, "They gave proving questions, some grammatical, some probing. They are the icing on the cake to make sure that it was publically readable."
- (35) George said, "It (the dissertation) will never be perfect. They can't give answers. They are waiting for you. The length and depth of your work is up to you. It is an on-going work. It will always be on-going."
- (36) Travis said, "My wife said to me, "Even when you are here, you are not really here." It is a hard balance. I had to reverse my times. So I had three lives...I was a husband and dad from 3:30 to 10:30, from 10 at night to 1:30 I would write at the library. I taught during the day."
- (37) Travis said, "It is the toughest thing you will ever do."
- (38) Joanne said, "The standards were higher in the doctoral program. Turning in a paper that I thought was done and then my chair would red mark every word....I thought I knew how to write."
- (39) Joanne said, "It was a very introverted time for me. It changed who I normally am. To get back into that social person. It is hard for me now. I am not that same person anymore."
- (40) Joanne said, "I had a piece of paper by my bed. I would wake up and write it down. It was like a big puzzle."
- (41) Joanne and her first chair had disagreements about the topic.
- (42) Joanne said, "(I would) keep to the schedule. By the end of the day, I had to have this and this done. I wouldn't leave the restaurant until I had this and this done."
- (43) Joanne said, "I thought I could do so well before in my masters...I had this inflated self-esteem...it was humbling. At the beginning of the doctorate program (I thought) I can't write. It did kind of cut me down but then at the end I realized what I could do then and now...I had to learn to delegate and lean on my coworkers a lot. That changed me to be able to delegate and not be the strongest one. I learned how to ask for help...in that way, it was humbling too."

(44) Joanne said, “A lot of it was, I needed a little bit of hand holding, more than my first chair would do. (My new chair) was nurturing. My first chair wasn’t. I needed someone to say it nicer to me. (The new chair) still had high expectations. There were times when she would say, “Go to this book and read this page.” Then I figured it out. Not, “This needs to be better.””

(45) Joanne said, “My (literature review) was the hardest. I didn’t feel like I knew what I was doing. There was constant rewriting. Once I got it figured out, I didn’t have to go back. Once I got (the data analysis) chapters done, I had to change the (introduction) chapter. I still don’t know what a conceptual framework is. That was the hardest part for me. My chair said my conceptual framework was really good. Each professor had a different idea of what it was they wanted. That was hard too.”

(46) Joanne said, “It was years of having all of this anxiety and then the (stress) is gone. My body is used to it. It is hard to just let it go. Every once in while I start feeling anxious. I never had anxiety in the past. It was a stressful thing.”

(47) Joanne said that she had to grow and learn how to add substance to her dissertation.

(48) Joanne said, “I was so focused on writing...no exercise, I wasn’t balanced. The biggest thing was just being so overwhelmed. I would say, “Today I am going to just sit on the couch all day.” Sometimes I would have to do that instead of just hit the wall. I had to vegetate out...and sometimes things were fuzzy, my mind wasn’t clear. I would hike and walk and then I would think things through while I was walking.”

(49) Joanne referenced this to her first chair.

APPENDIX G
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

Questions 6, 28, 50: How long had you been in the program after the third year of classes?

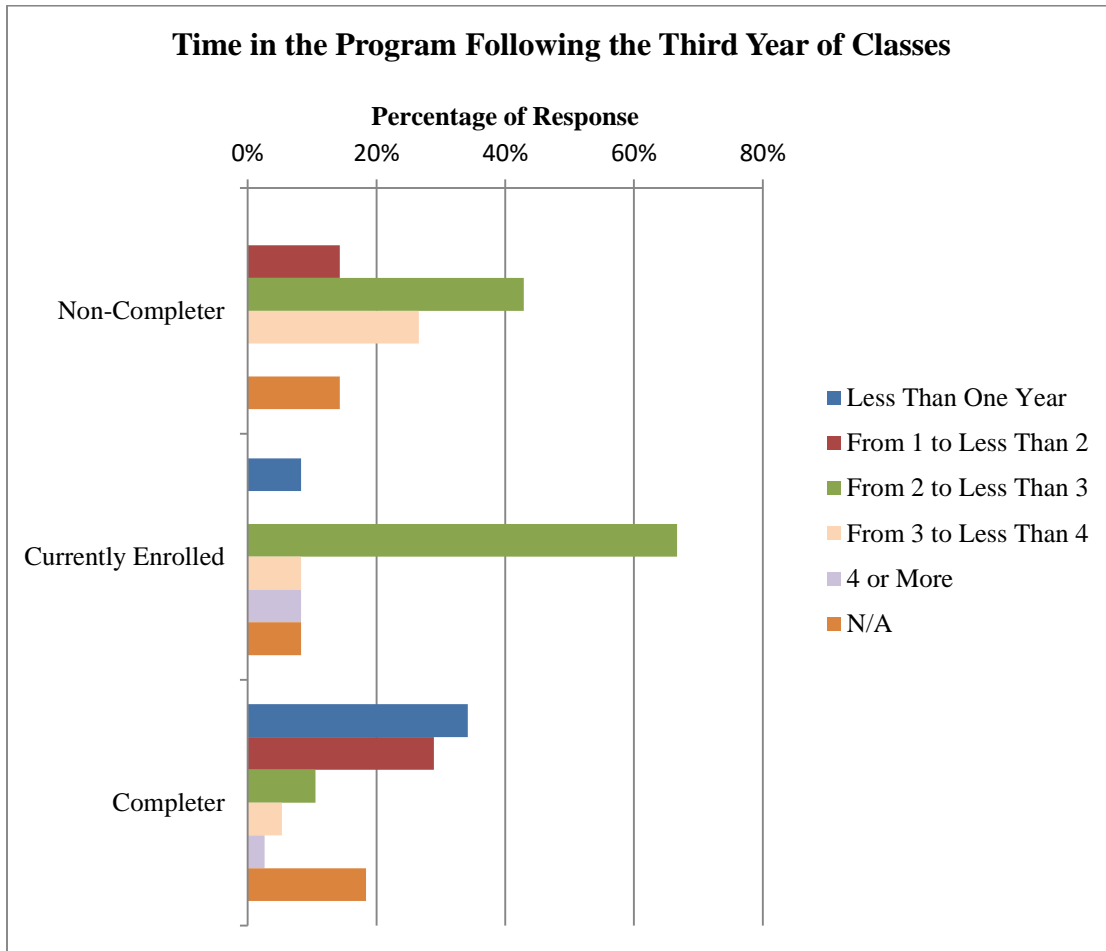


Figure G1. Time in program following the third year of classes

	Non-Completer	Currently Enrolled	Completer
Less Than One Year		8.30%	34.20%
From 1 to Less Than 2	14.30%		28.90%
From 2 to Less Than 3	42.90%	66.70%	10.50%
From 3 to Less Than 4	26.60%	8.30%	5.30%
4 or More		8.30%	2.60%
N/A	14.30%	8.30%	18.40%

Questions 7, 29, 51: How would you rate the relationship support?

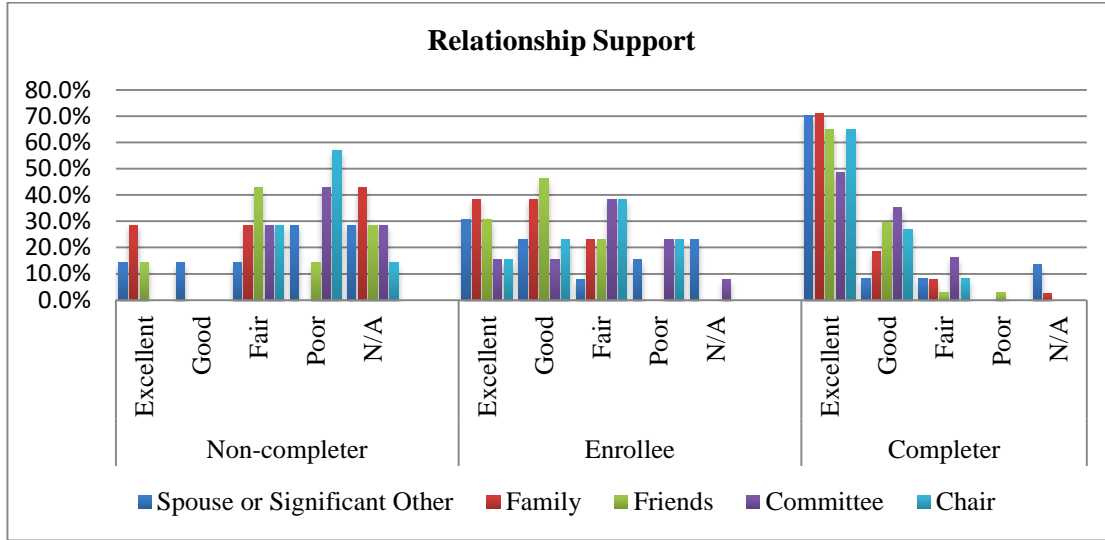
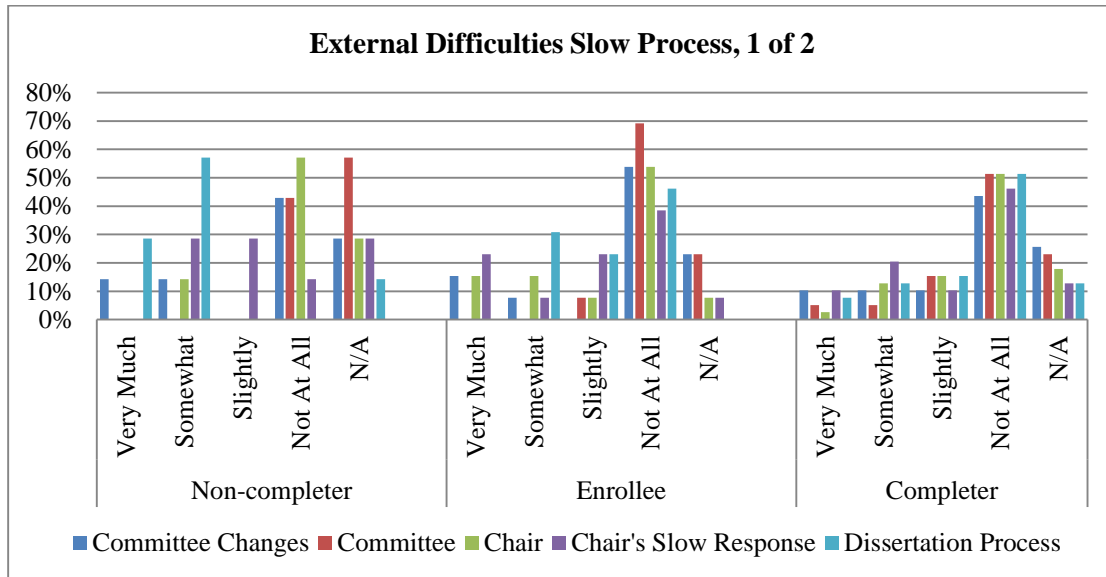


Figure G2. Relationship support

		Spouse or Significant Other	Family	Friends	Committee	Chair
Non-completer	Excellent	14.3%	28.6%	14.3%		
	Good	14.3%				
	Fair	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%
	Poor	28.6%		14.3%	42.9%	57.1%
	N/A	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%
Enrollee	Excellent	30.8%	38.5%	30.8%	15.4%	15.4%
	Good	23.1%	38.5%	46.2%	15.4%	23.1%
	Fair	7.7%	23.1%	23.1%	38.5%	38.5%
	Poor	15.4%			23.1%	23.1%
	N/A	23.1%			7.7%	
Completer	Excellent	70.3%	71.1%	64.9%	48.6%	64.9%
	Good	8.1%	18.4%	29.7%	35.1%	27.0%
	Fair	8.1%	7.9%	2.7%	16.2%	8.1%
	Poor			2.7%		
	N/A	13.5%	2.6%			

Questions 8, 30, 52 (Part 1): To what extent did the following possible difficulties slow the progress of your dissertation? (check all that apply.)



G3. External difficulties slow process, 1 of 2

		Committee Changes	Committee	Chair	Chair's Slow Response	Dissertation Process
Non-completer	Very Much	14%				29%
	Somewhat	14%		14%	29%	57%
	Slightly				29%	
	Not At All	43%	43%	57%	14%	
	N/A	29%	57%	29%	29%	14%
Enrollee	Very Much	15%		15%	23%	
	Somewhat	8%		15%	8%	31%
	Slightly		8%	8%	23%	23%
	Not At All	54%	69%	54%	39%	46%
	N/A	23%	23%	8%	8%	
Completer	Very Much	10%	5%	3%	10%	8%
	Somewhat	10%	5%	13%	21%	13%
	Slightly	10%	15%	15%	10%	15%
	Not At All	44%	51%	51%	46%	51%
	N/A	26%	23%	18%	13%	13%

Questions 8, 30, 52 (part 2)

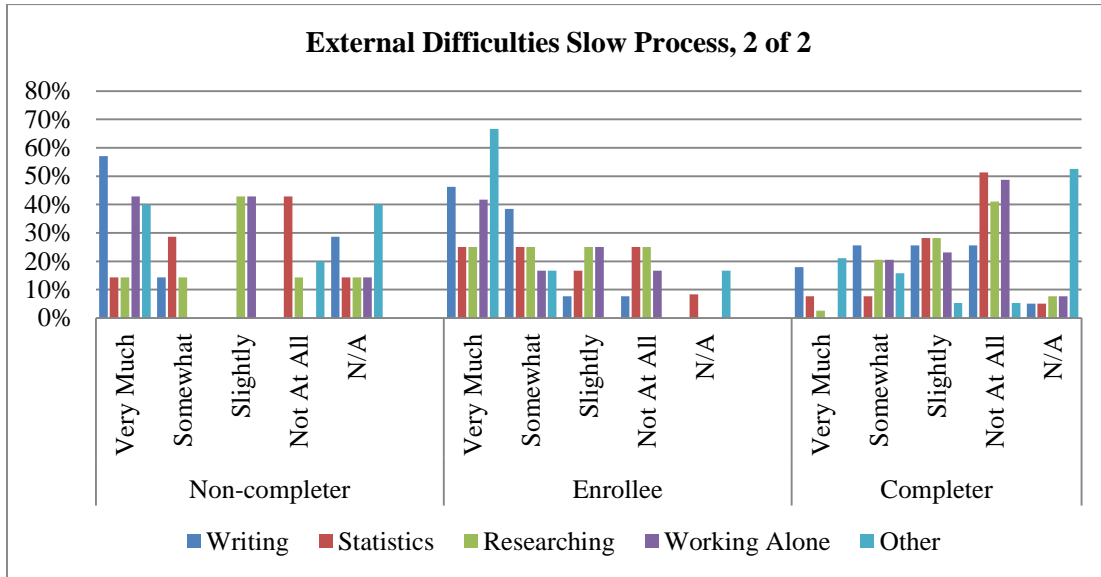


Figure G4. External difficulties slow process, 2 of 2

		Writing	Statistics	Researching	Working Alone	Other
Non-completer	Very Much	57%	14%	14%	43%	40%
	Somewhat	14%	29%	14%		
	Slightly			43%	43%	
	Not At All		43%	14%		20%
	N/A	29%	14%	14%	14%	40%
Enrollee	Very Much	46%	25%	25%	42%	67%
	Somewhat	39%	25%	25%	17%	17%
	Slightly	8%	17%	25%	25%	
	Not At All	8%	25%	25%	17%	
	N/A		8%			17%
Completer	Very Much	18%	8%	3%		21%
	Somewhat	26%	8%	21%	21%	16%
	Slightly	26%	28%	28%	23%	5%
	Not At All	26%	51%	41%	49%	5%
	N/A	5%	5%	8%	8%	53%

Question 9, 31, 53 (Part 1): During the dissertation process, did you have any of the following life situations occur within your family? If so, did one or more slow your dissertation progress?

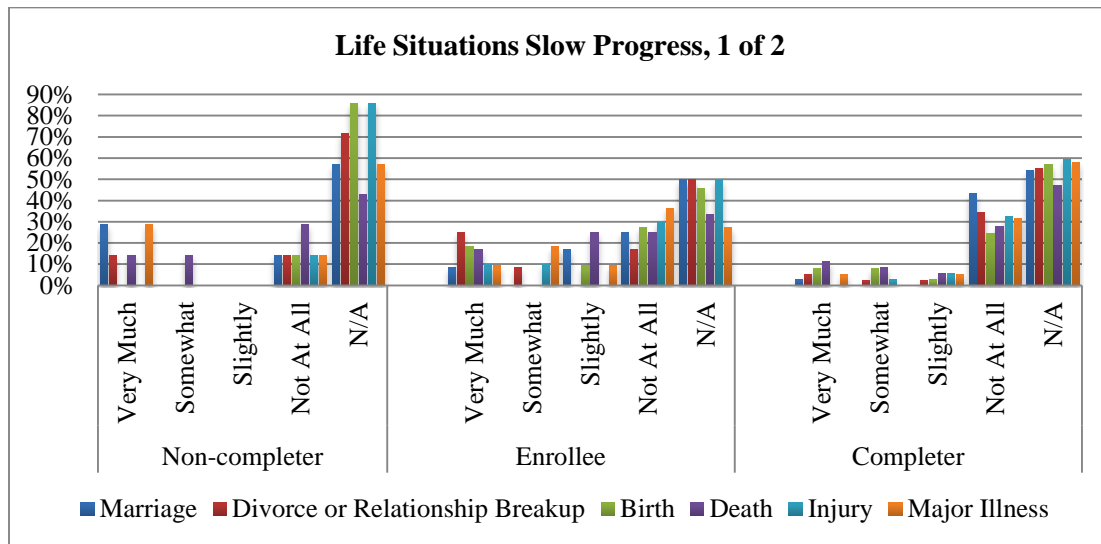


Figure G5. Life situations slow progress, 1 of 2

		Marriage	Divorce or Relationship Breakup	Birth	Death	Injury	Major Illness
Non-completer	Very Much	29%	14%		14%		29%
	Somewhat				14%		
	Slightly						
	Not At All	14%	14%	14%	29%	14%	14%
	N/A	57%	71%	86%	43%	86%	57%
Enrollee	Very Much	8%	25%	18%	17%	10%	9%
	Somewhat		8%			10%	18%
	Slightly	17%		9%	25%		9%
	Not At All	25%	17%	27%	25%	30%	36%
	N/A	50%	50%	46%	33%	50%	27%
Completer	Very Much	3%	5%	8%	11%		5%
	Somewhat		3%	8%	8%	3%	
	Slightly		3%	3%	6%	5%	5%
	Not At All	43%	34%	24%	28%	32%	32%
	N/A	54%	55%	57%	47%	60%	58%

Question 9, 31, 53 (Part 2)

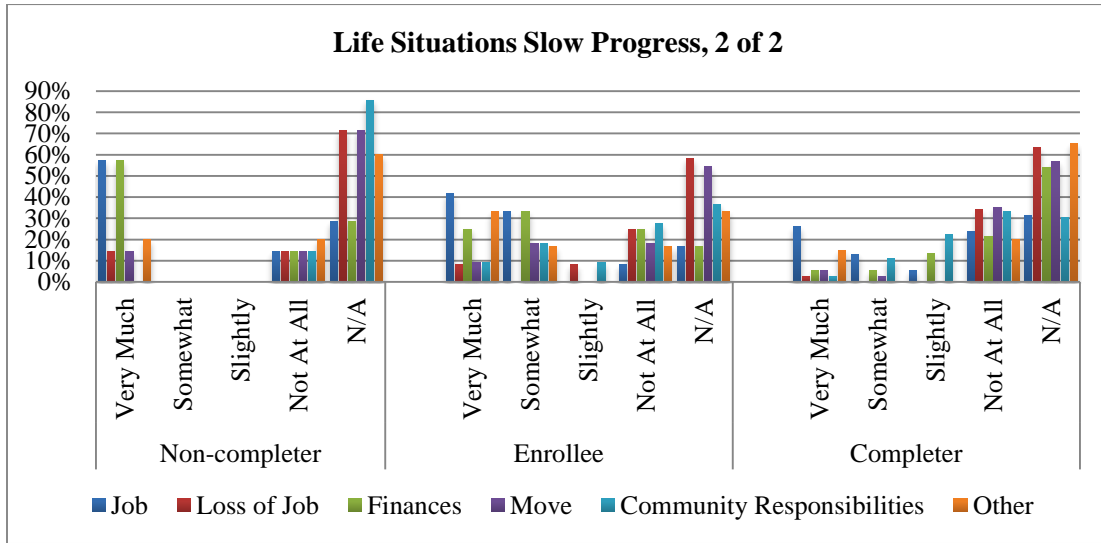


Figure G6. Life situations slow progress, 2 of 2

		Job	Loss of Job	Finances	Move	Community Responsibilities	Other
Non-completer	Very Much	57%	14%	57%	14%		20%
	Somewhat						
	Slightly						
	Not At All	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	20%
	N/A	29%	71%	29%	71%	86%	60%
Enrollee	Very Much	42%	8%	25%	9%	9%	33%
	Somewhat	33%		33%	18%	18%	17%
	Slightly		8%			9%	
	Not At All	8%	25%	25%	18%	27%	17%
	N/A	17%	58%	17%	55%	36%	33%
Completer	Very Much	26%	3%	5%	5%	3%	15%
	Somewhat	13%		5%	3%	11%	
	Slightly	5%		14%		22%	
	Not At All	24%	34%	22%	35%	33%	20%
	N/A	32%	63%	54%	57%	31%	65%

Questions 10, 32, 54 (Part 1): Did you participate in interventions, formally or informally, and if so, how would you describe the overall effect it had on the progress of your dissertation? (Check all that apply)

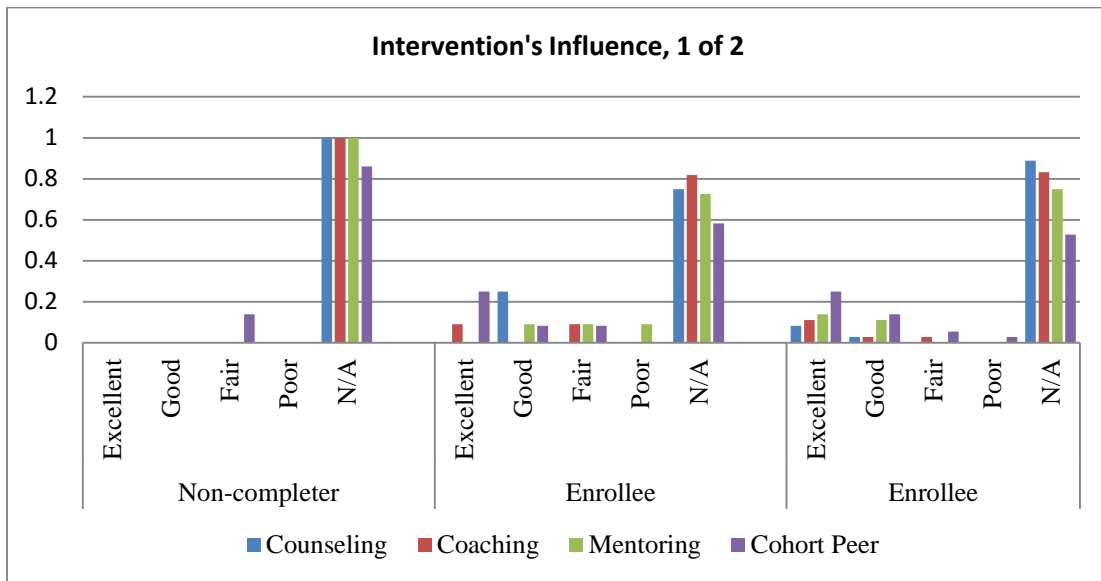


Figure G7. Intervention's influence, 1 of 2

		Counseling	Coaching	Mentoring	Cohort Peer
Non-completer	Excellent				
	Good				
	Fair				14%
	Poor				
	N/A	100%	100%	100%	86%
Enrollee	Excellent		9%		25%
	Good	25%		9%	8%
	Fair		9%	9%	8%
	Poor			9%	
	N/A	75%	82%	73%	58%
Enrollee	Excellent	8%	11%	14%	25%
	Good	3%	3%	11%	14%
	Fair		3%		6%
	Poor				3%
	N/A	89%	83%	75%	53%

Questions 10, 32, 54 (Part 2)

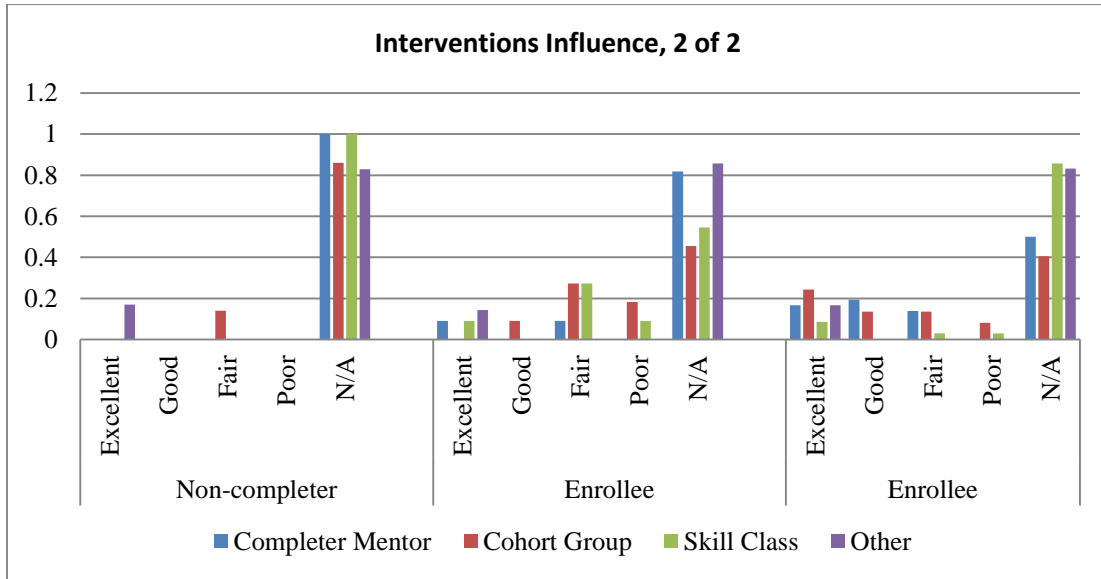


Figure G8. Intervention's influence, 2 of 2

		Completer Mentor	Cohort Group	Skill Class	Other
Non-completer	Excellent				17%
	Good				
	Fair		14%		
	Poor				
	N/A	100%	86%	100%	83%
Enrollee	Excellent	9%		9%	14%
	Good		9%		
	Fair	9%	27%	27%	
	Poor		18%	9%	
	N/A	82%	46%	55%	86%
Enrollee	Excellent	17%	24%	9%	17%
	Good	19%	14%		
	Fair	14%	14%	3%	
	Poor		8%	3%	
	N/A	50%	41%	86%	83%

Questions 11, 34, 56: What external influences contributed to your non-completion or a slowing of progress or non-completion?

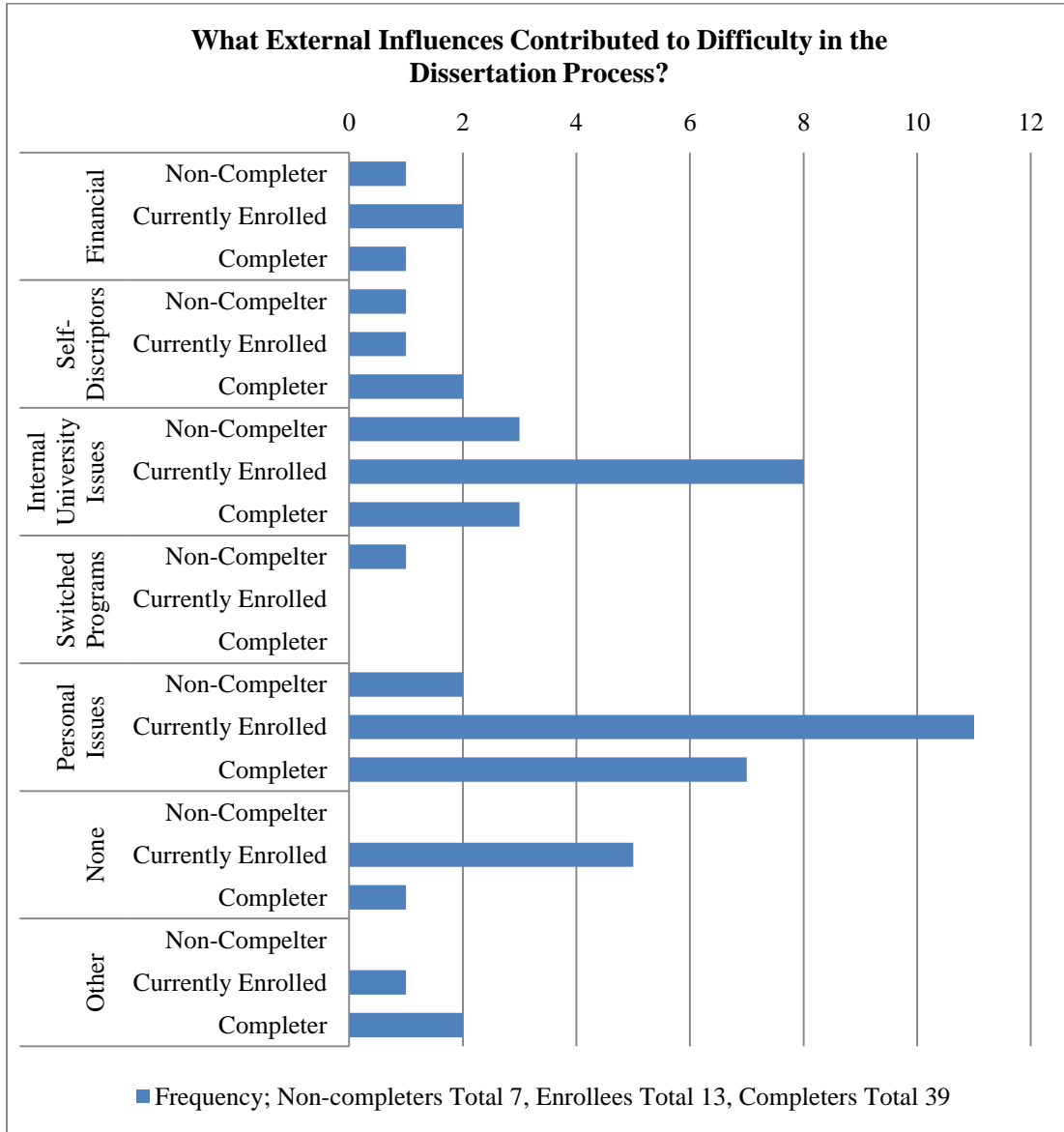


Figure G9. What external influences contributed to difficulty in the dissertation process?

Questions 12, 33, 55: What positive external influences contributed to completing all or a part of your dissertation?

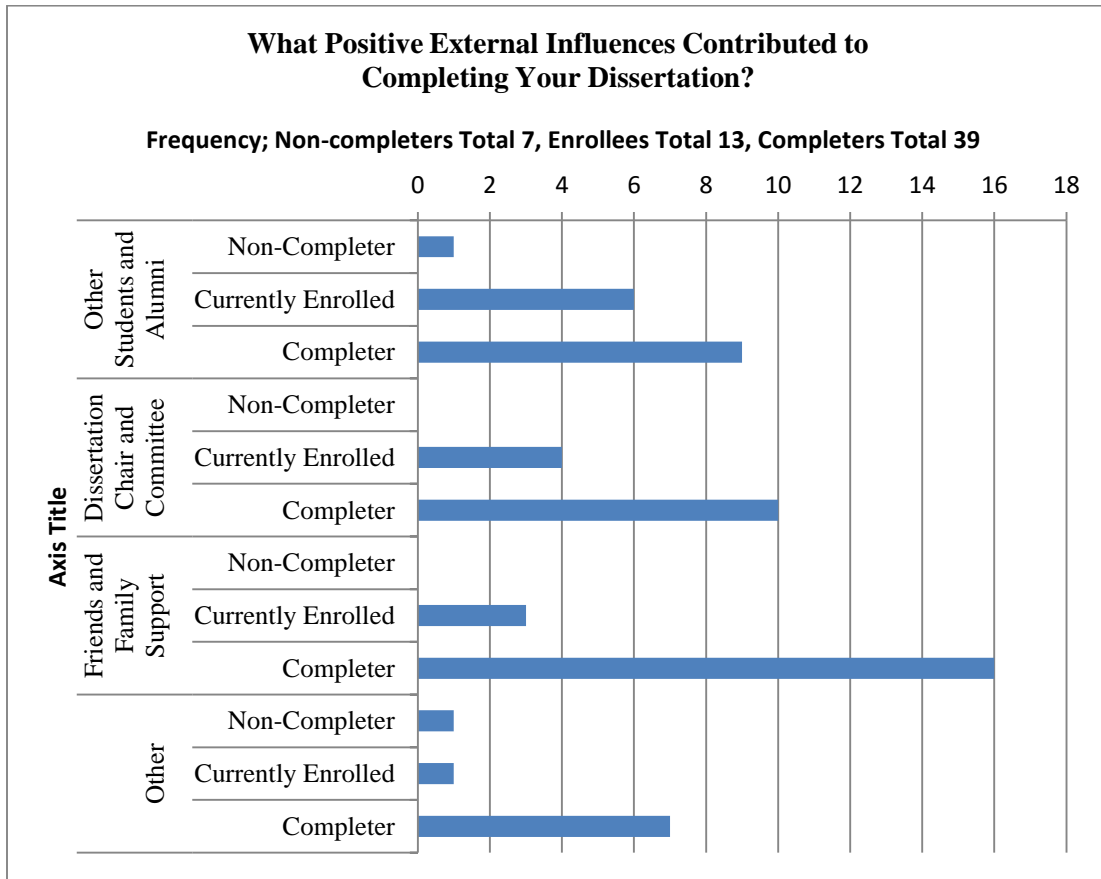


Figure G10. What positive external influences contributed to completing your dissertation?

Questions 13, 35, 57: Why did you choose to get your doctorate degree?

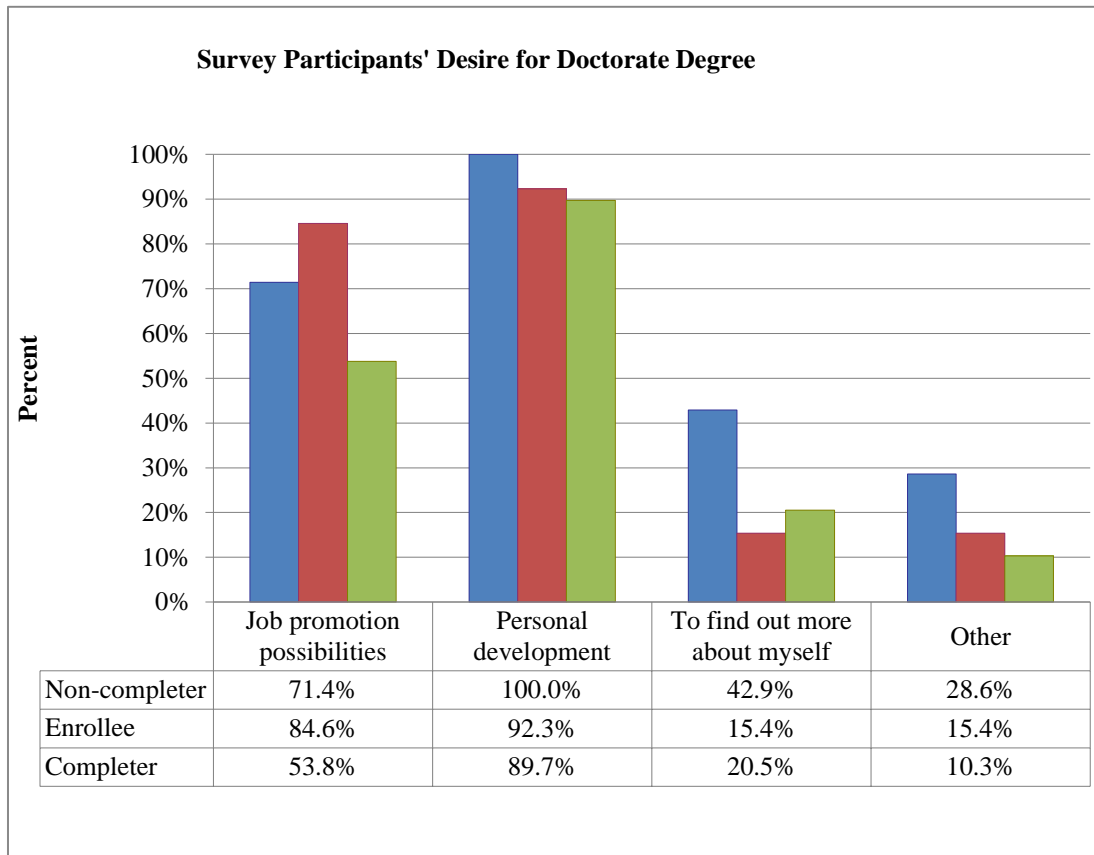


Figure G11. Survey participants' desire for doctorate degree

Questions 14, 36, 58 (part 1): During the dissertation process, how would you rate your well-being?

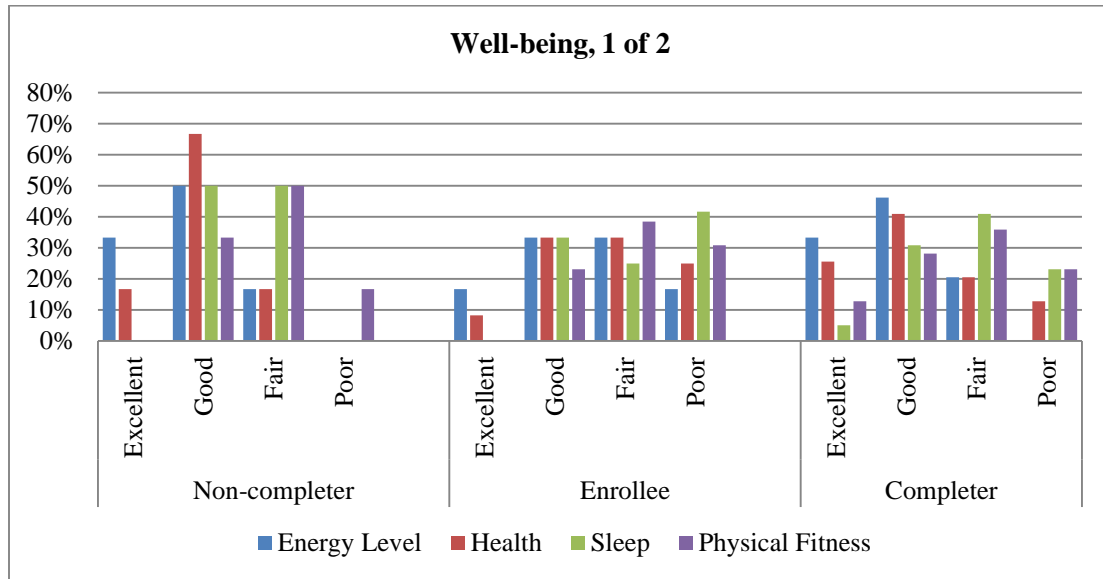


Figure G12. Well-being, 1 of 2

		Energy Level	Health	Sleep	Physical Fitness
Non-completer	Excellent	33%	17%		
	Good	50%	67%	50%	33%
	Fair	17%	17%	50%	50%
	Poor				17%
Enrollee	Excellent	17%	8%		
	Good	33%	33%	33%	23%
	Fair	33%	33%	25%	39%
	Poor	17%	25%	42%	31%
Completer	Excellent	33%	26%	5%	13%
	Good	46%	41%	31%	28%
	Fair	21%	21%	41%	36%
	Poor		13%	23%	23%

Questions 14, 36, 58 (part 2)

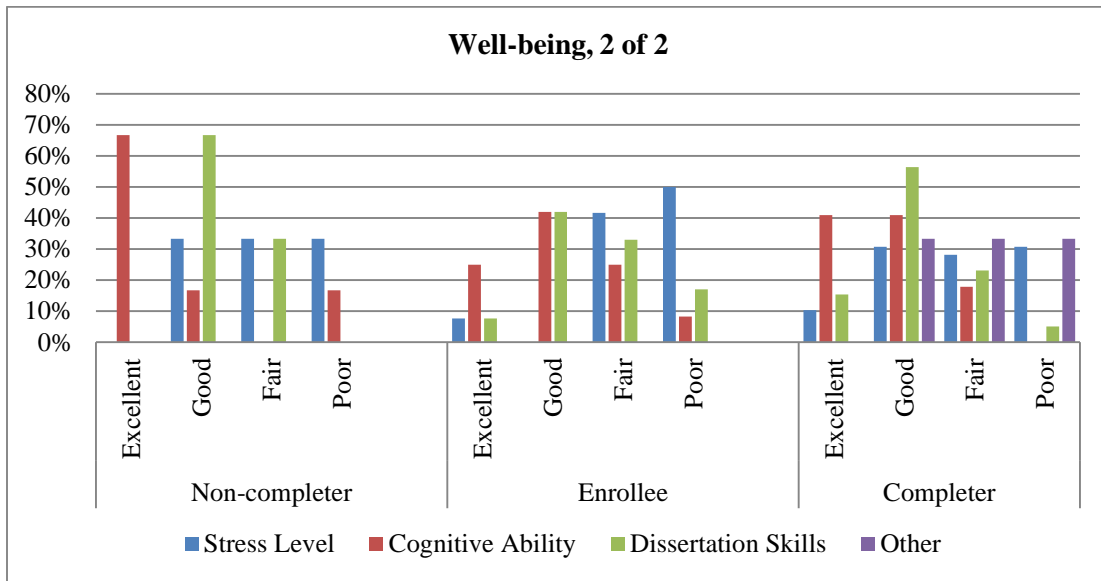


Figure G13. Well-being, 2 of 2

		Stress Level	Cognitive Ability	Dissertation Skills	Other
Non-completer	Excellent		67%		
	Good	33%	17%	67%	
	Fair	33%		33%	
	Poor	33%	17%		
Enrollee	Excellent	8%	25%	8%	
	Good		42%	42%	
	Fair	42%	25%	33%	
	Poor	50%	8%	17%	
Completer	Excellent	10%	41%	15%	
	Good	31%	41%	56%	33%
	Fair	28%	18%	23%	33%
	Poor	31%		5%	33%

Questions 15, 37, 59: During the dissertation process, how was our emotional state in the following areas? (Check all that apply.)

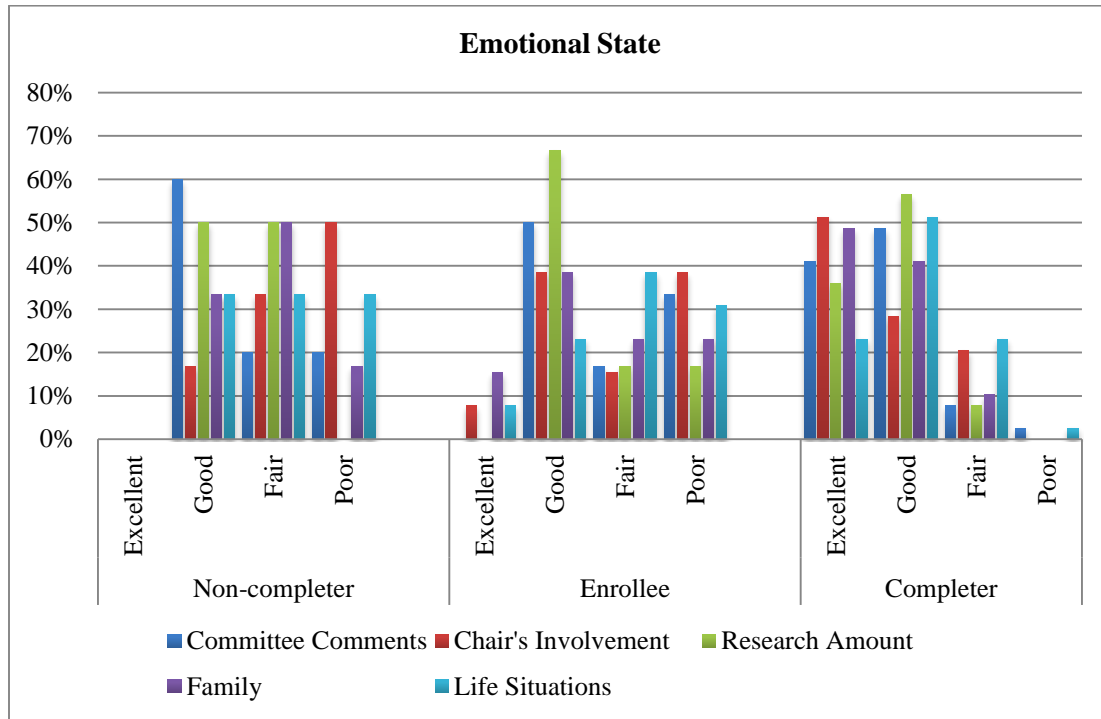


Figure G14. Emotional state

		Committee Comments	Chair's Involvement	Research Amount	Family	Life Situations
Non-completer	Excellent					
	Good	60%	17%	50%	33%	33%
	Fair	20%	33%	50%	50%	33%
	Poor	20%	50%		17%	33%
Enrollee	Excellent		8%		15%	8%
	Good	50%	39%	67%	39%	23%
	Fair	17%	15%	17%	23%	39%
	Poor	33%	39%	17%	23%	31%
Completer	Excellent	41%	51%	36%	49%	23%
	Good	49%	28%	56%	41%	51%
	Fair	8%	21%	8%	10%	23%
	Poor	3%				3%

Questions 16, 38, 60 (Part 1): To what degree do the following words or phrases describe you while working on your dissertation? (Check all that apply.)

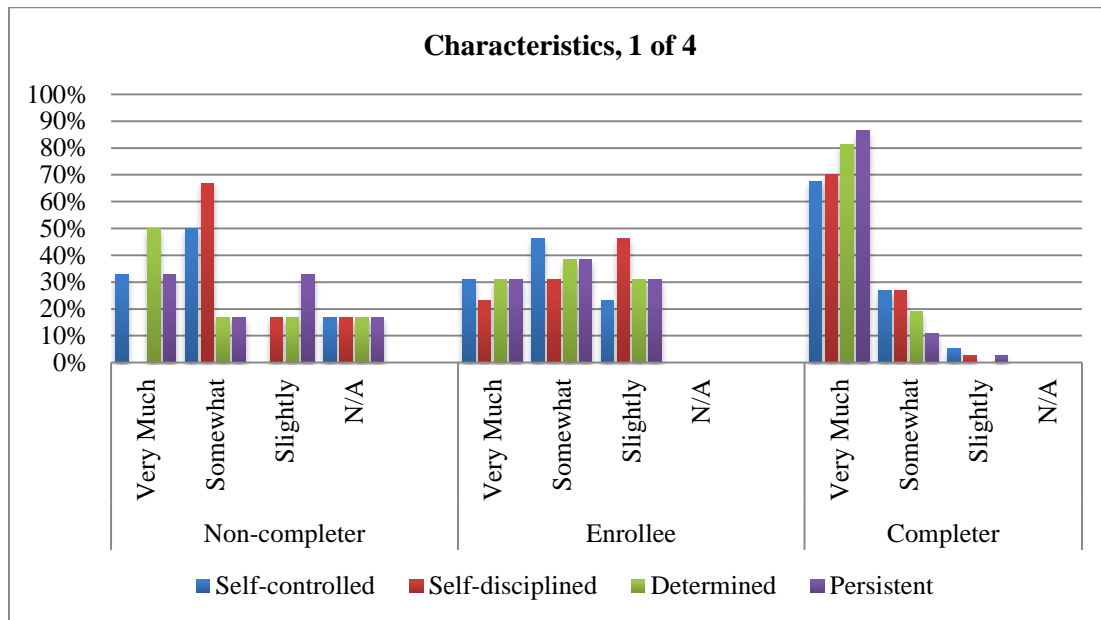


Figure G15. Characteristics, 1 of 4

		Self-controlled	Self-disciplined	Determined	Persistent
Non-completer	Very Much	33%		50%	33%
	Somewhat	50%	67%	17%	17%
	Slightly		17%	17%	33%
	N/A	17%	17%	17%	17%
Enrollee	Very Much	31%	23%	31%	31%
	Somewhat	46%	31%	39%	39%
	Slightly	23%	46%	31%	31%
	N/A				
Completer	Very Much	68%	70%	81%	87%
	Somewhat	27%	27%	19%	11%
	Slightly	5%	3%		3%
	N/A				

Questions 16, 38, 60 (Part 2)

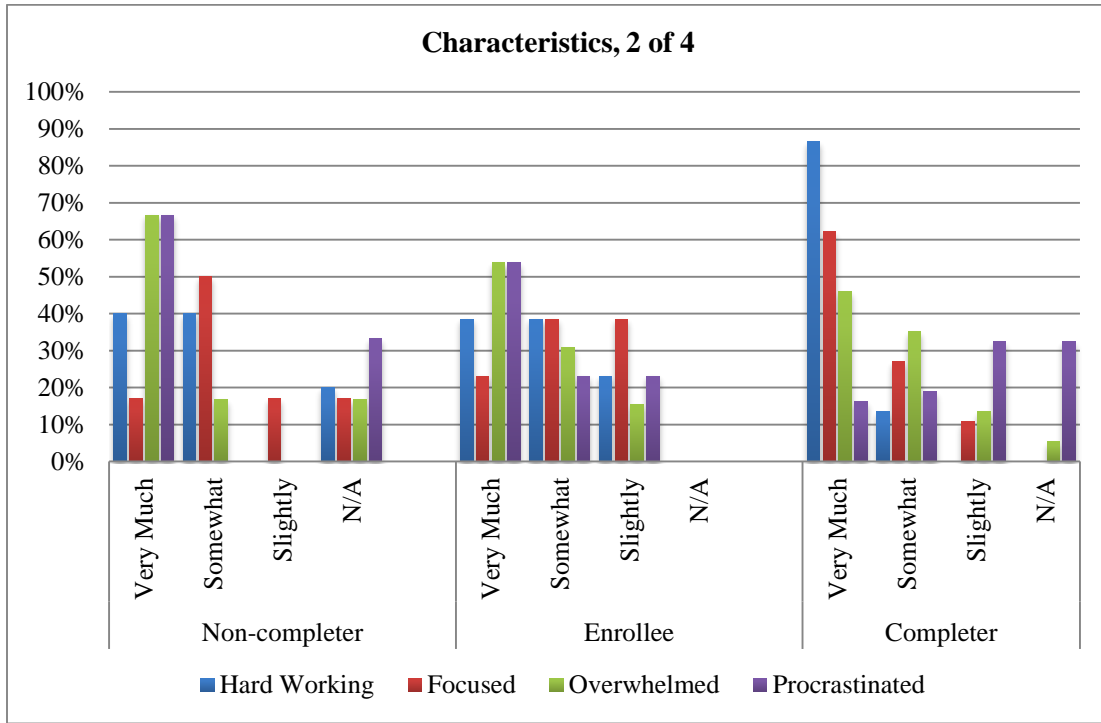


Figure G16. Characteristics, 2 of 4

		Hard Working	Focused	Overwhelmed	Procrastinated
Non-completer	Very Much	40%	17%	67%	67%
	Somewhat	40%	50%	17%	
	Slightly		17%		
	N/A	20%	17%	17%	33%
Enrollee	Very Much	39%	23%	54%	54%
	Somewhat	39%	39%	31%	23%
	Slightly	23%	39%	15%	23%
	N/A				
Completer	Very Much	87%	62%	46%	16%
	Somewhat	14%	27%	35%	19%
	Slightly		11%	14%	32%
	N/A			5%	32%

Questions 16, 38, 60 (part 3)

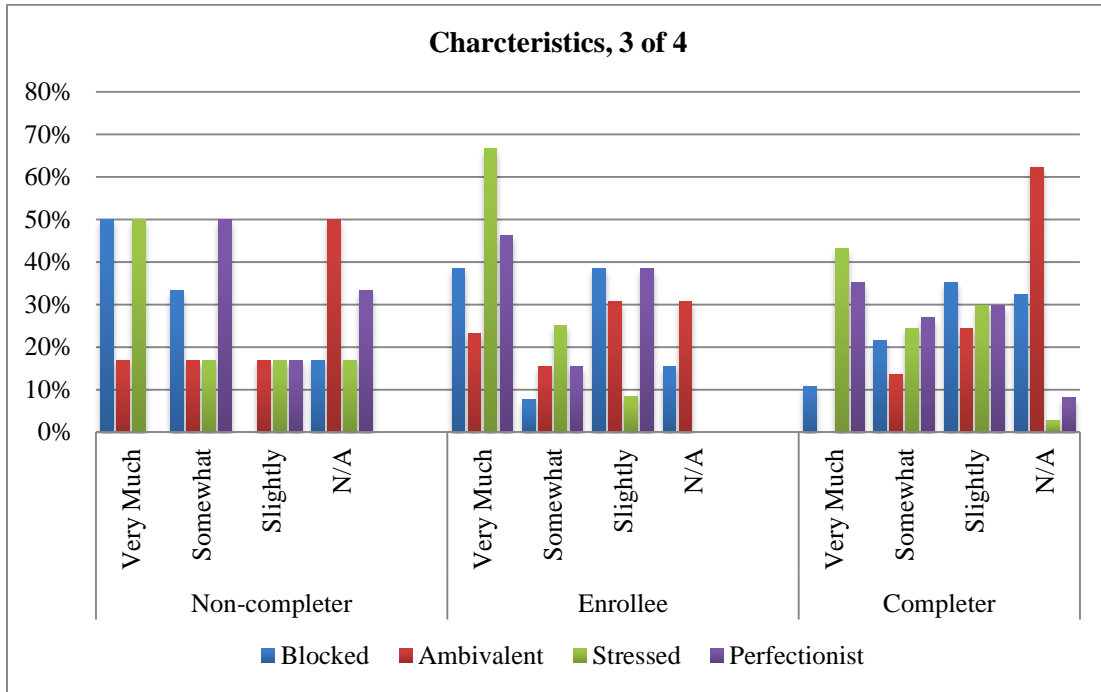


Figure G17. Characteristics, 3 of 4

		Blocked	Ambivalent	Stressed	Perfectionist
Non-completer	Very Much	50%	17%	50%	17%
	Somewhat	33%	17%	17%	50%
	Slightly	17%	17%	17%	17%
	N/A	17%	50%	17%	33%
Enrollee	Very Much	39%	23%	67%	46%
	Somewhat	8%	15%	25%	15%
	Slightly	39%	31%	8%	39%
	N/A	15%	31%	8%	39%
Completer	Very Much	11%	14%	43%	35%
	Somewhat	22%	14%	24%	27%
	Slightly	35%	24%	30%	30%
	N/A	32%	62%	3%	8%

Questions 16, 38, 60 (Part 4)

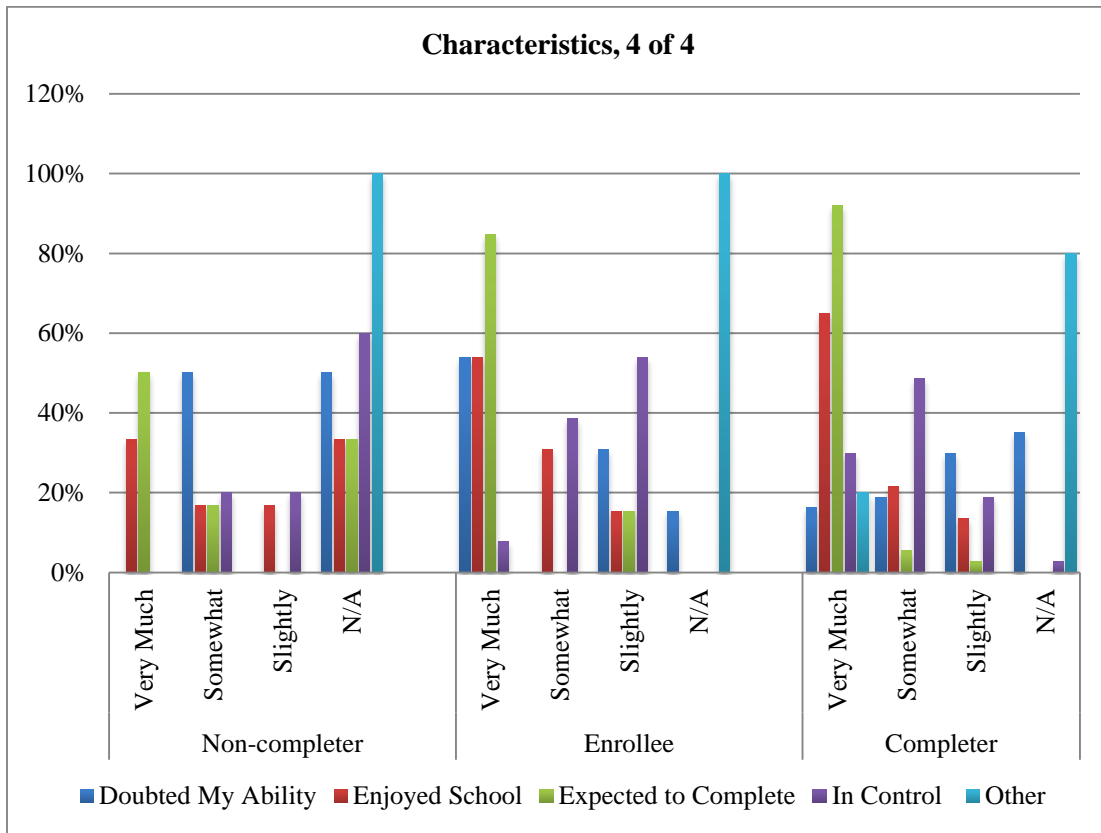


Figure G18. Characteristics, 4 of 4

		Doubted My Ability	Enjoyed School	Expected to Complete	In Control of the Dissertation Process	Other
Non-completer	Very Much		33%	50%		
	Somewhat	50%	17%	17%	20%	
	Slightly		17%		20%	
	N/A	50%	33%	33%	60%	100%
Enrollee	Very Much	54%	54%	85%	8%	
	Somewhat		31%		39%	
	Slightly	31%	15%	15%	54%	
	N/A	15%				100%
Completer	Very Much					
	Somewhat					
	Slightly					
	N/A					

Completer	Very Much	16%	65%	92%	30%	20%
	Somewhat	19%	22%	5%	49%	
	Slightly	30%	14%	3%	19%	
	N/A	35%			3%	80%

Questions 17, 39, 61: What internal feelings did you experience during the dissertation process of the dissertation throughout the years while you were in the program?

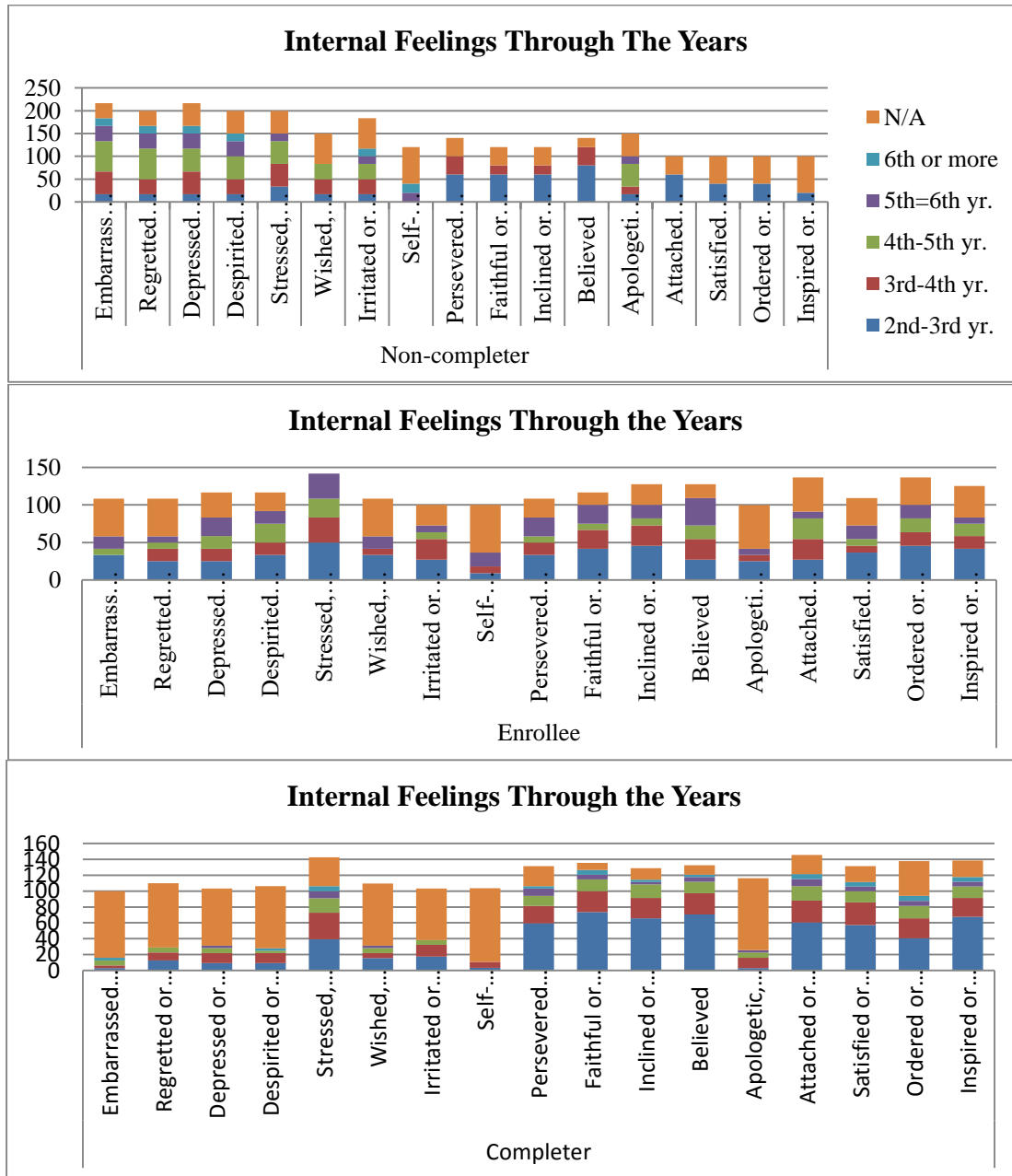


Figure G19. Internal feelings through the years

Question 17: Non-completer data

	2nd-3rd yr.	3rd-4th yr.	4th-5th yr.	5th=6th yr.	6th or more	N/A
Embarrassed or despising	16.7	50	66.7	33.3	16.7	33.3
Regretted or found fault	16.7	33.3	66.7	33.3	16.7	33.3
Depressed or cynical	16.7	50	50	33.3	16.7	50
Dispirited or anguished	16.7	33.3	50	33.3	16.7	50
Stressed, apprehensive, or agitated	33.3	50	50	16.7	0	50
Wished, wanted, or demanded	16.7	33.3	33.3	0	0	66.7
Irritated or infuriated	16.7	33.3	33.3	16.7	16.7	66.7
Self-respecting or arrogant	0	0	0	20	20	80
Persevered or braved	60	40	0	0	0	40
Faithful or confident	60	20	0	0	0	40
Inclined or ready	60	20	0	0	0	40
Believed	80	40	0	0	0	20
Apologetic, defensive, or argumentative	16.7	16.7	50	16.7	0	50
Attached or passionate	60	0	0	0	0	40
Satisfied or enjoyed	40	0	0	0	0	60
Ordered or balanced	40	0	0	0	0	60
Inspired or transformed	20	0	0	0	0	80

Question 39: Enrollee data

	2nd-3rd yr.	3rd-4th yr.	4th-5th yr.	5th=6th yr.	6th or more	N/A
Embarrassed or despising	33.3	0	8.3	16.7	0	50
Regretted or found fault	25	16.7	8.3	8.3	0	50
Depressed or cynical	25	16.7	16.7	25	0	33.3
Dispirited or anguished	33.3	16.7	25	16.7	0	25
Stressed, apprehensive, or agitated	50	33.3	25	33.3	0	0
Wished, wanted, or demanded	33.3	8.3	0	16.7	0	50
Irritated or infuriated	27.3	27.3	9.1	9.1	0	27.3
Self- respecting or arrogant	9.1	9.1	0	18.2	0	63.6
Persevered or braved	33.3	16.7	8.3	25	0	25
Faithful or confident	41.7	25	8.3	25	0	16.7
Inclined or ready	45.5	27.3	9.1	18.2	0	27.3
Believed	27.3	27.3	18.2	36.4	0	18.2
Apologetic, defensive, or argumentative	25	8.3	0	8.3	0	58.3
Attached or passionate	27.3	27.3	27.3	9.1	0	45.5
Satisfied or enjoyed	36.4	9.1	9.1	18.2	0	36.4
Ordered or balanced	45.5	18.2	18.2	18.2	0	36.4
Inspired or transformed	41.7	16.7	16.7	8.3	0	41.7

Question 61: Completer data

	2nd-3rd yr.	3rd-4th yr.	4th-5th yr.	5th=6th yr.	6th or more	N/A
Embarrassed or despising	3.2	3.2	6.5	0	3.2	83.9
Regretted or found fault	12.9	9.7	6.5	0	0	80.7
Depressed or cynical	9.4	12.5	6.3	3.1	0	71.9
Dispirited or anguished	9.4	12.5	3.1	0	3.1	78.1
Stressed, apprehensive, or agitated	39.4	33.3	18.2	9.1	6.1	36.4
Wished, wanted, or demanded	15.6	6.3	6.3	3.1	0	78.1
Irritated or infuriated	17.7	14.7	5.9	0	0	64.7
Self- respecting or arrogant	3.6	7.1	0	0	0	92.9
Persevered or braved	59.4	21.9	12.5	9.4	3.1	25
Faithful or confident	73.5	26.5	14.7	5.9	5.9	8.8
Inclined or ready	65.7	25.7	17.1	2.9	2.9	14.3
Believed	70.6	26.5	14.7	5.9	2.9	11.8
Apologetic, defensive, or argumentative	3.2	12.9	6.5	3.2	0	90.3
Attached or passionate	60.6	27.3	18.2	9.1	6.1	24.2
Satisfied or enjoyed	57.1	28.6	14.3	5.7	5.7	20
Ordered or balanced	40.6	25	15.6	6.3	6.3	43.8
Inspired or transformed	67.7	23.5	14.7	5.88	5.88	20.59

Questions 18, 40, 62: What internal thoughts helped you finish part or all of your dissertation?

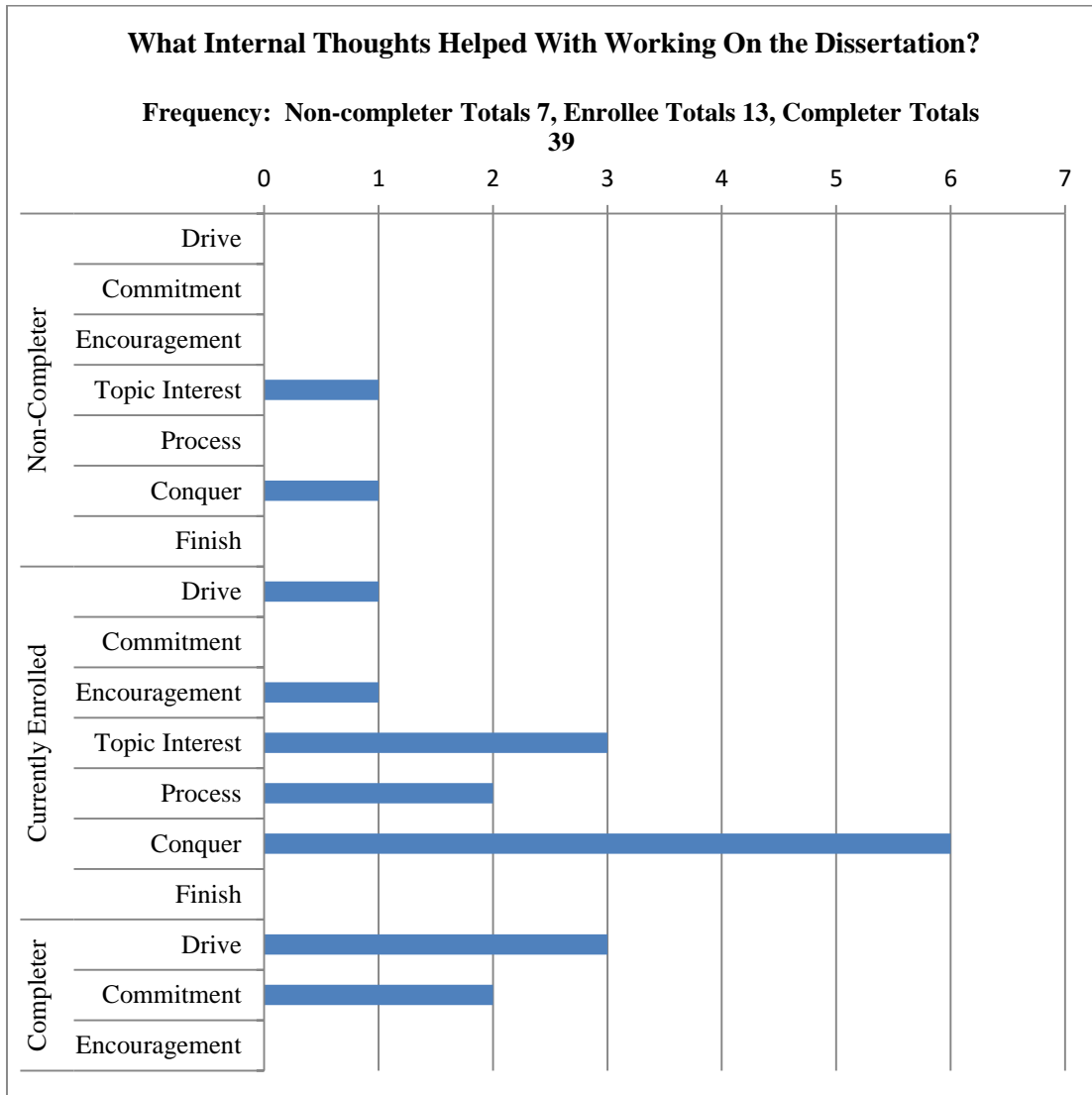


Figure G20. What internal thoughts helped you finish part or all of your dissertation?

Questions 19, 41, 63: If you had any difficulty with your dissertation, what internal thoughts contributed?

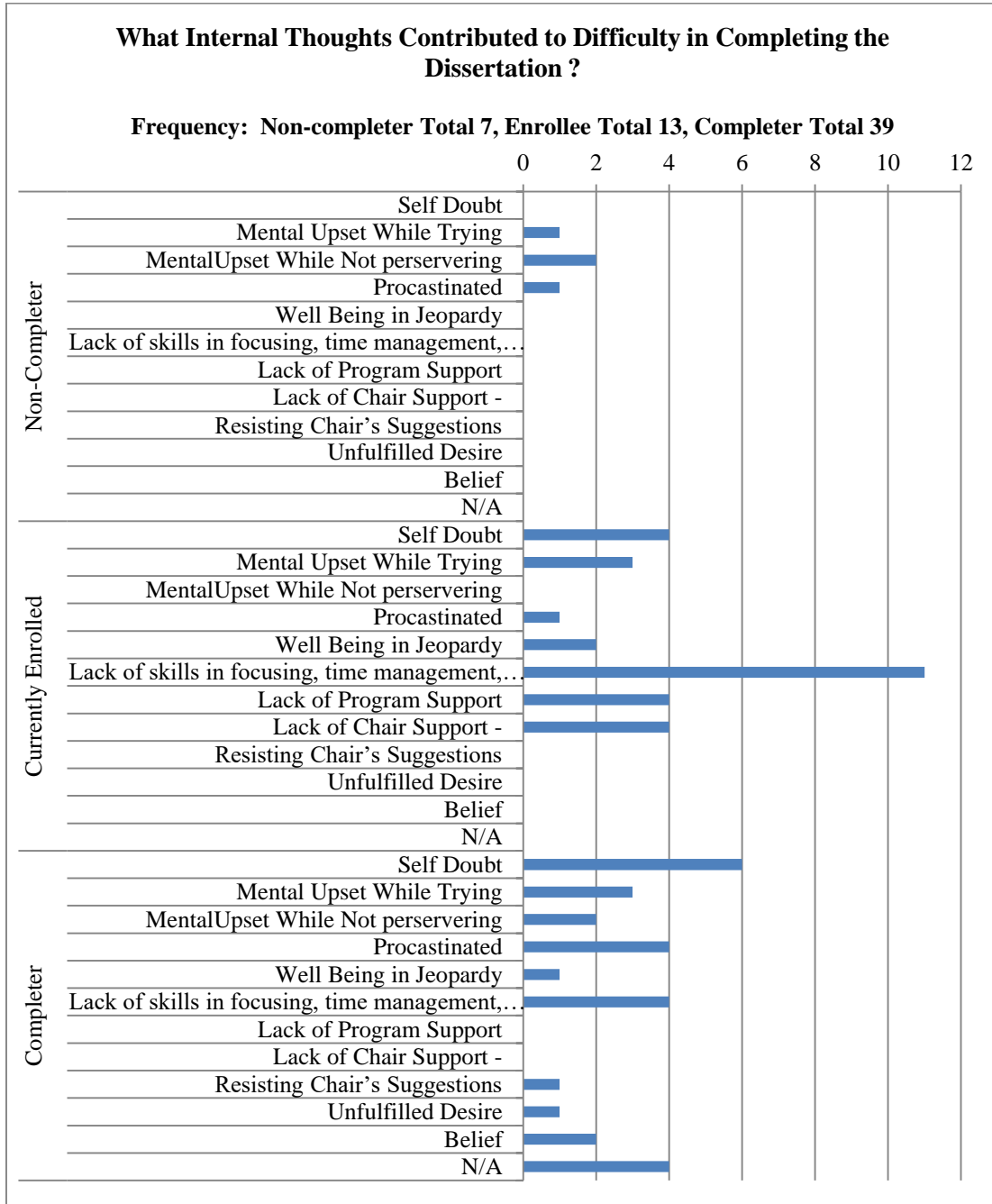


Figure G21. What internal thoughts contributed to difficulty in completing the dissertation?

Question 20, 42, 64: What helpful process did you use for motivation to work on your dissertation?

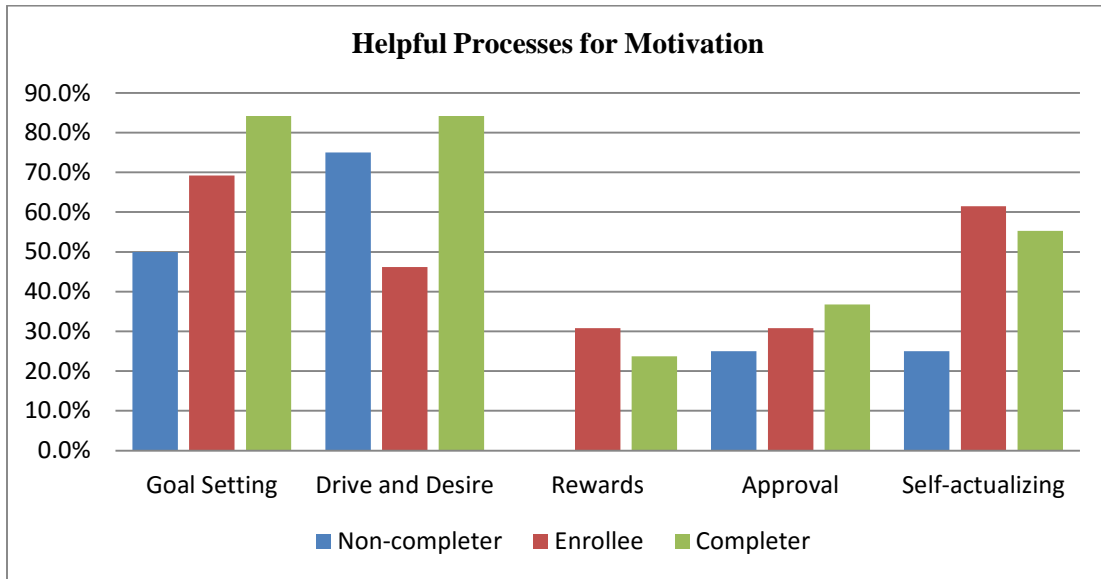


Figure G22. Helpful processes for motivation

	Goal Setting	Drive and Desire	Rewards	Approval	Self-actualizing
Non-completer	50.0%	75.0%		25.0%	25.0%
Enrollee	69.2%	46.2%	30.8%	30.8%	61.5%
Completer	84.2%	84.2%	23.7%	36.8%	55.3%

Questions 21, 43, 65: When working on your dissertation did you use any time management processes and if so, how well did they work? (Check all that apply.)

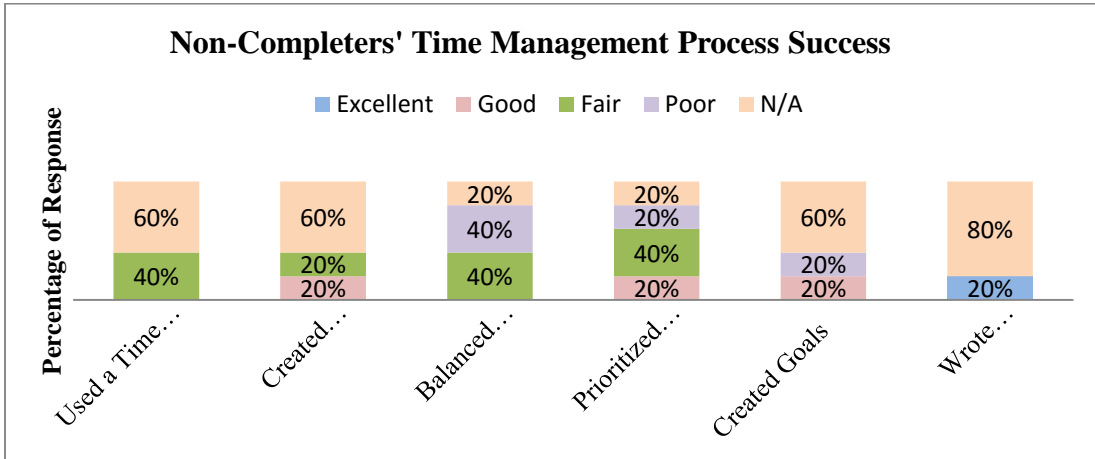


Figure G23. Non-Completers' time management process success

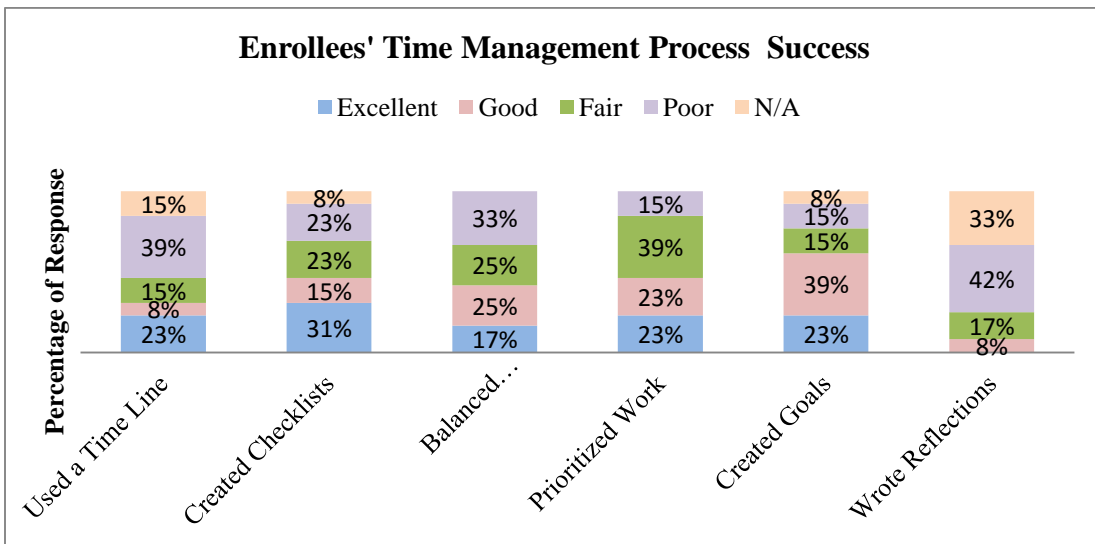


Figure G24. Enrollees' time management process success

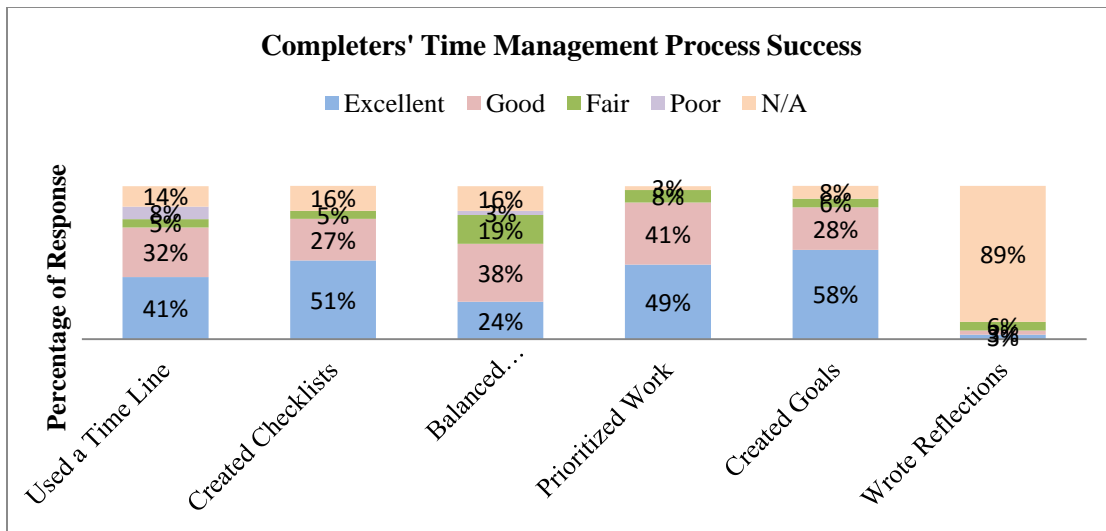


Figure G25. Completers' time management process success

Questions 21, 43, 65

		Used a Time Line	Created Checklists	Balanced Responsibilities	Prioritized Work	Created Goals	Wrote Reflect -ions
Non-completer	Excellent						20%
	Good		20%		20%	20%	
	Fair	40%	20%	40%	40%		
	Poor			40%	20%	20%	
	N/A	60%	60%	20%	20%	60%	80%
		Used a Time Line	Created Checklists	Balanced Responsibilities	Prioritized Work	Created Goals	Wrote Reflect -ions
Enrollee	Excellent	23%	31%	17%	23%	23%	
	Good	8%	15%	25%	23%	39%	8%
	Fair	15%	23%	25%	39%	15%	17%
	Poor	39%	23%	33%	15%	15%	42%
	N/A	15%	8%			8%	33%
		Used a Time Line	Created Checklists	Balanced Responsibilities	Prioritized Work	Created Goals	Wrote Reflect -ions
Completer	Excellent	41%	51%	24%	49%	58%	3%
	Good	32%	27%	38%	41%	28%	3%
	Fair	5%	5%	19%	8%	6%	6%
	Poor	8%		3%			
	N/A	14%	16%	16%	3%	8%	89%

Questions 22, 44, 66 (part 1): When you worked on your dissertation, what processes did you use to maintain the momentum on your dissertation and how well did they work?

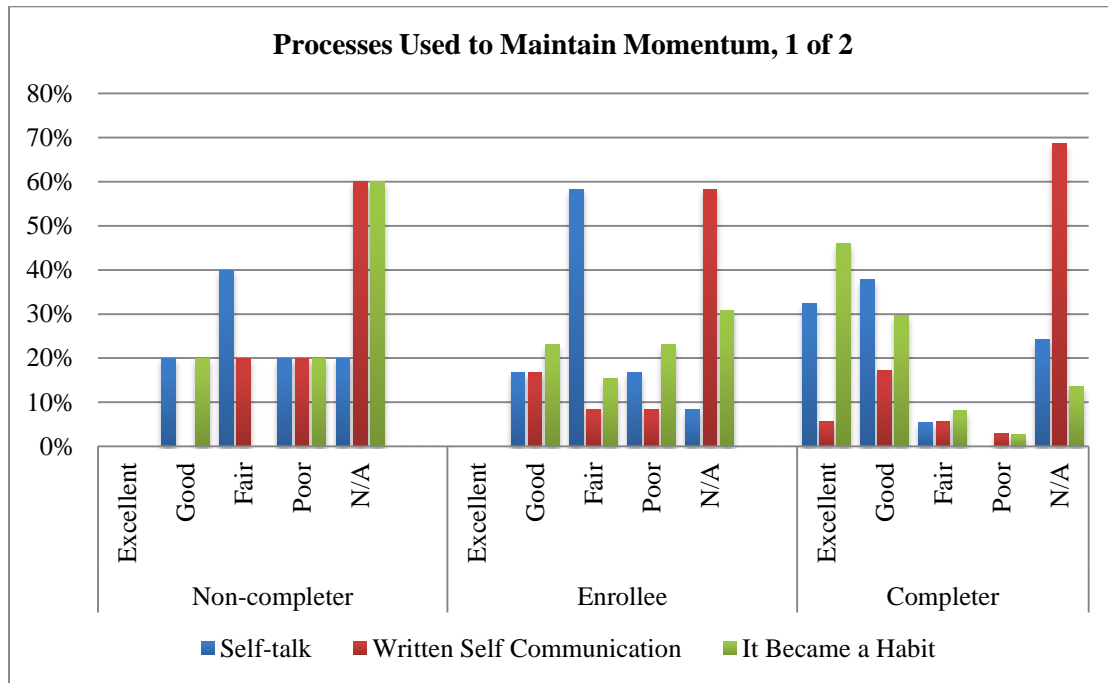


Figure G26. Processes used to maintain momentum, 1 of 2

		Self-talk	Written Self-Communication	It Became a Habit
Non-completer	Excellent			
	Good	20%		20%
	Fair	40%	20%	
	Poor	20%	20%	20%
	N/A	20%	60%	60%
Enrollee	Excellent			
	Good	17%	17%	23%
	Fair	58%	8%	15%
	Poor	17%	8%	23%
	N/A	8%	58%	31%
Completer	Excellent	32%	6%	46%
	Good	38%	17%	30%
	Fair	5%	6%	8%
	Poor	3%	3%	3%
	N/A	24%	69%	14%

Questions 22, 44, 66 (Part 2)

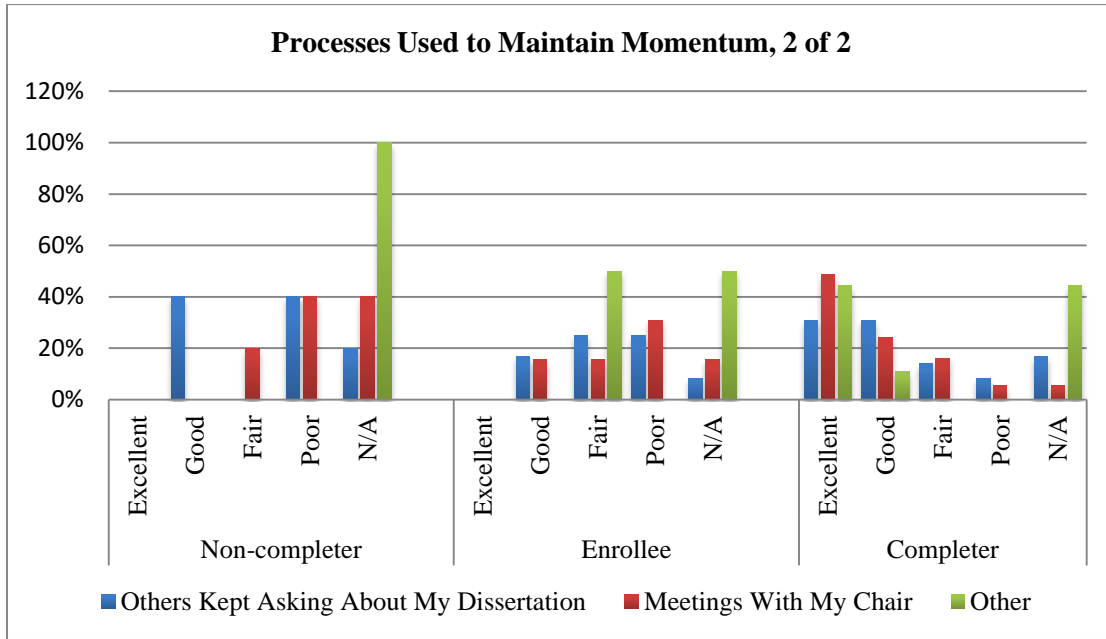


Figure G27. Processes used to maintain momentum, 1 of 2

		Others Kept Asking About My Dissertation	Meetings With My Chair	Other
Non-completer	Excellent			
	Good	40%		
	Fair		20%	
	Poor	40%	40%	
	N/A	20%	40%	100%
Enrollee	Excellent			
	Good	17%	15%	
	Fair	25%	15%	50%
	Poor	25%	31%	
	N/A	8%	15%	50%
Completer	Excellent	31%	49%	44%
	Good	31%	24%	11%
	Fair	14%	16%	
	Poor	8%	5%	
	N/A	17%	5%	44%

Questions 23, 45, 67: When working on your dissertation, what processes did you use that did work for you?

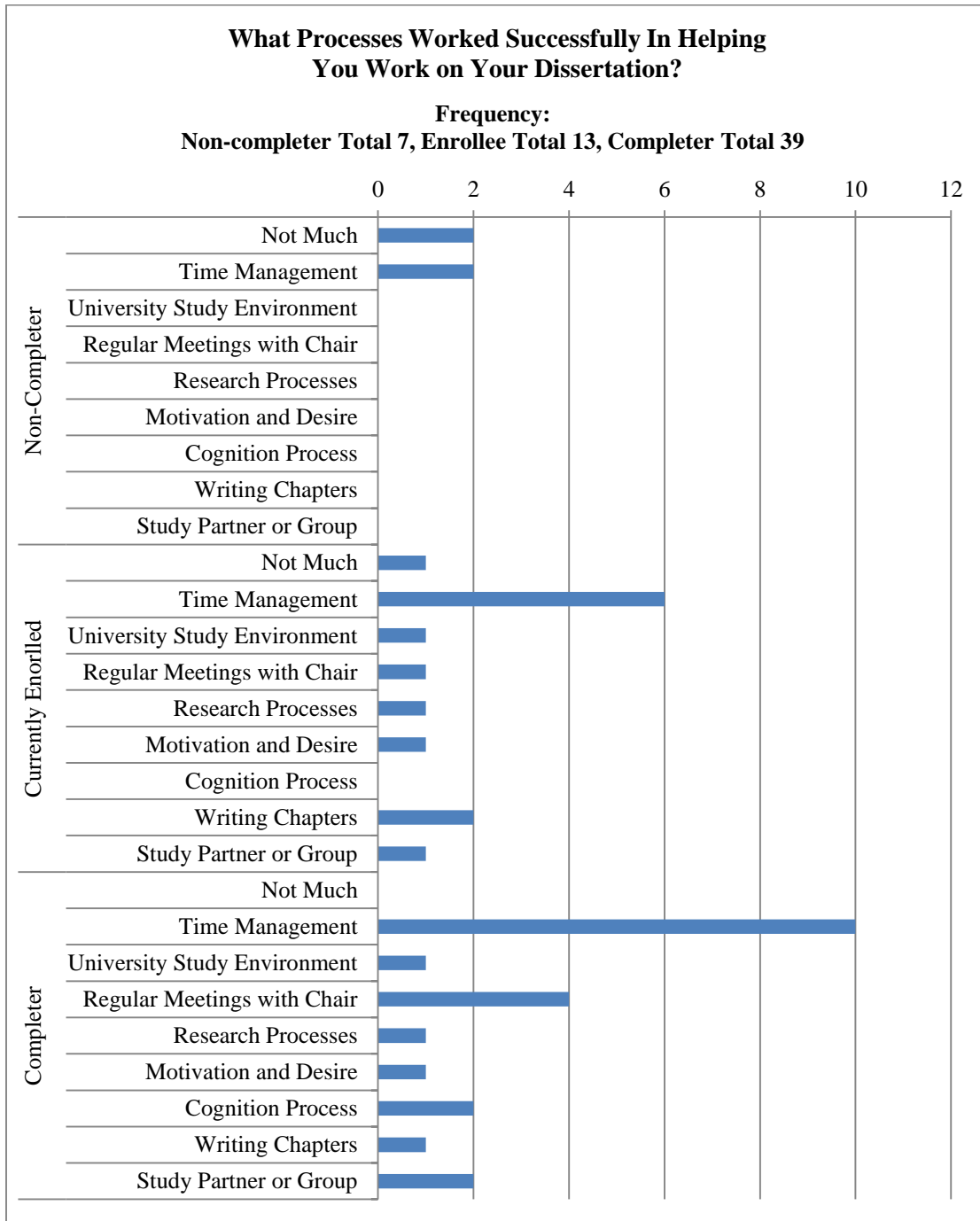


Figure G28. What processes worked successfully in helping you work on your dissertation?

Questions 24, 46, 58:

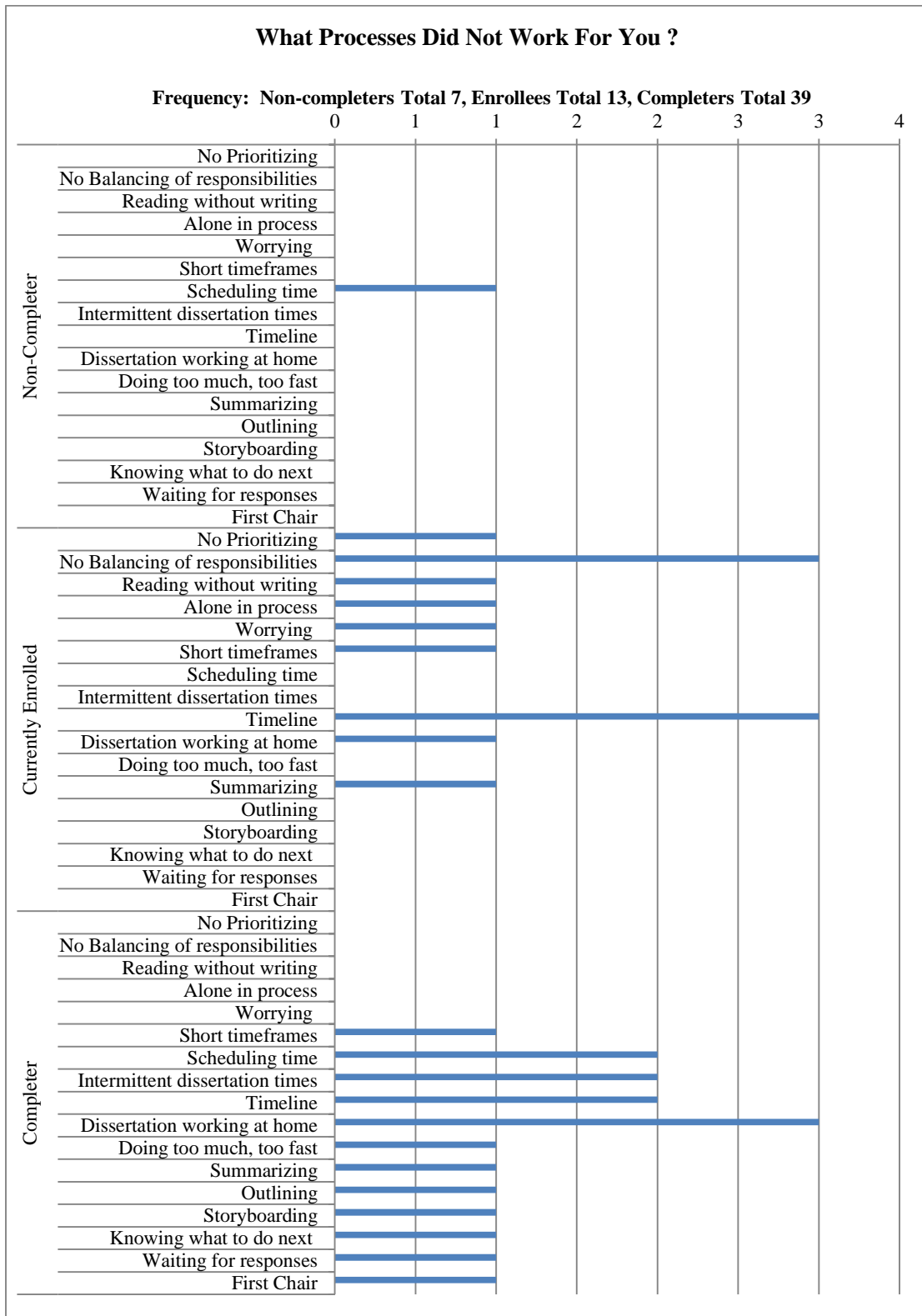


Figure G29. What processes did not work for you when working on your dissertation?

Questions 25, 47, 69 (Part 1): When working on your dissertation, what did you find most troublesome?

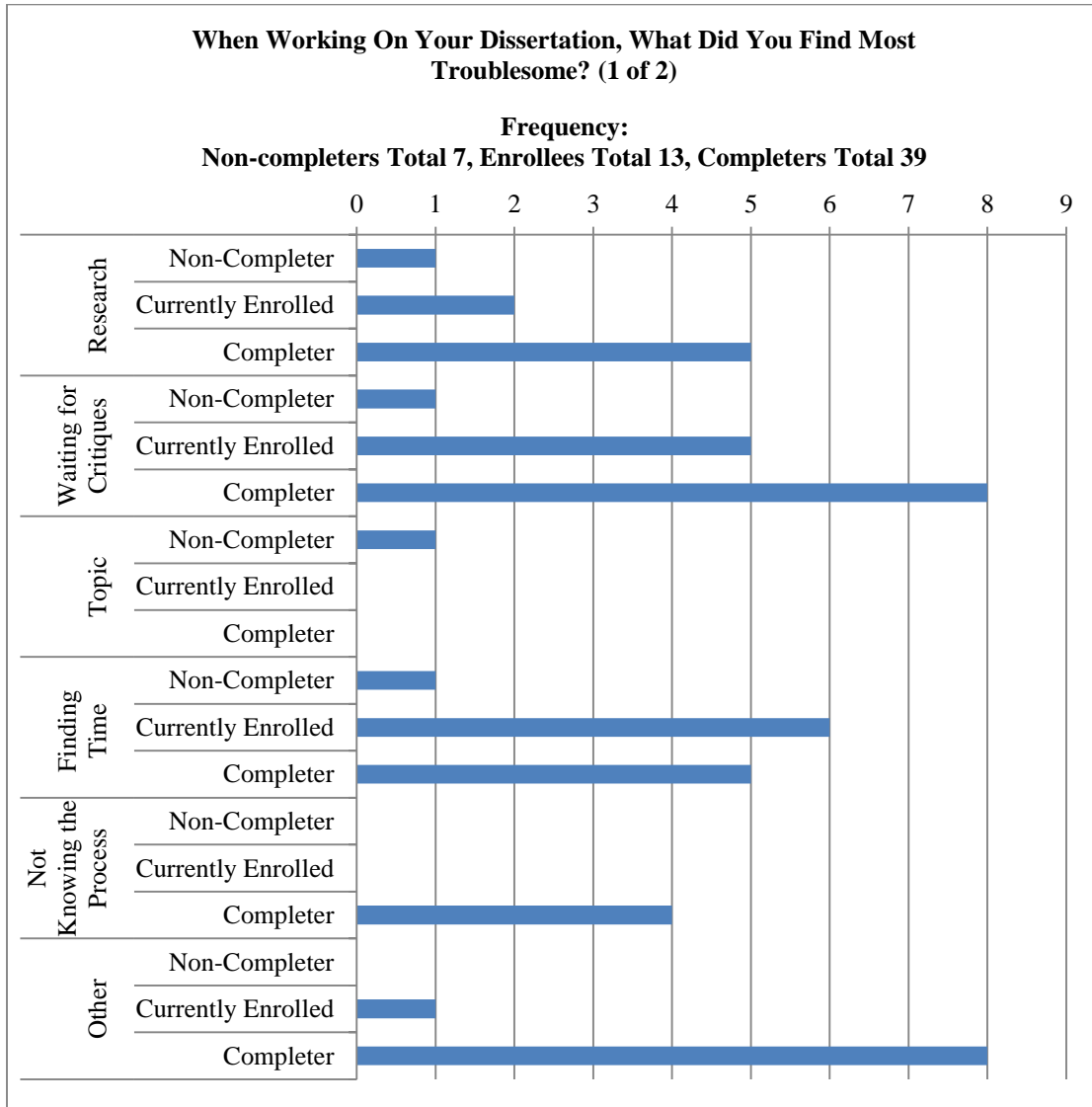


Figure G30. When working on your dissertation, what did you find most troublesome? (1 of 2)

Questions 25, 47, 69 (Part 2)

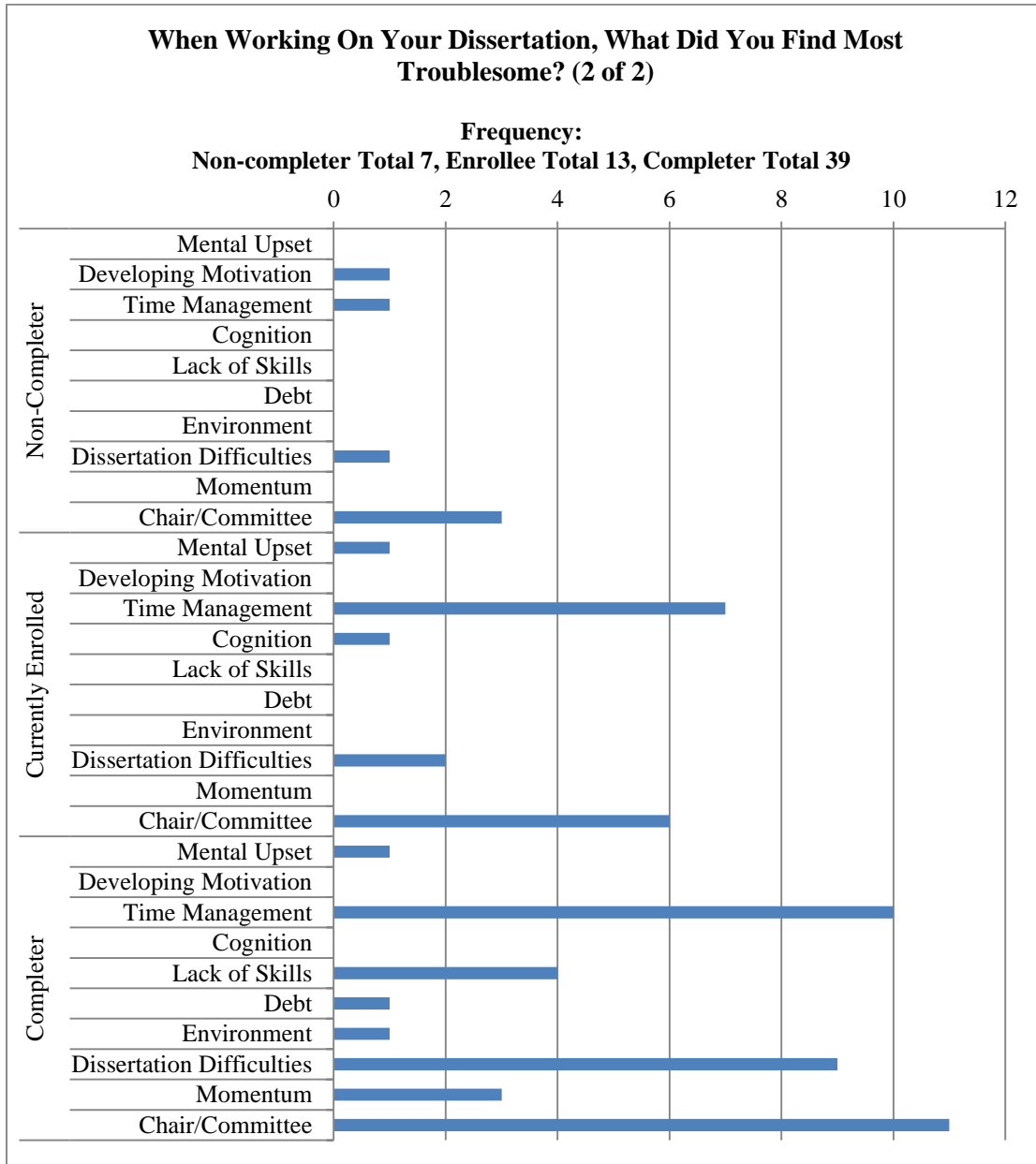


Figure G31. When working on your dissertation, what did you find most troublesome?
(2 of 2)

Questions 26, 48, 70 (Part 1): What do you suggest be included in a study guide for doctoral students working on their dissertation?

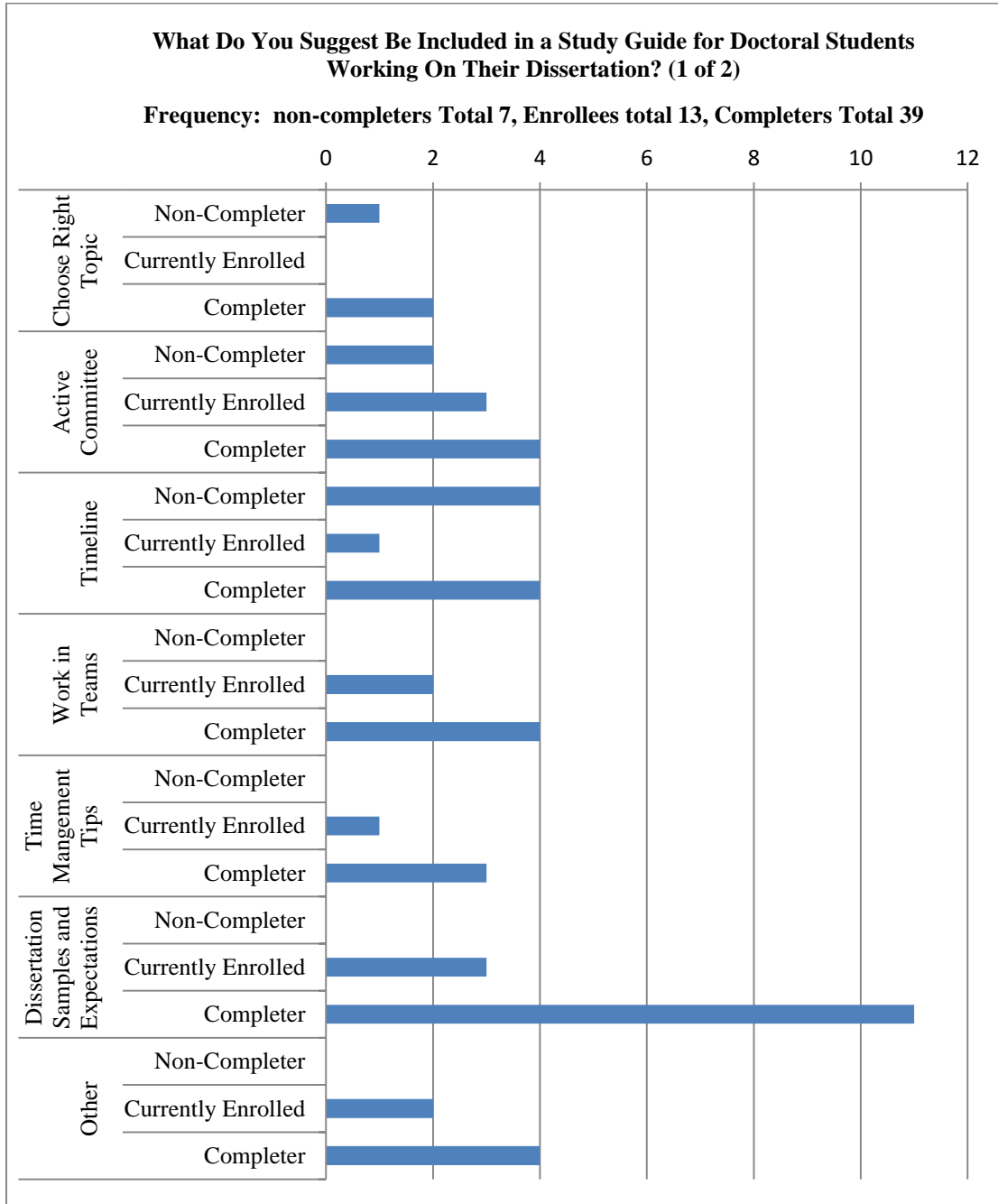


Figure G32. What do you suggest be included in a study guide for doctoral students working on their dissertation? (1 of 2)

Questions 26, 48, 70 (Part 2):

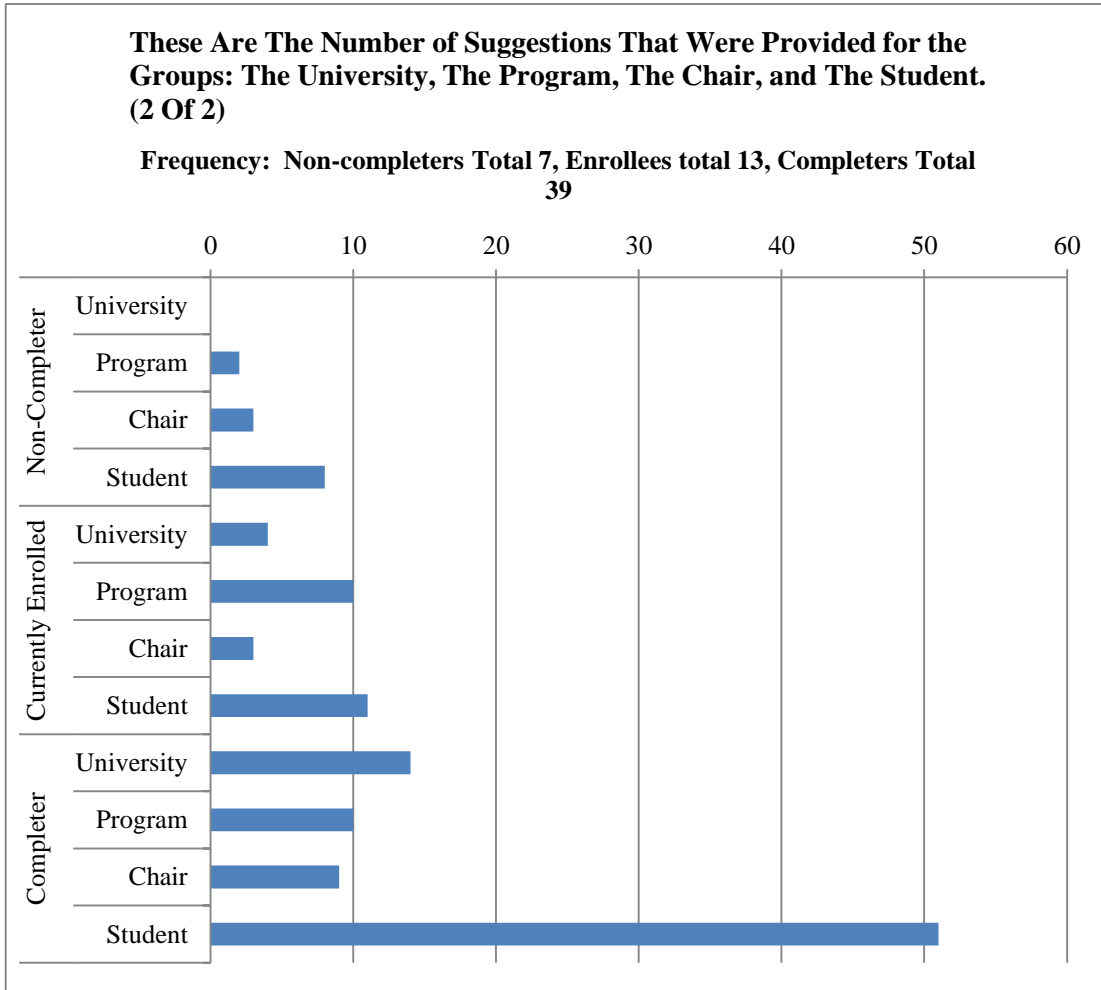


Figure G33. These are the number of suggestions that were provided for the groups: The university, the program, the chair, and the student. (2 of 2)

APPENDIX H
MULTI-CONVERGENCE TABLES

Table H1

Multi-convergence Table: Literature Review

Research	Literature Review evidence of effects on completion	SR	IR	C
Overview of Research				
Ph.D. vs. Ed.D.	EdDs are an older population with full time employment (Kelly, 2008).	Y	Y	Y
	EdDs have difficulty recalling the writing process due to longer time out of school (Kelly, 2008).	Ysome	Ysome	N S
	EdDs take less time to complete a qualitative study than a quantitative study. The opposite applies to the Ph.D. student (Tierce, 2008).	NS	N	N
Hard vs. Soft Science	Inconclusive. Department influence may affect completion (Hopwood et al., 2008). No influence to non-completion found (Yoshimuro, 2010).	NS	NS	N S
<i>Non-completion Rates</i>	<i>More than 50% do not complete (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Hawley, 2003; Lovitts, 2001; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Naylor & Sanford, 1982; Sells, 1975; Sternberg, 1981).</i>	<i>N</i> <i>7/59 =</i> <i>12%</i> <i>7NC +</i> <i>13E =</i> <i>20/59</i> <i>34%</i> <i>Possible</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
	EdD non-completion rate is approximately 41% (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	N 7/46 12%	N	N
	Approximately 30% leave the program in the first three years (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992) and approximately 24% (Nerad & Cerny, 1991) .	N 1/59 2%	N	N
	Approximately 25% leave the program after obtaining ABD status (Bowne & Rudenstine, 1992).	N 6/59 10%	N	N
	Approximately 15% leave the program after completing the first three chapters (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Nerad & Cerney).	N 0/59 0%	N	N
Pre-enrollment non-completer forecasting	Inconclusive. None of these are shown to have an effect: GPA (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973); time-to-degree (Muhic, 1971); time between bachelors and master's degree (Destigter, 1983).	NS	NS	N S

Note: SR = Survey, IR = Interview, C = Convergence, Y = yes, NS = Not Studied, N = no, Com = completer, NC = Non-completer, E = Enrollee

Table H1 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Literature Review

Time-to-degree	Cohort students are more likely to complete their degree approximately one year sooner than non-cohort students (Tierce, 2008).		N	N	N
	ASU graduates take an average of four years to graduate (Smiley, 2007).		N 4.5 years + E's years	N 4.5 years + E's years	N
	Those who take longer are more at risk for non-completion (Dickson, 1987).		Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity	African Americans are under-represented (Pouncil, 2009).		Y 4/59 7%	Y 0/16 0%	Y
	Students of international origin have a high success rate (Hesseling, 1986).		NS	NS	NS
	More minorities are non-completers (Smallwood, 2004).		N 1/7 14%	N 0/4 0%	N
Age	Not found to be a factor (Campbell, 1992; Pogrow, 1977, Valentine, 1986, Wright, 1991).		Y	Y	Y
Gender	Students	Do better with like gender advisors (Berg & Ferber, 1983; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988).	NS	NS	NS
	Men	Fewer men enroll (Shaw, 2006).	Y 19/59 = 32%	Y	Y
		More likely to graduate (by 1.5 to 1; Kittell-Limerick, 2005). More likely to graduate (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973; Mooney, 1968).	Y initial ly	Y	Y
		Take less time to graduate (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1973).	Y	Y	Y
		Receive more support from advisors (Hite, 1985).	NS	NS	NS
	Women	Have more completion success in the EdD field than any other (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	NS	NS	NS
		Experience pain in lack of closure more than men (Lenz, 1995; Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	NS	Y	Y
		Experience self-doubt (Bauer, 1988).	Y	N	N

Table H1 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Literature Review

Reasons for Non-completion	60% due to other obligations (Solomon & Rothblum (1984).	N 2/7 29%	Y 2/4 50%	N
	About half of the non-completers left the program due to personal health (Malmberg, 2000). Health was a major issue (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	N 0/7 0%	N 0/4 0%	N
	50% took more than a year off after classes while 20% completers did (Nettles & Millet, 2006).	NS	Y 2/4 50%	Y
	32% due to not finding a workable topic (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	N 1/7 14%	Y more 3/4 75%	N
	30% due to not knowing what to put in the dissertation or knowing how to proceed (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984).	Y more 4/7 57%	Y 1/4 25%	Y
	Financial issues affected 50% of participants (Malmberg, 2000).	Y 4/7 57%	Y 2/4 50%	Y
	Intensity (Wagnor, 1986).	N 0/7 0%	N 0/4 0%	N
	Frustration due to magnitude of dissertation (Campbell, 1992; Goodchild et al., 1997).	NS	NS	NS
	Loss of momentum (Hawley, 2003).	N 0/7 0%	N 0/4 0%	N
	Took time off after classes and never started again (Campbell, 1992).	N 1/7 14%	Y 1/4 25%	N
	Major reason for leaving was advisor difficulties, such as, lack of support or timely feedback (Campbell, 1992; Jacks, 1983; McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	Y 6/7 86%	Y 4/4 100%	Y
	Change in advisor caused lost and alone feelings (Campbell, 1992).	N 0/7 0%	N 0/4 0%	N
	Not getting a different advisor when needed (Strite, 2007).	N 0/7 0%	Y 2/4 50%	N
	Department faculty leaving related to student non-completion (Nelson & Lovitts, 2001).	N	Y	N

Table H1 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Literature Review

Major reasons for completion	An active positive advisor relationship is related to completion (Campbell, 1992; Gell, 1995; Mah, 1986).	Y	Y	Y
	92% claim that advisor was key to their success. (Shaw, 2006)	Y > 50%	Y	Y
	Psychological influences have the greatest influence on completion (Kittell-Limmerick, 2005).	NS	NS	NS

Table H2

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 1

Characteristics				
Students	Like to finish what they start (Campbell, 1992).	Y	Y	Y
Completer	Was determined (Shaw, 2006). Was persistent, resilient, and tenacious (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Was disciplined, self-controlled (Strite, 2007) (Regimented).	Y	Y	Y
	Was self-directed (Yeager, 2009). Has initiative (Blue, 2008). Has the ability to work alone, and was self-reliant (Strite, 2007) (self-sufficient, autonomous, and Independent)	Y	Y	Y
	Was a self-advocate (Wendover, 2006). Was confident and bold (Hawley, 2003). (self-assured or proactive)	Y	Y	Y
	Was self-motivated (Shaw, 2006). (Was energetic, vibrant, or active]	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	Was passive (Hawley, 2003).	Y	Y	Y
	Was timid (Hawley, 2003).	N	N	N
	Non-responsive to work necessary (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	Y	Y	Y
Desire				
Completer	Their desire is likely to be for career advancement (Franek, 1982; Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
Longer than average time-to-degree students	Their desire is likely to be for personal or for altruistic reasons (Strite, 2007).	NS	NS	NS
	More external pressures are placed on those who get the degree for personal reasons (Tluczek, 1995).	NS	NS	NS
Some non-completers	Lost interest in completing (Campbell, 1992).	Y	N	N

Note: SR = Survey, IR = Interview, C = Convergence, Y = yes, NS = Not Studied, N = no, Com = completer, NC = Non-completer, E = Enrollee

Table H2 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 1

Belief				
Completer	Has self-efficacy (Shaw, 2006). (confidence]	Y	Y	Y
Enrollees	Self-doubt (related to not understanding how to do the statistics; Williams, 1997).	Y	N	N
Emotions/thoughts/Feelings				
Students	> 50% experience anxiety (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	N	N
	Admit it is a lonely experience (Strite, 2007; Wendover, 2006; Williams, 1997).	N	Not com.	N
Completer	Has control of emotions (Goleman, 1995; Strite, 2007)	Y	Y	Y
Enrollees	Some had anger and frustration due to committee difficulties (Williams, 1997).	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	Have conflicting thoughts and emotional turmoil interfering with focusing and thinking (Goleman, 1995, p. 36).	Y	Y	Y
	Experience negative feelings (Ramos, 1994).	Ync	Ync	Y
	Felt intimidated and overwhelmed with dissertation (Campbell, 1992).	Y	Y	Y
	Experience anxiety (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	N	N
	Have apprehension and helplessness, and lack self-efficacy. (Ramos, 1994) May experience lack of self-esteem from non-completion (Sherizen, 1973).	Ync	Ync	Y
Energy				
Non-completers	Have more health issues. Up to 50% do not complete because of health issues (Malmberg, 2000).	N	N	N
Getting Started – Acceleration				
Students	Did not find procrastination much of a problem (Malmberg, 2000).	N	N	N
	Create a workable plan (Williams, 1997).	Yc	Yc	Yc
Non-completers	Found procrastination a problem for 2/3 non-completers (Yeager, 2008).	Y	Y 4/4	Y
Maintenance – Momentum				
Completer	Had direct current energy (Miller, 1995).	Yc	Yc	Yc
Non-completer	Had a weak battery or lack of momentum energy (Miller, 1995).	N	N	N
Maintenance				
Research				
Students	Most had research difficulty (Malmberg, 2000).	N	N	N
	Approximately half had literature review difficulty. (Strite, 2007)	N	N	N
Completers	More than 50% had difficulty with starting the research process (Strite, 2007).	N	N	N

Table H2 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 1

Topic				
Students	Both genders have difficulty finding a topic. Women have difficulty selecting a topic (Smith, 1983). Men have difficulty finding a topic (Yeager, 2008).	Y	Y	Y
Proposal				
Completers	Had difficulty with the proposal (Strite, 2007).	N	N	N
Statistics				
Students	Statistics cause self-doubt	N	N	N
Analyzing Data				
Completers and enrollees	Approximately 50% had difficulty coding data (Strite, 2007; Williams, 1997).	N	N	N
Experiences, Interactions, and Interventions				
Life Situations				
Students	Major life events occurred during dissertation process such as; personal illness, family illness, death in the family, or become a caregiver. All experienced factors that slowed progress (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Major life events slowed the dissertation process. Greater than 50% had one major event that slowed progress (McCormack-Weiss, 2003)	Y	Y	Y
	Job slowed progress (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	Y	Y
Students	Personal obligations slowed progress for more than half (Malmberg, 2000)	Y	Y	Y
Non-completers	Job interfered with completing the dissertation for 2/3 non-completers (Campbell, 1992; Yeager, 2008).	Y	Y	Y
	Half divorce or separate during program (Malmberg, 2000).	N	Ye	N
Relationship Support				
Completers	80% felt the committee was instrumental to progress (Malmberg, 2000)	NS	NS	NS
Longer time-to-degree students	Experience an advisor/student mismatch (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Non-functioning committees stall process (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
Enrollees	Experienced co-advisor difficulties (Franek, 1982).	NS	NS	NS
Non-completers	Less active, less nurturing, less supportive advisors sometimes generate conflict and lack timely feedback. (Green & Kluever, 1996; Ross, 2009).	Y	Y	Y
	Non-supportive relationship partner or spouse slows progress (Franek, 1982).	Y	Y	Y
	All had committee changes, 4/4 (Malmberg, 2000).	NS	NS	NS

Table H2 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 1

Interventions				
Completers	Study partners help some (Wendover, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Mentors help some (Wendover, 2006).	Y	NS	Y
	Cohorts help each other finish (Barnett et al., 2000; Grasso, 2004; Strite, 2007)	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Large group meetings (Figueroa, 2003).	Ysome	NS	Ysome
Interaction Relationships				
Students	Unstable committee affects progress (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	NS	Y
Completers	Have supportive faculty relationships (Johnson, 1997; Norquist, 1993).	Y	Y	Y
	Have supportive peer relationships (Figueroa, 2003).	Y	Y	Y
	Have mentoring relationships (Ross, 2009).	Ysome	NS	Ysome
	Have active, nurturing, supportive advisors that provided mentoring (Malmberg, 2000; Strite, 2007; Shaw, 2006; Wendover, 2006).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Approximately 50% had committee changes (Malmberg, 2000).	NS	NS	NS
	95% claimed that cohort support was a major factor to success (Strite, 2007).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
Non-completer	Non-supportive relationship partner can be detrimental to progress (Franek, 1982).	Ysome	Y	Y
Resources				
Completer	Used university program layout (Shaw, 2006).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Used professor input (Shaw, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Used the library (Shaw, 2006).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome

Table H3

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 2

Characteristic Process				
Completer	Has supportive relationships with advisor and committee promoting self-efficacy (Faghihi, 1998).	Y	Y	Y
Desire Process				
Longer time-to-degree student	Allows pressure to slow progress (Tluczek, 1995)	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	Loses interest in completing after taking time off after classes for more than a year (Campbell, 1992).	N	N	N
Beliefs and Self-confidence Process				
Completer	Completion of tasks causes self-confidence (Varney, 2003).	Y	Y	Y
	Advisor's modeling of writing helps with understanding expectations (Wendover, 2006).	NS	NS	NS
	Advisor shows emotional support (Kluevar, 1995) by providing attentive and sympathetic responses to remove self-doubt (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	In-adequate dissertation training (Varney, 2003).	Y	Y	Y
Emotions/Thoughts/Feelings Process				
Completer	No processes.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Non-completer	No processes.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Energy Process				
Completer	Less rest time off after classes from working on dissertation.	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	More rest time off after classes from working on dissertation.	Y	Y	Y
Intervention Process				
Completer	Advisor nurtures, supports, and helps move student toward completion.	Y	Y	Y
	Supportive department.	NS	NS	NS
Non-completer	Non-supportive advisor.	Y	Y	Y
	Department faculty leaving department (Nelson & Lovitts, 2001).	Y	Y	Y
Motivation Process				
Completer	Advisor nurtures, supports, and helps move student toward completion.	Y	Y	Y
	Supportive department.	NS	NS	NS
	Job opportunities provide motivation.	Y	Y	Y
Slower time-to-degree	Receiving advice from other students removes hesitancy.	Y	Y	Y

Note: SR = Survey, IR = Interview, C = Convergence, Y = yes, NS = Not Studied, N = no, Com = completer, NC = Non-completer, E = Enrollee

Table H3 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 2

Non-completer	Less supporting advisor.	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer (implied)	Department is less supportive.	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	Department faculty leaving department.	Y	Y	Y
Getting Started Process				
Time Management Process				
Completer	Timeline use (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Balanced obligations and socializing time (Malmberg, 2000; Hagedorn & Doyle, 1993; Tluczek, 1995).	Y	Y	Y
	Balanced socializing time.	Y	Y	Y
	Initiates contact with advisor.	Y	Y	Y
	Holds regular meetings with advisor (Strite, 2007).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
Unsure how to begin after classes.				
Students	Experience some blocked time of not knowing how to proceed (Strite, 2007).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Most have a lack of knowledge of how to do research. (Varney, 2003).	N	N	N
Completer	Fewer than 20% took a year or more off	NS	NS	NS
Longer time-to-degree student	Start and stop working on dissertation several times.	NS	Y	Y
Longer time-to-degree student (Implied)	Received advice from fellow students removes hesitancy.	Y	Y	Y
Dissertation events and skill areas affecting completion				
Planning and organizing Process				
Completers	Plan and organize creating their own process (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Persistently prioritizes time.	Y	Y	Y
Dissertation				
Completers	Have multiple reviews done of writing (Figuroa, 2003).	NS	NS	NS

Table H3 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 2

Relationship Partner or Spouse				
Being supportive.				
Completer (implied)	Supportive	Y	Y	Y
Non-completer	Non-supportive	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
Intervention's Process				
Completer	Meet as a group with a faculty member to listen, model, suggest, and encourage each other.	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Peer students in the same program, share experiences, review each other's work, and explain the process to each other.	Y	Y	Y
Intervention processes				
Advisor				
Completer	Balanced power in the relationship between advisor and student (Goleman, 2006).	NS	NS	NS
	Strong active positive relationship.	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Nurturing supportive relationship showing empathy and understanding of life situations (Strite, 2007).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Avoid conflicts and resolve differences.	Y	Y	Y
	Timely feedback although some had difficulty getting prompt feedback.	Y	Y	Y
	General help.	Y	Y	Y
	Students provide advisor responses and work.	Y	Y	Y
	92% claim advisor was key to their success (Shaw, 2006).	Y>50%	Y>50%	Y>50%
Longer time-to-degree	Changed chair due to mismatch.	Y	Y	Y
	Co-advisor difficulties slow progress (Strite, 2007).	NS	NS	NS
Non-completer	Lack of supporting chair.	Y	Y	Y
	Lack of timely feedback.	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
Committee				
Completer	Cohesive committee.	Y	Y	Y
	Help move student through program	Y	Y	Y
	Available.	Y	Y	Y
	Student makes committee contacts.	NS	NS	NS

Table H4

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 3

RQ3, Study Guide Recommendations				
University	Maintain a Doctoral Student Database (Malmberg, 2000, McCormack-Weiss, 2003; Smiley, 2007).	N S	N S	N S
	Require doctoral student's yearly status updates from departments (Strite, 2007).	N S	N S	N S
	Provide a message board for doctoral students (Williams, 1997).	N S	N S	N S
	Provide an advisor selection course for students (Madsen, 1992).	N	N	N
	Survey students for recommendations to reduce time-to-degree (Tierce, 2008).	Y	Y	Y
Department Program	Maintain a collegial department (Nelson & Lovitts, 2001).	N S	N S	N S
	Set up a counseling system for enrollees (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	N	N	N
	Provide a mentoring system with training that provides the following: enforcement of timelines, timely responses and suggestions, accessibility, and support educationally, emotionally, and relationally. (Campbell, 1992; Varney, 2003; Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	Require documentation of advisement from advisors and students (Strite, 2007).	N	N	N
	Establish roles and expectations of the advisor and student (Ramos, 1994).	Y	N	N
	Make resources available (Shaw, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Provide a means to match chairs with students (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	N	N	N
	Provide a process for advisor/advisee contacts (Campbell, 1992).	N	N	N
	Provide a Dissertation Structure Guide (Campbell, 1992; Figueroa, 2003).	Y	N	N
	Provide training for chairs (Brawer, 1996; Kittell-Limerick, 2005; Ramos, 1994).	N	N	N
	Provide a doctoral program orientation (McCormack-Weiss; 2003; Ramos, 1994).	N	N	N
	Provide an orientation booklet for the doctoral student. (Kittell-Limerick, 2005; McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	N	N	N
	Provide a writing course at the doctorate level (Gibbs, 2013).	N	N	N
	Provide a required dissertation course for students (Malmberg, 2000; Strite, 2007; Wendover, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Provide dissertation experience in course work (Strite, 2007; Varney, 2003; Wendover, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Provide support for finishing the proposal prior to the end of the classes (Varney, 2003).	N	N	N
	Provide classes to teach students how to handle stress and pressure and to balance their emotions (Goleman, 1995).	N	N	N
Provide a class to learn to maintain desire, get started, and to maintain momentum (my suggestion).	N	N	N	

Note: SR = Survey, IR = Interview, C = Convergence, Y = yes, NS = Not Studied, N = no, Com = completer, NC = Non-completer, E = Enrollee

Table H4 (continued)

Multi-convergence Table: Research Question 3

Chair	Track progress regularly (Malmberg, 2000; Wendover, 2006).	N	N	N
	Provide guidance and structure (Ramos, 1994).	Y	Y	Y
	Provide emotional support (Kluevar, 1995, Ramos, 1994).	Y	N	N
	Provide evening hours for advising meetings (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	N	N	N
	Be attentive and sympathetic (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	N	N	N
	Maintain good relations between the advisor, student, and committee (Williams, 1997).	N	N	N
	Provide active involvement and care (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	Y	Y
Students	Know your academic and emotional skills prior to going into program (Sternberg, 1981).	Ysome	Ysome	Ysome
	Communicate with advisor regularly (Campbell, 1992).	Y	N	N
	Change chairs if there is a miss-match (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998; Strite, 2007).	N	N	N
	Work with advisor to put together a compatible committee. (Brause, 2000).	N	N	N
	Maintain relationships with others (Strite, 2007).	N	N	N
	Start the first year of the program doing research for your topic (Strite, 2007).	Y	Y	Y
	When stuck, read completed dissertations (Strite, 2007).	N	Ysome	N
	Use available resources (Malmberg, 2000).	Y	Y	Y
	Hire a proofreader (Malmberg, 2000).	N	Ysome	N
	Use a dissertation progress log/timeline/Checklist (Franek, 1982; Hanson, 1992; Kittell-Limerick, 2005).	Y	Y	Y
	Save copies of your articles (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).	N	Ysome	N
	Pick an advisor well (Shaw, 2006).	Y	Y	Y
	Do not take time off (Campbell, 1992).	N	N	N

Table H5

Multi-convergence Profile Table

	Completer	Both groups similar	Non-completer
Desire		Desire to finish	Desire may change
Belief	Self-efficacy		Lower self-efficacy
Characteristics	Tenacious, persevering, self-directed, resilient, determined, extremely motivated, hardworking, bold, shows initiative, has integrity, disciplined, resilient, self-advocate		Passive
Emotions	Emotionally stable	Experience anxiety	Turmoil, negative feelings, difficulty focusing, intimidated by the magnitude of the paper
Life events		Experience life events, such as deaths, marriages, family issues	
	What works		What does not work
Motivation (self-regulation)	Rewards, chair's emotional support, mentoring or study partners, small successes, being focused		Faculty turnover. Other priorities. Lack of support
Skills and knowledge	Getting help when needed		Lack of skills in the following: dissertation process, statistical analysis, writing skills, quantitative, and qualitative training
Belief (self-efficacy)	Having confidence		Self-doubt
Progress	Continue to work through difficulties		Getting stuck, not understanding requirements
Emotional	Having Balance		Not resolving difficulties
Choices	Choose topic early		Difficulty selecting topic

Table H5 (continued)

Multi-convergence Profile Table

Chair	Seeks strong chair support, picks the right chair, has a workable committee, changes chair if needed		Having non-supportive advisors that are slow to give feedback, not changing chairs when needed, having uncooperative committees
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APPENDIX I
SUGGESTED STUDY GUIDE LIST

Suggested Study Guide List

The suggestions are labeled by the groups who recommended the suggestions. The legend is as follows: for survey responses: C = completer, E = enrollee, and NC = non-completer; for interview responses: IC = interview completer, IE = interview enrollee, and IN = interview non-completer (see Appendix I).

University

1. Requirements

“Waive the immunization requirement” (IN, Donald).

“Streamline requirements...unfairness of requirements” (IE, Brenda).

2. Financial

“Explain the process of deferment of student loans” (IE, Regina).

3. Study Guide

Ask scheduled graduates ideas for a study guide. (C)

4. Motivation

Show the benefits (money) of getting a doctorate degree. (C, E)

5. Classes

Hold bi-weekly classes through the dissertation process. (C)

6. Dissertation Process

Set up and explain the overall process. (C) 2

7. Deadlines

Provide guides on deadlines with an explanation of whose responsibility it is to get and turn in forms and paperwork. (C, E)

8. Interventions

Provide a list of possible interventions. (E)

9. Resources

Provide resources on how to find answers to questions (C)

Data analysis (C)

Websites for formatting references (C)

Methodology books for purchase(C)

Glatthorn and Joyner's (2005) book, *Writing the Winning Dissertation* (C) 2

Bryant's book (2004) *The Portable Dissertation Advisor* (C)

Editors (C)

Statisticians (C)

10. Equity

Have the same dissertation requirements for all students getting their doctorate.
(C, E)

11. Additional research

Compare cohort versus non-cohort program participant data and perceptions. (C)

"Investigate chairs that take more of a personal interest in their students and the students that finish" (IC, George).

Survey students for recommendations to reduce time-to-degree. (Tierce, 2008)

12. Accountability

"There needs to be one person, other than a secretary that is in charge of seeing the remaining people through the program" (IE, Jeanette).

"Is there a big group of people who have not gotten feedback from their chair so they are stuck?" (IE, Brenda).

Maintain a doctoral student database (Malmberg, 2000; McCormack-Weiss, 2003; Smiley, 2007).

Require doctoral students' yearly status updates from departments (Srite, 2007).

13. Communication

Provide a message board for doctoral students (Williams, 1997).

Program

1. Communication

Provide Orientation: Specialized by type of degree

“Explain the program and expectations well for new recruits” (IN, Heather).

“Explain program changes and responsibilities to existing students” (IN, Suzanne; IE, Jeannette, Elena, & Regina).

Provide a doctoral program orientation (Brawer, 1996; McCormack-Weiss, 2003; Ramos, 1994).

Provide an orientation booklet for the doctoral student (Kittel-Limerick, 2005; McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Maintain a collegial department (Nelson & Lovitts, 2001).

2. Incentive

Show the benefits (money) of getting a certain type of doctorate degree. (C, E)

3. Student Development

Provide opportunities for students to learn how they learn best. (C, E)

Help students to become aware of what times they function best for the different types of dissertation work. (C, E)

Help students develop a sense of the type of chair they would function best with. (C, E)

“Prepare the student earlier” (IC, Joanne).

4. Well-being

Have frank discussions on how the student should take care of themselves throughout the process. (C, E)

Set up a counseling system for enrollees (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

Provide classes to teach students how to handle stress and pressure and to balance their emotions (Goleman, 1995).

5. Momentum

Explain how to keep the momentum going if there are setbacks. (C, E)

6. Time management/Accountability

Provide ideas for balancing work and family responsibilities. (C, E)

Establish roles and expectations of the advisor and student (Ramos, 1994).

Provide a process for advisor/advisee contacts (Campbell, 1992).

Require documentation of advisement from advisors and students (Strite, 2007).

7. Classes

Plan the sequencing of classes to match the dissertation writing sequence. (NC)

Provide dissertation training with dissertation assignments in the first class. (NC).
Provide dissertation experience in coursework (Strite, 2007; Varney, 2003; Wendover, 2006).

“Provide teaching on how to input sources into the dissertation. Provide a course for SPSS” (IC, Pamela).

“Teach how to write a proposal” (IE, Elena).

“Bring back the classes for those struggling” (IE, Brenda).

“Set up a dissertation for dummies or don’t be A.B.D. monthly class” (IC, George). “Continue classes with deadlines during dissertation writing” (IN, Wesley).

Provide a required dissertation course for students (Malmberg, 2000; Strite, 2007; Wendover, 2006).

Provide an advisor selection course for students (Madsen, 1992).

Provide a writing course at the doctorate level (Gibbs, 2013).

8. Chair training

Provide training for chairs (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).

9. Dissertation

“Start the dissertation process earlier in the program.” (IN, Wesley)

Explanation of process

Provide specific requirements related to the program. Provide a full disclosure of what is involved. Explain that the doctoral process is not at all like a master's program. It is extremely arduous and will consume you. (C) 3

Topic

Guide how to choose a subject. (C)

Theoretical Framework

“Become familiar with others’ theoretical frameworks and why they chose it” (IE, Elena).

Events

“Guide students on how to set up and prepare for the comp/proposal meeting” (IE, Brenda & Regina).

10. Incentive

Financial

Provide a financial incentive for completion of the program. (C)

11. Resources

Provide good examples and chapter outlines of dissertations with table of contents, indexes, and frameworks. (C), (E)

Bring in more completers each semester to talk with the students about how to balance the time and other process issues. (C), (E)

“Provide professors that have experienced social injustice” (IE, Regina).

Make resources available. (Shaw, 2006)

Provide a dissertation structure guide. (Campbell, 1992)

12. Mentor

Provide a mentor to give complete step-by-step guidance. (C) “More support is needed when classes are over and you are on your own” (IC, George).

“Organize groups that work and study together” (IN, Heather).

“Have someone in the . . . program to walk you through the last month of meetings and formatting process” (IC, George).

Provide a mentoring system with training that provides the following: enforcement of timelines, timely responses and suggestions, accessibility, and support educationally, emotionally, and relationally (Campbell, 1992; Strite, 2007; Varney, 2003).

13. Chair Selection

Provide chairs who care and are deeply involved. (C) “Provide chair and committee lists with their current research” (IE, Regina & Kayla).

“Provide more ways for the students and possible chairs to get to know each other” (IN, Heather). “Match the students with the chair” (IC, Joanne).

Provide a means to match chairs with students (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).

Chair

1. Support

Care about the students and encourage them. Be a cheerleader. (C) Provide active involvement and care (Malmberg, 2000).

Be deeply involved in the student’s progress. (C) Provide guidance and structure (Ramos, 1994).

Be in contact with the enrolled students on a weekly basis. Prod the students. Motivate the student by staying in contact and asking the status of their work. (C, E)

Do what you can to help your students complete. (C)

“If you do not like the student, do not agree to be his or her chair. Tell the student nicely to find someone else. (IC, George)

Provide emotional support (Kluevar, 1995; Ramos, 1994). Be attentive and sympathetic (Kittell-Limerick, 2005).

Provide evening hours for advising meetings (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

2. Accountability/timeline

Develop timelines with the student (IE, Brenda) with clear and specific expectations and agree upon times to meet throughout the process (C).

“Let your student know how far ahead of the defense you need to see the paper to provide feedback” (IC, Joanne).

Provide support for the student’s timeline (NC). Support student’s work in order to meet timeline (NC).

Hold students accountable for timeline (NC; IE, Brenda). “Have deadlines for the students” (IC, Joanne). “Have guidelines for deadlines” (IN, Heather & IE, Kayla). Track progress regularly (Malmberg, 2000; Wendover, 2006).

Critical Time Support

Provide support for finishing the proposal prior to the end of the classes (Varney, 2003).

3. Feedback

Provide fast turnaround times for drafts. (C, E)

“Provide specific feedback in writing” (IE, Regina and Kayla).

4. Guide

Explain and guide the students through the process (IN, Donald; IE, Brenda) including the comprehensive exam and the proposal process (E).

“Need to provide scaffolding” (IC, Joanne).

5. Dissertation

Provide dissertation process specifics that you require as the chair. (C)

“Have students research topics and include the research as chapters for books that they put together” (IN, Donald).

“Provide more topic choices that the student can relate to and be passionate about” (IN, Heather).

6. Committee Coordination

Maintain good relations between the advisor, student, and committee (Williams, 1997).

Student

1. Voice

Acquire a voice that is respected with the professors and cohort. (NC)

Advocate for yourself. (IN, Wesley)

2. Self-knowledge

Become aware of your best study times. (E)

Learn how you learn best. (E)

Determine what type of chair would best meet your needs. (E)

“Know yourself, your learning styles, and what works for you. Identify your weaknesses and seek out ways to compensate or navigate around those weaknesses” (IE, Brenda and Regina). Know your academic and emotional skills prior to going into the program (Sternberg, 1981).

3. Drive

Motivation

Be a self-starter. (C)

Develop internal motivation and plan external supporting components. (C)

4. Momentum

Purpose

Maintain your drive and passion for the process and for the final outcome. Keep referring back to the “so what” of your research and why it is so important. Find a purpose and drive for the research prior to jumping into it. Don’t test topics for a couple months and give up. (C)

5. Struggles

Work through the struggles. Like teaching, completing the dissertation is difficult to prepare for. It is real world learning. Learn how to keep the momentum going if there are setbacks. (C, E)

Intervention

Form a study group of cohort peers or partner to encourage, support, relieve stress, provide ideas, and hold each other accountable. (C, E)

Meet weekly with partner or group. (C)

6. Relationship support

“Reach out to people who have completed” (IE, Elena & Brenda).

“You have to start the process with your people and say, ‘What sacrifices are you all willing to make?’” (IC, Travis).

Maintain relationships with others (Strite, 2007).

Spouse

Have a discussion with your spouse on the sacrifices and expectations during the dissertation journey. (C)

Family and friends

Explain to your family and friends that you will need time to complete the dissertation, and that you will see more of them when you are done, and that you need their understanding and support. (C)

Job

Get job and peer support before enrolling. (NC)

7. Accountability/Time management

Schedule

Plan your time and balance your schedule with spouse, family, and work. (C, E)

Get yourself on a regular schedule. (C)

Plan days from work to have a dedicated time to write. (C)

Timeline and planning

Set up a calendar. (C)

Set up a timeline of clear and specific expectations to have completed by specific dates. (C, E, NC)

Have a clearly defined plan with specific dissertation assignments. (C, NC)

Create checklists. (C) “Have a checklist for the dissertation process” (IN, Donald).

Do not take time off (Campbell, 1992).

Organization

Be extremely organized. (C)

Be consistent. Follow through. (C)

“Keep things organized in folders by themes” (IE, Elena).

Save copies of your articles (McCormack-Weiss, 2003).

8. Skills

Stay current with using data analysis. (C)

“Regularly save your work on the computer” (IC, Ronnie).

“Learn early how to use research software like OneNote for citations” (IE, Elena).

“Learn transcribing, the statistics program, and using the library” (IC, Pamela).

9. Well-being

Eat healthy. (C)

Take care of your health. (E)

“Listen to your body to find your own best time to study” (IC, Pamela).

“Believe in yourself. . . . Don’t feel that your work is not good enough. Don’t listen to others’ views of your lack of ability. . . . Love yourself” (IE, Regina).

“Keep afloat. Take everything with a grain of salt. There are a lot of things they don’t tell you” (IE, Regina).

“Work when you feel most comfortable” (IC, Cathy).

“Be willing to try. You have to take responsibility for this. . . . If some little mishap comes along, remember that you have invested a lot of time and money” (IC, Cathy).

“Know that a part of your personal life will get put on hold” (IC, George).

“Don’t take on extra committee work. . . . Your plate is full” (IC, George).

“Need balance or the mental health suffers” (IC, Joanne).

10. Environment

Find a place you can work. (C)

“Have your own room with at least two tables in the house . . . an office” (IC, George).

11. Dissertation

Topic

Your topic needs to be something you care about with a good dissertation question. (C) 2

Do not pick a topic you will be emotionally tied to. (NC)

Set up a firm deadline on when your topic has to be decided. (C)

Do not deviate from your topic. (C)

“Consider a writing team looking at the same topic from different angles, each writing their own dissertation that will fit together with others” (IE, Brenda).

Theoretical framework

“Become familiar with others’ theoretical framework and why they chose it” (IE, Elena).

“Keep the same topic and look at it from different lenses” (IE, Brenda & Regina).

“Get narrow in focus” (IC, Vivian).

“Start writing sooner” (IE, Regina).

Method

Do not change your method of research. (C) 2

Plan a realistic method design of research that fits into your life. (C)

Research

Enjoy researching. Visualize finding puzzle pieces to tell a story. (C)

Read other dissertations on your topic. (C)

“The best way to find good sources was to look at the bibliography of other writers” (IC, Cathy).

“Take notes as you read” (IE, Elena & Regina).

“In the literature review, write about the most prominent people in the field” (IE, Elena).

“Need at least 60% to respond to a survey” (IC, Ronnie).

“Put everything you read in your bibliography. You can pull it out later” (IC, George).

12. Class assignments

Apply classroom assignments to your topic. (C)

Start the dissertation in the first class (NC). Start the first year of the program doing research for your topic (Strite, 2007).

13. Resources

Use good dissertations to determine what should be included in each chapter, how it should be presented, and how to format the paper. (C)

“To save hours, (IC, George), get an editor” (IE, Regina and George).

14. Chair relationship

Selection

Understand the importance of the committee chair selection. Make sure you and your chair match (align). Have an amazing chair that becomes your prod as well as your cheerleader. Find someone who believes in what you are doing and is willing to get you through. Have those conversations up front. Graduation depends on your chair. (C, CE) “Find the right chair. It is like a marriage” (IC, George). “Learn how to pick a chair that will be there for you.” (IE, Elena). Pick an advisor well (Shaw, 2006).

Change chairs if there is a mismatch (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998; Strite, 2007).

Timeline

Work on the timeline with your chair. (C)

“Have the conference with the chair about when you want to graduate” (IC, Joanne).

Get chair’s support of timeline. (NC)

“Get to know your chair’s expectations” (IE, Elena).

“After submitting work to chair, work on another section while waiting for feedback” (IC, Joanne).

Use a dissertation progress log/timeline/checklist (Franek, 1982; Hanson, 1992; Kittell-Limerick, 2005).

Meetings

Agree upon meeting times with your chair. (C)

Meet with your chair. (C)

Communicate with advisor regularly. (Campbell, 1992)

Changes

Be prepared to make some changes you may not agree with to honor your chair’s wishes so long as it does not impact the integrity of your work. (C)

Resource

Ask your chair for one of their graduate’s completed dissertation to use as a resource. (C)

When stuck, read completed dissertations. (Strite, 2007)

Use available resources. (Malmberg, 2000)

Hire a proofreader. (Malmberg, 2000)

Work with advisor to put together a compatible committee. (Brause, 2000)

15. Be a mentor

“Mentor another cohort member in a different cohort” (IE, Regina).