

Faculty Mentors' Perceptions: Evidence of Applied Practitioner Research by EdD Candidates

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to understand faculty mentors' perspectives on the impact of CPED-aligned methodology courses on doctoral students' development as scholarly practitioners. This study was a pilot study and exploratory in nature. Methods included distribution of a survey which included Likert items, as well as open-ended questions. The study presents descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of the survey results. Additionally, exemplar DiPs were analyzed to demonstrate alignment with CPED principles. Findings indicated that faculty mentors perceive that the CPED-aligned methods coursework is having a positive impact on students' learning and development as scholar practitioners. However, areas for growth and continuous improvement were identified. Implications of the research indicate a need for ongoing program assessment and evaluation of the impact of methodological coursework as the institution moves forward in program redesign and improvement. This study also serves as a model for incorporating faculty mentor perspectives in course and program assessment.

KEYWORDS

methodology coursework, CPED principle alignment, faculty mentorship, scholarly practitioners, educational leadership

PURPOSE

As a recently inducted member of Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), Marymount University is interested in understanding the impact of CPED-aligned methodology courses on our doctoral students' development as scholarly practitioners. Scholarly practitioners identify a problem of practice through their experience in the field and "use practical research and applied theories as tools for change" (CPED Framework, 2019, para. 6). In assessing student development as scholarly practitioners, this pilot study specifically considers the lens and perspective of faculty mentors, as they guide students through the process of the dissertation in practice (DiP). Because faculty mentors directly observe student development and growth as researchers, they can provide unique perspectives on how methodology coursework is preparing students to apply practical research to solve a complex problem of practice.

MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY EDD PROGRAM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Marymount University's EdD program in Educational Leadership and Organizational Innovation was launched in Fall 2020. The curriculum, which strategically combines leadership theory coursework and research coursework, is designed to prepare scholar practitioners "to generate, transform, and apply professional knowledge and leadership practice" (Marymount University, 2021, p. 1).

Marymount's EdD program is a fully online 48-credit program that can be completed in less than three years. The program is designed for working professionals in a wide range of diverse fields and industries. Cohort members are professionals seeking to advance their careers within education, nonprofit, government, corporate, and healthcare industries, among others. While we are a fully online program, Marymount prides itself on being a very high-



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touch program with an intentional design to support students as they balance work, school, and personal responsibilities.

The EdD program coursework is designed to provide frameworks on which students can reflect in order to conduct research that can bring about organizational change. The program coursework has been designed to achieve four overarching learning outcomes. Throughout the program, students are challenged to:

- Use transformative leadership to promote change across diverse instructional and organizational settings,
- Collaborate with diverse audiences and stakeholders about organizational research, practice, and theories,
- Create innovative processes or systems that foster continuous improvement,
- Develop analytical thinking skills to evaluate change processes. (Marymount University, 2021)

Although not formally accepted into CPED until a year after program launch in 2021, the EdD program and its curriculum were proactively designed according to CPED's guiding Design Concepts and six Guiding Principles, which states that the Professional Doctorate in Education:

1. Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice.
2. Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
3. Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships.
4. Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.
5. Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry.
6. Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice. (Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2019, para. 3)

Several studies have been conducted on the value of using CPED's principles to guide EdD programs during their program design (Buss et al., 2017; Gallagher, 2013; Mayer et al., 2013; Peterson, 2016). Throughout our program design, and as we move forward in refining and improving our program, the CPED principles remain at the forefront of our programming, particularly in the dissertation methods courses. As a consortium member, it is the duty of Marymount's School of Education faculty to utilize the CPED Framework to redesign, evaluate, and improve our programs. Per the three CPED phases of design, our program is in the redesign stage. Several faculty members are examining various aspects of our program through a multitude of data collection methods.

With a newly minted, thriving terminal degree program underway, we find it sagacious to examine the perspectives of our Lead Doctoral Faculty Mentors (LDFM) as to the exposure and acquisition of the CPED principles of their mentees. We seek to use data from our LDFM stakeholders as a means to make informed, purposeful, and evidence-based decisions when engaging in continuous improvement of our research courses (Giancola, 2021).

LEAD DOCTORAL FACULTY MENTOR (LDFM) PROGRAM

A key focus of this study is examining students' development as scholar practitioners through the lens of the LDFM. The LDFM program is integral to the Marymount EdD program, as we pride ourselves on offering a high-touch program with comprehensive student support, especially throughout the research and dissertation process. In accordance with the CPED Design Concepts (2019), Marymount's EdD is dedicated to providing a supportive learning environment" and comprehensive "individualized and cohort attention. The LDFM program is built on principles of mutual respect, equity and justice, and the fostering of a rigorous, yet flexible learning environment (CPED, 2019).

Historically, only half of all doctoral students complete their degree, and dissertation mentorship plays an important role in those who achieve program completion (Mullen, 2021). Doctoral students often note that a positive mentoring relationship with their dissertation chair, one in which advisors exhibit dispositions acknowledging daily struggles (balancing school, work, and family responsibilities) and promoting mentee proficiency, leads to increased intrinsic motivation of the doctoral student (Jameson & Torres, 2019). Mullen (2021) concurs, citing findings by Maddox (2017) that a leading cause of program disruption is "lack of advising and mentoring" (p. 140). Elmore (2021) also found that effective dissertation mentorship can help doctoral students overcome five common challenges of online doctoral learners, including "writing at a doctoral level, experiencing feelings of isolation, accessing online resources, establishing a professional and collegial relationship, and managing research" (p. 67). This study specifically focuses on the challenge of managing research, as demonstrated by doctoral students' incorporation of CPED's Guiding Principles in their research methodology. Simply put, a positive mentoring relationship promotes student success.

The LDFM acts as a mentor and coach for the doctoral students, guiding them through the process of research and writing their Dissertation in Practice. LDFMs work closely with the doctoral students as they journey through their research coursework, and thus are able to closely observe their development as research and scholarly practitioners. The LDFM is similar to what many may consider a dissertation chair; however, the LDFM goes beyond what is typically expected of this traditional role. LDFMs are paired with doctoral students early in the program, during the fourth semester of coursework, undergo extensive onboarding training, and participate in ongoing professional development training. LDFMs are expected to meet with students a minimum of three times each semester, and they observe first-hand how students are developing and applying their methodology coursework. Their perspective is especially unique, as they see their mentee's journey and growth over time, as opposed to coursework faculty, who may only see a snapshot of the student's research skills in a given semester. The LDFM is integral in the transition of doctoral students to scholarly practitioners.

EDD RESEARCH COURSEWORK

Throughout the Marymount EdD program, students take both content and research coursework to prepare them to become thought-leaders and research-practitioners in their respective fields. Coursework is delivered asynchronously through the Canvas



Learning Management System. All courses for the EdD program were written, developed, and designed by various full- and part-time Marymount faculty, with the assistance of Keypath Education instructional designers. Content courses introduce students to theoretical foundations of leadership, ethics, and crisis/change management to prepare students to lead and affect change within their organizations.

Alongside these content-based courses, students also take a series of research and methods-based courses throughout their program. The research and methodology courses are scaffolded in a way that allows students to apply their knowledge and progress in their research for their DiPs. As discussed above, the design of these methods courses, like all the program coursework, was guided by the CPED principles. In Table 1, we draw on research from Buss (2018) to analyze how the design of each methodology course aligns with the CPED principles. As a second step, a colleague conducted original research with course designers and course instructors to verify their perspective of course alignment with the CPED principles (Marotta, 2023).

Table 1. MU Methodology Coursework and CPED Alignment

Table with 3 columns: Course Title, Course Objectives, and CPED Principles (1-6). Rows include ED 703: Approaches to Research Methods, ED 712: Program Evaluation, ED 713: Applied Research Methods, ED 715: Communicating Research Findings, and ED 801: Doctoral Seminar.

As we seek to understand the effectiveness of our methodology coursework and honor our commitment to continuous improvement, it is imperative that we begin to evaluate the design of our methods courses and consider the preparedness of our students in their development as researchers and scholar practitioners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study is intended to serve as a pilot and exploratory study to guide the development of a larger study as the program grows in both student enrollment and number of faculty mentors. These research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is the perspective of lead doctoral faculty mentors (LDFM) on how CPED-aligned methodology courses have impacted students' learning and development as scholar practitioners?
2) How do lead doctoral faculty mentors (LDFM) perceive the impact of the course design, sequencing, and instruction of the research methodology courses on student learning and development?
3) How have students' development as scholar practitioners and their dissertations in practice aligned with CPED's six Guiding Principles?

METHODS

This study is part of a larger project of EdD program review and improvement for our institution. Because the program was only established in Fall 2020 and the number of students enrolled in research coursework was still limited at the time of this study, this research is exploratory in nature and is intended to guide the development of a larger study as the program grows and strives for continuous improvement. This research team sought the perspectives of the LDFMs to determine the impact of CPED-aligned methodology courses on doctoral students' development as research-practitioners. An electronic survey was administered to LDFMs for Cohort One and Cohort Two of the EdD program. The rationale for limiting the population to these cohorts was to ensure that at the time the survey was administered, students would have taken some foundational methodology coursework. The survey consisted of a questionnaire, in which LDFMs would rate responses on a five-point Likert scale, as well as a section of open-ended questions.

The survey was sent out to 25 faculty mentors mentoring students in either the first and second cohorts, or both. Of the 25 active LDFMs at the time of the study, 12 responded, for a response rate of 48%. All responses were anonymous. According to the survey, the LDFM respondents were equally distributed in membership between serving Cohort One (33.33%), Cohort Two (33.33%), and both cohorts (33.33%).

We drew on descriptive statistics (Cooksey, 2020) to present and analyze our data. We analyzed the Likert scale data by looking at median and mode scores, as experts have argued that these are the best ways to measure central tendency for Likert data (Jamieson, 2004). We also looked at standard deviation as evidence of the variation or alignment in our LDFM responses. In addition to descriptive statistics, we use focused coding (Saldaña, 2021) and applied thematic analysis (Mackieson et al., 2019) to analyze the open-ended questions in our survey. We specifically looked for thematic patterns, repetition, and comparisons within our data (Saldaña, 2021) to analyze possible growth and improvement areas for the program. Lastly, we drew upon students' dissertation drafts to analyze the ways in which students' application of their methods coursework align with the CPED principles.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research was to understand faculty mentors' perspectives on the impact of CPED-aligned methodology courses on doctoral students' development as scholarly practitioners. A discussion of supporting research questions follows, examining in-depth the data on LDFM perspectives, the impact on methodology course design, and examples of DiP exemplars in which doctoral candidates demonstrated integration of CPED's Guiding Principles.

LDFM Perspectives

Our first supporting research question asked: What is the perspective of LDFMs on how CPED-aligned methodology courses have impacted students' learning and development as scholar practitioners? To answer this question, we looked primarily at the quantitative data elicited from our Likert-scale questions. Our survey consisted of 16 Likert-scale questions which were designed to understand students' development as scholar-practitioners through the lens of the CPED principles. Each of the statements aligns with one or more of these principles. The questions sought to examine individual components of the CPED principles to garner a more concrete understanding of LDFM perspectives on their mentees' development as scholar practitioners.

The response options were provided on a spectrum between strongly disagree (score of 1) to strongly agree (score of 5). While the available range of scores for each question was 4 (between 1-5), the actual range of the data was 3 (between 2-5). The response of "strongly disagree" was not selected for any survey question. The responses were primarily in the agree and strongly agree ranks. With an aggregate mean of 4.29, mode of 5, and standard deviation of 0.79, our data revealed that the LDFMs believe their doctoral student mentees generally demonstrate facilitation of the CPED principles via their coursework and the working drafts of their dissertations.

If we delve deeper into the individual Likert questions and corresponding CPED principles in Table 2, we notice some additional patterns that are important to note. In terms of strengths, our LDFMs perceive that our methodology coursework is strongest in CPED principles one, four, and six, as we work to prepare students as scholar practitioners. Thus, our LDFMs perceive that our students are generally strong in identifying a problem of practice grounded in equity and social justice (principle one), as well as generating new professional knowledge that is filling a scholarly research gap (principle six). Additionally, our LDFMs strongly agree that our students have opportunities to engage in relevant real-life applications in their field or profession through their coursework (principle four).

In terms of areas of growth, our data shows that LDFMs see an area for growth with respect to CPED principle five. For all of the Likert statements that align with principle five, we report a median of 4 and mode of 4, consistently lower than much of the data that aligns with the other principles. Of particular note is the Likert item which asked LDFMs their level of agreement with the following statement: "The doctoral student(s) clearly articulates theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide the research." The range for this statement was a score of 2-5, and this statement also reported the greatest standard deviation with a value of 1.01. This data shows us that we may need to help our students better understand and articulate conceptual frameworks for their research. Additional statements under principle four reveal that students may need further support in selecting and justifying a method that is appropriate for their

research. However, we should also note that some of the students in these cohorts had not completed all of their foundational methods courses at the time of this research. Table 2 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics of survey items as aligned to CPED Principles.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Items as Aligned to CPED Principles

CPED Principles/Survey Items	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
CPED Principle One. Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice.			
The doctoral student(s) identified a complex problem of practice that is grounded in equity and social justice.	4.50	5.00	0.64
The doctoral student(s) demonstrates a foundational understanding of research ethics.	5.00	5.00	0.88
The doctoral student(s) constructed research protocols in which they were qualified by education, training, and experience.	5.00	5.00	0.66
CPED Principle Two. Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.			
The doctoral student(s) effectively applies knowledge learned through their methodology coursework to the process of preparing their DiP proposal.	4.00	4.00	0.91
The doctoral student(s) identifies research that will bring about solutions that will make a positive difference in the respective field, organization, or community.	5.00	5.00	0.78
CPED Principle Three. Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships.			
The doctoral student(s) demonstrates the ability to collaborate and build partnerships (i.e., LDFM, cohort peers, community partners, etc.).	5.00	5.00	0.48
The doctoral student(s) incorporates diverse perspectives into their DiP.	4.00	4.00	0.69
The doctoral student(s) demonstrates the ability to effectively communicate research purpose to a broad audience.	4.00	4.00	0.60
CPED Principle Four. Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.			
The doctoral student(s) have opportunities to engage in relevant real-life applications in their field or profession through their coursework (e.g., Program Evaluation).	5.00	5.00	0.66
CPED Principle five. Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry.			
The doctoral student(s) clearly articulates theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide the research.	4.00	4.00	1.01
The doctoral student(s) is familiar with common methods of data collection and identifies a method best suited for problem of practice analysis.	4.00	4.00	0.86
The doctoral student(s) has a clear vision of appropriate methodology to implement.	4.00	4.00	0.76
The doctoral student(s) is able to justify methodological process for inquiry.	4.00	4.00	0.73
The doctoral student(s) incorporates research coursework to guide the DiP proposal and presentation.	4.00	4.00	0.76



CPED Principles/Survey Items	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
CPED Principle Six. Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice.			
The doctoral student effectively generates new professional knowledge through their dissertation in practice.	5.00	5.00	0.65
The doctoral student has generated research that fills a scholarly gap and offers a solution to a problem of practice.	5.00	5.00	0.78

Impact of Methodology Course Design

Our second research question asked: How do LDFMs perceive the impact of the course design, sequencing, and instruction of the EdD program's research methodology courses on student learning and development? To answer this question, we relied primarily on data from the open-ended questions in our survey. One of these questions asked for LDFM perspectives on how the research methodology has impacted students' learning and development as scholar practitioners. In addition, we looked at a question which asked LDFMs for their feedback on the methodology coursework and student development as research practitioners.

In summary, our findings indicate that LDFMs perceive that the methodology courses generally have a positive impact on student learning and development as research practitioners. According to one LDFM, "students are aware of how to select the appropriate research tool to answer their questions and how best to implement that method with their selected population." Another LDFM noted, "I believe the students have received training in their research methodology necessary to develop their DiPs." A response to note is that one LDFM pointed out that overall, the CPED-aligned research methodology has had a positive impact on students' learning, but that "the extent of that impact varies depending on the skill and commitment of each individual student." This reminds us that while methodology courses play a role in preparing students for research, we cannot overlook the importance of skill, experience, and commitment level of each individual student.

While there was evidence that LDFMs perceive a positive impact of the methodology coursework, there was also evidence that LDFMs identify possible areas of growth and change with the methods courses and how we may be able to better prepare our students as scholar practitioners. A primary theme that emerged from the research is the need for an increased and earlier focus on developing a theoretical and conceptual framework to guide the research. Out of this concern came another concern that the literature review may be completed too early in the program, as students may not have a sound idea of their theoretical framework at that early point in the program.

Another theme that emerged from the data is the need for students to hone their research to a manageable scale. Many students start out with research ideas that are too big and unmanageable to complete within the expedited timeline of the program. Lastly, a final theme that emerged was a consideration of program course sequence. Some LDFMs commented that students may need an earlier introduction to qualitative research methods, as well as conceptual and theoretical frameworks, before writing their literature review. Table 3 outlines each of these themes, as well as the supporting evidence from our qualitative survey responses.

Table 3. Identified Growth Areas to Maximize the Impact of the Research Methods Courses

Growth Area/Theme	Evidence
Increased focus on theoretical/ conceptual framework	"I think there needs to be more time spent on theoretical framework and conceptual framework earlier in the research classes' content."
	"I think students would be served better if they were introduced to theoretical frameworks earlier in the process so they can incorporate their theory into their literature review and it would help them frame their problem through that lens."
Hone research to manageable scale	"Students struggle a bit with conceptual/theoretical framework, perhaps because the literature review is embedded so early and they don't identify a framework at that time"
	"At first my students were thinking too big and this bogged them down."
Consider sequence/ content of courses	"...helping the students realize a) it's OK to have a small project that's do-able, b) it's OK to build a conceptual framework as a project, and c) how a DiP can be mined and used as a basis for further research would be good."
	"It was very hard for my students to begin writing the first three chapters last year before they had been introduced to qualitative research methods, to the concept of mixed methods, and to the idea of a conceptual framework."
	"the literature review is embedded so early and they don't identify a [conceptual] framework at that time"
	"I found that some of my DOC students were doing too many weekly assignments from the beginning that I did not think were directly aligned with and focused on planning and writing a dissertation"

DiP Exemplars

Our final supporting research question asked: How have students' development as scholar practitioners and their DiPs aligned with CPED's six Guiding Principles? While the overall results in our Likert scale provides some feedback for this question, we specifically asked the following open-ended question: "Do you believe any of your students provide exemplar DiP proposal(s) that especially support the CPED principles referenced above? Please share the topic(s) and to which CPED principle(s) they align." Via this item we prompted LDFM respondents to provide details of exemplar DiPs that especially supported the CPED principles. LDFMs reported their mentees are studying a wide variety of topics and their dissertation drafts demonstrate exceptional facility with a number of CPED principles. Table 4 showcases the data provided by our LDFMs:

Table 4. Exemplar DiP Drafts and their Alignment with CPED Principles

Select Dissertation in Practice Draft Titles	CPED Principles					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appreciative Inquiry, Conflict of Caring from an Ethic of Justice	X	X		X	X	X
When They Lean on Us: A Phenomenological Study of Black Male Educators and their Experiences.	X	X				
Scaffolded Post-Secondary Planning Methods and their Role in Cultivating Career Decision	X	X			X	X
Anti-Hazing Curriculum Efficacy in Higher Education: A Program Evaluation	X	X	X		X	X
A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Face-to-Face Teachings in a K-8 Catholic Schools: What about the Teachers?		X	X	X	X	X



Select Dissertation in Practice Draft Titles	CPED Principles					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
How A Comprehensive Training Program Builds Resilience in School Administrators at a Boarding School for Students with Learning Disabilities		X	X			X
Hispanics in Higher Education	X	X				X
Frequency (f)	5	7	3	2	4	6

Of the seven DiPs disclosed by the LDFMs as exemplars, all were purported to exhibit principle two. Six exhibited CPED principle six. Five DiPs exhibited CPED principle one. CPED principles three and four were the least commonly reported. Two LDFMs provided more extensive information regarding the work of their mentees by name. Here, we provide an overview of four of these proposals and the CPED principles to which they align, from the perspective of the LDFMs who are mentoring the doctoral candidates, followed by a further explanation of the exemplary DiP work.

A Qualitative Phenomenological Exploration of COVID-19 Impacts on Face-to-Face Teachers in K-8 Catholic Schools: Beyond the Pandemic, How are the Teachers?

Tanya Salewski has served as principal for a Catholic elementary (K-8) school in McLean, Virginia for several years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became apparent that classroom teachers needed additional support as they navigated the changing landscape of instructional delivery. As referenced in her dissertation proposal, the March 13, 2020 order by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam to temporarily close Virginia schools, and then, the subsequent return to in-person education, began a two-year journey into ambiguity and flux for her school’s educators (Salewski, 2023). Although teachers and administrators were not prepared for this unprecedented crisis, research does indicate that schools can better prepare themselves for future potential crises (Salewski, 2023).

To that end, Dr. Salewski examined the lived experiences of classroom teachers who returned to face-to-face classroom instruction, seeking their perspectives on supportive structures that were provided, or those which they wished had been implemented. Resulting data was used to establish a tool-kit of sorts, one that helps administrators develop a system of methodologies that can be used as resources in the event of future crises. Dr. Salewski’s LDFM believes that this approach aligns with CPED principle two, preparing leaders to construct and apply knowledge that makes a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities (classroom teachers and their school communities) and CPED principle four, using field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice. As the study evolved and Dr. Salewski authored her recommendations for the final chapter of her DiP, her LDFM stated that she addressed CPED principle six, generating and using professional knowledge and practice as a means of informing other educators in their preparation for future emergencies.

Efficacy of Hazing Prevention Curriculum in Higher Education

Courtney White is a life-long educator who examined the effectiveness of anti-hazing curriculum for higher education students. After a hazing incident at Virginia Commonwealth University resulted in the death of Dr. White’s cousin, Adam Oakes, Dr. White and her

family established the Love Like Adam Foundation. Collaborating with other educational and counseling professionals, Dr. White designed an anti-hazing program that can be shared with incoming freshmen students in higher education (White, 2023). The foundation partnered with Virginia colleges and universities to integrate these educational workshops into freshmen orientation sessions, thus demonstrating CPED principle Three - collaborative partnerships.

Since these workshops are offered on the college/university campuses, Dr. White’s LDFM is confident she used field-based opportunities to analyze this problem of practice and that she used multiple frames (different higher education institutions and diverse student populations) to address CPED principle five. This study builds upon prior research establishing a timeline for how hazing has evolved on campuses, why students engage in the practice, and how interventions might prove effective in eliminating the practice. Study participants, freshmen higher education students, completed a pre-test prior to the training, engaged in the workshop, and completed a post-test after the training, providing feedback on the program’s effectiveness. Dr. White’s LDFM perceives that CPED principle five (grounded in professional knowledge, integrating practical research knowledge) and principle six (generating and using professional knowledge to improve practice) are also embedded.

How a Comprehensive Training Program Builds Resilience in School Administrators at a Boarding School for Students with Learning Disabilities

Jennifer Scully completed a qualitative research study on the impact of the implementation of a professional development training program expected to help build resilience in the administrators at a boarding school for students with learning disabilities. In her study, she explored with more specificity, how administrators feel about their basic core of resilience, how they can build their resilience skills through a comprehensive professional development training program, and how they apply the learned resilience skills when supervising faculty and staff at this boarding school for students with learning disabilities (Scully, 2023). Dr. Scully demonstrated integrity and clarity while exploring her stance in regards to positionality as leader, trainer, and researcher. Her extensive data collection allowed for narrative and thematic analysis to ascertain insights, perspectives, needs, and themes for what specific skills from the training are effective, whether additional training or support is needed, as well as whether the training is building their resilience skills (Scully, 2023). Dr. Scully’s work to help build resilience for educators who teach and care for students with special needs in a boarding school, exemplified her acquisition and effectuation of CPED principles two, three, and six, as her work specifically focused on constructing and applying new knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of her staff and students. Additionally, she intends for her work to yield new partnerships within the boarding school for the special needs community.

The Lack of Hispanic Leadership in Higher Education: A Qualitative Study of Current Leaders at U.S. Universities

Nataly Chandia Viaño completed a qualitative ethnographic study seeking to describe the elements or experiences that helped current Hispanic university leaders in the United States reach their executive positions. She conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews to capture and understand themes, patterns, and holistic



features specific to the journeys of said participants (Chandia Viaño, 2023). Her review of the literature revealed significant gaps for Latinx students in the completion of advanced degrees, thus even less attaining university leadership roles. As a Spanish-speaking Latina university leader herself, Chandia Viaño's stance provided an additional opportunity to quickly build rapport with the participants. Her work yielded rich, fascinating data which clearly contributes to the literature on Hispanic representation in university leadership. Dr. Chandia Viaño's authentic study demonstrated her acquisition of and facility with CPED principles one, two, and six.

SUMMARY

Through our analysis of the above DiP exemplars and the LDFM survey data, we were able to better understand LDFM perceptions on how our CPED-aligned methods coursework impacts our students' development as researchers. While this represents a pilot study that is exploratory in nature, the findings of our study indicate that LDFMs perceive that doctoral students are successfully applying their study of practitioner research to their dissertations. Findings further indicate that these CPED-aligned methodology courses have positively impacted students' learning and development as scholarly practitioners and their emerging DiPs.

LIMITATIONS

Because this research represents a pilot study, the sample size of this study was small and restricted to one particular doctoral program specializing in Educational Leadership and Organizational Innovation; thus, the opportunity to generalize results across other contexts is low. However, this study acts as a reflective practice for the institution, providing valuable information for continuous program improvement, as well as the development of a future study that will involve input from a greater number of faculty mentors as the program continues to grow and increase enrollment. Additionally, this research can serve as a model to other institutions as they design or redesign their methodology coursework. Since LDFMs are integral to helping doctoral students synthesize the CPED Guiding Principles into their scholarship and practice, it was important to seek their perspectives.

IMPLICATIONS

A practical implication of this study is for the program to continue its work on aligning research block courses to the CPED Guiding Principles. When this work is refined, training modules for LDFMs should not only contain this information, but also provide concrete examples of how successful program graduates have demonstrated their mastery of the CPED ideals within their DiPs. Exemplar DiP examples would be a valuable training tool. By increasing the knowledge and expertise of the LDFMs, they will be of greater assistance in their mentorship of doctoral students, attending to their personal professional development within a culture of mutual respect and equity (CPED, 2019; Mullen, 2021).

Since the institution strives to offer a results-focused experience for its EdD cohorts, future research implications should include continued practices of self-reflection. Original research to clarify course alignment to the CPED Guiding Principles should be revisited on a continuous basis (Marotta, 2023). Since LDFMs consist of both

full-time and adjunct faculty members, particular attention should be paid to LDFM training modules to ensure a firm foundational knowledge of the Principles and an understanding of how scholarly practitioners might embed these ideals into their DiPs.

CONCLUSION

In the continuum of program improvement, lingering questions always remain. For our program, three questions emerged from this study and are especially relevant: 1) Should we reconsider the timing of the first research course and its embedded initial literature review? 2) How can we better serve students' understanding and development of a conceptual/theoretical framework on which to build their original research? 3) How can we better assist students in designing a manageable research study, one that aligns with the CPED Guiding Principles, to fit the timeline of the program? Whatever the answers may be, continuous reflective practices will undoubtedly strengthen our program and student outcomes. As the program matures and evolves, faculty members and LDFMs will remain collaborative, providing a learning community worthy of our emerging scholarly practitioners.

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