Engaging in the Battle of Snails By Challenging the Traditional Dissertation Model

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*Abstract*: Tensions between Ph.D. and Ed.D. requirements arise with regard to appropriate research preparation and dissertation experiences for Ed.D. students who have as a career goal the conducting of context-based research to solve problems of practice (Hochbein & Perry, 2013; Shulman, Golde, Conklin Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). Schön (1995) describes “technical rationality[,] the prevailing epistemology built into the research university” (p. 27), as a primary impediment to Ed.D. programs that attempt to develop practitioner scholars. In this paper, we define technical rationality and explore the epistemological challenges it presents to Ed.D. faculty.  We then examine policy language of contemporary Ed.D. programs regarding dissertation requirements, with particular attention given to aspects of the experiences that diverge from the values imposed by technical rationality. Next, we describe a critical incident illustrating how conflicting epistemologies between programs and graduate schools impact students and faculty. Finally, we make recommendations for policies and practices that could better support doctoral work conducted from a range of epistemological approaches.

Faculty members in colleges of education that offer both Ph.D. and Ed.D. degrees must negotiate a long-standing debate regarding the similarities and differences between the degrees as well as what those similarities and differences should mean for programming and advising (Archbald, 2008). The primary tensions arise with regard to appropriate research preparation and dissertation experiences for Ed.D. students who have as a career goal the conducting of context-based research to solve problems of practice (Hochbein & Perry, 2013; Shulman, Golde, Conklin Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). Traditional values and shared institutional expectations for what the dissertation process and product should entail have evolved with the rise of the modern American research university. Schön (1995) traces this evolution to the second half of the 19th century when European ideals for research universities began to replace the values embodied in American liberal arts colleges and reflected “technical rationality[,] the prevailing epistemology built into the research university” (p. 27). Technical rationality frames: a) social problems as composed of discrete parts rather than interdependent systems; b) problems as solvable through basic research approached using postpositivist research designs; and c) knowledge as accumulating through a process of incremental and linear progress (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Schön, 1995). Technical rationality justifies narrowly defined conceptions of what counts as valid and reliable research, and frames rigor as a qualification that can only be accomplished by an objective researcher detached from contexts and systems (Anderson & Herr, 1999).

Practitioner scholarship, the focus of many contemporary Ed.D. programs, poses an epistemological challenge to technical rationality by situating problems of practice within a context and embracing the researcher’s embedded role as a stakeholder in that context. Ravitch and Lytle (2016) argue that the positioning of practitioners as producers of knowledge “represents a ‘constructive disruption’ of some understandings of the relationships of knowledge and practice” (p. 3). Practitioner research has emerged from a history of international movements to shift research paradigms in order to better address social problems (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994). Rather than adopting the technical rational view that the researcher’s subjectivity should be controlled and limited, practitioner scholarship foregrounds the researcher as an agent of change and positions the research process as a vehicle for change. Its purpose is not to protect a phenomenon from researcher bias in order to describe the phenomenon but rather to insert informed understandings or practices in a context in order to transform it. In this process, the researcher is also transformed. Because both context and researcher change through acts of practitioner scholarship, technical rational understandings of knowledge, which presume an unchanging context, have little use. Practitioner scholarship challenges technical rationality and represents a fundamentally different epistemological approach (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2005; Dill & Morrison, 1985; Schön, 1995; Zeichner & Noffke, 1998).

Challenges to technical rationality can cause tensions between faculty members who disagree about what counts as research and rigor, particularly in Ed.D. programs, when faculty who subscribe to technical rationality impose Ph.D. requirements on Ed.D. programs. Anderson and Herr (1999) state, “Practitioners [and we would argue faculty members] intuitively know that when they challenge the norms, the institution’s dynamic conservatism will often respond in a self-protective manner” (p. 17). Challenging technical rationality is risky and uncomfortable, but also necessary to unseat this paradigm and develop institutional systems that make room for paradigms that adequately support and explain research conducted outside of technical rationality and that may better address social problems. Schön (1995) explains:

All of us who live in research universities are bound up in technical rationality…hence, introducing the new scholarship into institutions of higher education means becoming involved in an epistemological battle. It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look very carefully in order to see it going on. But it is happening nonetheless. (p. 32)

In this paper, we examine existing scholarship that describes how Ed.D. programs have engaged in the battle of snails particularly with regard to creating appropriate dissertation experiences. We then examine policy language of contemporary Ed.D. programs regarding dissertation requirements, with particular attention given to aspects of the experiences that diverge from the values imposed by technical rationality. Next, we describe a critical incident illustrating how conflicting epistemologies between programs and graduate schools impact students and faculty. Finally, we make recommendations for policies and practices that could better support doctoral work conducted from a range of epistemological approaches.

**Conceptualizing Contemporary Ed.D. Dissertations**

Teachers College at Columbia University, granted the first Education Ph.D. in 1891 and Harvard offered the first Ed.D. in 1920 (Anderson, 1983; Dill & Morrison, 1985). Harvard began offering an Ed.D. so that the School of Education could replace the Graduate School in granting a doctoral degree in a field focused on applied rather than basic research (Dill & Morrison, 1985), which may have marked the beginning of the epistemological battle of snails. The epistemological underpinnings of programs shape several program components, including the content of the dissertation research, the approach to the research process, and the format of the research product (see Figure 1). We define the content of the research as what students do for their capstone project (e.g. build new knowledge about a topic of interest or investigate a solution to a problem of practice); the process of research is how the content is addressed or studied (e.g. individually or collaboratively); and the format of the research product is what is submitted to the committee as a demonstration of mastery (e.g. a five-chapter dissertation or a series of journal articles). Each of these areas provides terrain for the battle of snails.

**Contents of the Dissertation Research**

In 2007, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) invited Ed.D.-granting institutions to join the organization in redesigning the Ed.D. to more closely align the research content, process, format, and preparation to the goals of what they conceptualized as a professional practice doctorate (CPED, 2016a). CPED distinguishes the Ed.D. dissertation as a “dissertation in practice,” one that focuses on “a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner” (CPED, 2016b). By acknowledging and promoting contextualized, evolving interrelationships between scholar, knowledge, and application, the dissertation in practice reflects a constructionist epistemology underlying practitioner scholarship. This epistemological foundation positions practitioner scholarship to bridge the divide between research, theory, and practice. Practitioner scholars can study complex educational issues that perpetuate social injustices in particular contexts and figure out how to improve them in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. The shift from accumulating discrete pieces of academic knowledge presumably isolated from context and application—the domains of much Ph.D. research—to continually contextualizing understandings and addressing problems of practice—the domains of practitioner scholarship— require fundamentally different approaches to the research and may result in fundamentally distinct dissertation products.

**Approaches to the Dissertation Research Process**

CPED does not offer guidelines on how the dissertation research should be conducted, but the values placed on collaboration and social justice have implications for the research process. Some Ed.D. programs have incorporated collaboration into dissertation research, which challenges the “traditional perspective of the lone investigator laboring away on her or his research project” (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2005, p. 47) that characterizes Ph.D. research. Archbald (2008) asserts that few details are available to describe collaborative dissertations but concludes from existing literature that group approaches derive from faculty members’ recognition that collaboration is an important component of the work of practitioner scholars. According to Archbald’s review, group-based dissertations include both individual and group components.

**Formats of the Dissertation Product**

Since dissertations in practice may address content and use research processes distinct from Ph.D. dissertations, students and faculty seek formats for the final dissertation products that similarly reflect the epistemological foundations of practitioner scholarship. However, faculty members who, as Schön (1995) points out, are themselves steeped in technical rationality, have difficulty imagining alternatives. A number of surveys of Ed.D.-granting institutions have been conducted over the past half century examining differences in research preparation and dissertation products between Ed.D.s and Ph.D.s (see Anderson, 1983; Archbald, 2008; Dill & Morrison, 1985; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2005). These surveys have consistently shown that while the goals of the two degree programs typically differ, the implementation rarely does; Ed.D. and Ph.D. research courses are often indistinguishable and the five-chapter, sole-authored dissertation genre abounds.

Nevertheless, philosophers of science and education have developed paradigmatic alternatives to technical rationality that support practitioner scholarship, and the literature base documenting culminating tasks that differ from the five-chapter, sole-authored dissertation is growing (for example, see Archbald, 2008; Belzer & Ryan, 2013; Dana, Bondy, Kennedy-Lewis, Adams, & Ma, In Press; Dawson & Kumar, 2014; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2005; Ravitch & Lytle, Forthcoming). Archbald (2008) summarizes, “alternatives proposed in the literature include portfolios, internships, analytical papers, and collaborative projects” (p. 705). He then critiques the paucity of literature examining the breadth, depth, and effectiveness of those products in supporting the goals of practitioner scholarship, pointing the way for future research. In the specific field of educational leadership, Murphy and Vriesenga (2005) contacted 161 Ed.D. programs and found that only eight included dissertation formats that differed from the sole-authored, five-chapter genre, and only four institutions had fully developed and consistently implemented those models. All four programs offered multiple formats for the final project and incorporated collaboration as a key component of their culminating tasks.

**A Review of CPED Members’ Policies Regarding Dissertations**

To further examine contemporary alternatives to traditional Ph.D. research and dissertations, we reviewed the online program descriptions guiding dissertation work as well as Graduate School policies at each of the 83[[1]](#footnote-1) programs/institutions that have an affiliation with CPED. We navigated the websites of each program as well as the university Graduate School websites associated with each program and created a table of policy language that described Ed.D. dissertation requirements with regard to the approach to the research process and format of the research product.[[2]](#footnote-2) We chose to record both program descriptions and Graduate School policies since programs guide the approach to the research process while it is often graduate schools that ultimately accept dissertation products and grant degrees. We found guidelines at 41 institutions that dealt with approaches to dissertation research processes and formats (see Table 1). While we understand that what is written on program websites may differ from how programs are actually enacted, we believe that an examination of these policies offers useful insights into how Ed.D. programs are operationalizing practitioner scholarship, the challenges they face in doing so, and the promise that exists for gaining ground in the battle of snails.

**Policies Regarding the Research Process**

As suggested in the literature, a significant way that practitioner scholarship differs from basic research is with regard to the role of collaboration with stakeholders and colleagues, as reflected in Fielding Graduate University’s goal for its students to “learn how to help solve real-world education problems in their communities of practice” (Fielding Graduate University, 2016). Although fewer than half of CPED’s member programs have explicit policies that support collaboration, those that do, assert the value of collaborative processes in practitioner scholarship. Interdependent work and belonging to a dissertation group can provide logistical and emotional support as well as lead to deeper and broader knowledge, what California State University, Los Angeles’ program calls, “the collective knowledge, experience, and interest of a diverse cohort” (Trustees of the California State University, 2016). Collaborative work also reflects the real world of practitioner scholars who will address context-based dilemmas with various stakeholders, embodied in the University of Southern California’s thematic dissertation groups “in which students work collaboratively with faculty and practitioners from the field to study a contemporary problem [of practice]” (University of Southern California, 2016).

While these program descriptions and policies reflect the value placed on collaboration, they rarely clarify what such collaboration actually looks like. Duquesne’s policy most clearly articulates, “Dissertations/theses will be individual projects. Students wishing to work together may address two related research questions, may share information from literature reviews and/or may share data sets, but they will not co-author the same dissertation/thesis” (Duquesne University, 2016). Other programs, however, such as Boston College, Georgia Southern University, Lynn University, Michigan State University, the University of Georgia, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Western Carolina University, explicitly state that collaboration will be part of the dissertation research and suggest that parts, or all, of the dissertation will be jointly produced.

**Policies Regarding Formats of the Product**

Our analysis supported Archbald’s (2008) finding that few explicit descriptions of alternative dissertation formats exist, with the frequent exception of descriptions of the journal manuscript format in which the dissertation is composed, in part or in full, of manuscripts either published or prepared for publication, often co-authored with faculty or peers. Policies describing this format existed primarily in graduate school guidelines rather than Ed.D. program descriptions, presumably because these policies were created to support the use of this format in the natural sciences. In their article advocating alternative dissertation models even for Ph.D. research in education, Duke and Beck (1999) explained, “Although experimentation with alternative formats is a relatively recent phenomenon in the humanities and social sciences, the so-called ‘hard’ sciences have been accepting alternatives to the traditional Germanic dissertation format for decades, usually in the form of a collection of articles that have already been accepted for publication in refereed journals (Monaghan, 1989)” (p. 33). This innovation does not challenge the technical rational approach to knowledge accumulation by objective researchers and was intended to “cultivate the writing skills necessary to succeed in the ‘real world’ of scientific research” (Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 33).

Nevertheless, the joint production of dissertations does conflict with the individualistic orientation of technical rationality and its emphasis on individual competence and mastery. Consequently, policies that promote collaboration sometimes sit uncomfortably alongside those requiring independent research and sole-authored products, as evidenced in Duquesne’s policy above. The University of Auckland has the most explicit allowance for joint production and ownership of the dissertation product, stating “A work of joint authorship will arise if you have collaborated with one or more persons to jointly create a work. For it to be a work of joint authorship, the contribution of each author is not distinct from the other authors” (University of Auckland, 2016). However, the policy also states that the dissertation should “demonstrate a capacity for independent thinking” (University of Auckland, 2016). Several programs utilizing team approaches also incorporate standards for individual demonstrations of competency. Tensions between innovative approaches that support the collaborative production of knowledge, and traditional approaches that require individual demonstrations of mastery exist across programs.

Additional alternative formats to the five-chapter genre and journal manuscript format were alluded to but not well described in the policy language of several programs, whereas four institutions gave explicit alternatives: Georgia Southern, Illinois State, Washington State, and Western University (see Table 1). While Georgia Southern and Illinois State offer similar lists of alternative formats for the research, including program evaluations, descriptions of policy formation, organizational problem analysis, and systems analysis (Georgia Southern only), their policies reflect distinct philosophies likely to lead to different types of dissertation products. Georgia Southern’s program description states, “As a college of education, we have agreed to maintain the 5 chapter structure as a required design for the dissertation document” (Georgia Southern University, 2016). Illinois State’s policy does not identify specific product requirements, stating only that their “alternatives include both individual and collaborative projects” (Illinois State University, 2016), suggesting that this faculty might prioritize alternative formats for the research process as well as the product.

Nevertheless, Illinois State’s program policy exists alongside Graduate School policies that specifically allow only for “traditional” and “journal style” dissertations. The juxtaposition of these policies highlights the complexity faculties must negotiate not only in order to articulate values and imagine alternatives to traditional Ph.D. research, but also to make changes in the context of graduate schools that may have policies that limit or contradict program values and goals. These findings confirm that collaboration, co-authorship, and alternative dissertation formats are relevant issues at Ed.D.-granting institutions and that shared norms do not exist across programs, schools, or institutions. As innovative programs continue to gain ground in the battle of snails, students and faculty members may face difficulties in navigating the contested terrain of dissertation research. Next, we describe a critical incident illustrating how this battle impacted two Ed.D. students and their faculty advisor.

**Context**

As part of her faculty appointment, Brianna advised students in an Ed.D. program designed to develop practitioner scholars as defined by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), specifically by having “a clear focus on the scholarship of teaching”; having “a ‘signature pedagogy’ to guide the work”; “grounding students’ work in their own contexts to create authentic ‘laboratories of practice’”; and having “new ‘capstone’/dissertation experiences in which doctoral students can work together to produce outstanding demonstrations of their proficiency” (University of Florida College of Education, 2016). In practice, the Ed.D program tended not to actualize the collaborative demonstrations of proficiency described in these key program features; instead, the program culminated with a doctoral dissertation that often looked similar to the Ph.D. dissertation in content, research process, and format, though faculty continued to explore alternatives that could better prepare practitioner scholars (see Adams, Bondy, Ross, Dana, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2014; Dana, Bondy, Kennedy-Lewis, Adams, & Ma, In Press).

The Ed.D. program was housed in the College of Education, which contained Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs. These programs varied with regard to goals, target student populations, and faculty perspectives on CPED principles. Although Ed.D. programs enrolled significant numbers of students, preferences toward traditional Ph.D. research over practitioner scholarship were reflected in many aspects of the college, such as in the types of research courses offered and required. Faculty regularly worked to inform colleagues about the purpose as well as the programmatic aspects of their Ed.D. program, and often worked through, around, and in spite of misunderstandings about, and disregard for, the Ed.D. as a valid and high quality doctorate. The critical incident described next occurred as Brianna advised two Ed.D. students, Miriam and Ana, on their dissertation. The incident illustrates one attempt to work through, around, and in spite of institutional limitations.

**The Critical Incident[[3]](#footnote-3)**

When completing their Ed.D. program, both Miriam and Ana worked in early childhood education settings in Miami. They brought critical stances to the roles of standardization, accountability requirements, and narrow definitions and assessments of quality in early care and education (ECE). In Miriam and Ana’s local context, predominantly Latina immigrants working with Latinx[[4]](#footnote-4) children negotiated tensions between ECE quality improvement demands and their personal, cultural, and linguistic assets and beliefs. Miriam was interested in contested definitions of “quality” ECE, and exploring how ECE professionals with varied roles understand and represent the construct. Ana was interested in ECE practitioners’ perspectives of effective professional development (PD) and their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and professional assets as well as their perceived PD needs. Miriam’s and Ana’s independent studies addressed an overarching, complex problem of practice: the marginalization of the voices and experiences of ECE practitioners in Miami.

Miriam and Ana did not occupy the same professional roles or consistently work together, but their professional paths had crossed before enrolling in the program and they shared experiences facilitating PD for local ECE practitioners. Both students subscribed to Campbell and Wasco’s (2000) constructivism, which understands reality and knowledge as socially constructed, and social factors such as gender, race, class, culture, and economics as shaping perceived realities. After two years of coursework, the students began their written qualifying examinations, which included preparing a dissertation proposal that they developed with feedback from Brianna before presenting to their committees. As Brianna provided feedback on each student’s first chapter she noticed complementarity in their professional contexts, epistemological stances, problems of practice, perspectives, interests, and skills, and suggested they consider collaborating on their dissertation. In addition, Brianna recognized the potential of jointly exploring the interrelated problems of practice in the students’ shared ECE context, believed collaboration to be necessary for creating educational change, and that encouraging such collaboration would benefit the students and their work. As an advisor, Brianna committed to seeing how the partnership evolved to best suit the students’ individual and shared goals.

Brianna first consulted program colleagues about forming dissertation committees for both students that were composed of the same members, and then consulted with the committee regarding the students’ collaboration. The committee agreed to allow the collaboration to develop organically with the understanding that each student would conduct independent, related research. After the successful defense of a co-authored three-chapter dissertation proposal, which would become the first chapters of the dissertation, Brianna and the students regularly discussed their independent research and its collaborative intersection. While committee members had endorsed co-authorship in the proposal, they did not articulate any distinction between collaboration and co-authorship during the following year that Miriam and Ana co-authored their dissertation. The students’ collaboration seamlessly included co-authorship and neither students nor advisor saw a need to distinguish between them.

Through the processes of collaboration and co-authorship, Miriam and Ana deepened their individual thinking and produced work far more sophisticated and rigorous than would have been expected of them individually. Although they asked separate research questions, performed distinct data collection and analyses, and conducted their studies in different languages, they supported each other at each stage. Miriam and Ana engaged in collaborative and critical reflection and writing processes that challenged them to position both studies within their broader Miami ECE context to widen potential impact. They described collaboration and co-authorship as so important to their work that Brianna and the students agreed that the students would craft a co-authored final document. This document would clearly articulate their individual contributions and the specific nature of their collaboration while also weaving together both studies within the students’ shared context and the broader field.

To guide the students in this process, Brianna consulted the Graduate School guidelines regarding collaboration and co-authorship, and, finding conflicting policies--one stating that co-authorship was not allowed and another stating that co-authorship should be noted and cited appropriately--presumed that the following part of the policy was meant as the fundamental guiding principle: “Your supervisory committee chair is responsible for the level of scholarship found in your thesis or dissertation. You must show a high level of professional competence, and only your supervisory committee can give you the guidance and instruction needed to achieve this goal” (University of Florida Graduate School, 2013, p. 7). Brianna had used her professional judgment to determine that the students had conducted high quality work and that their collaborative process and co-authorship developed their individual skills in ways that would benefit their roles as practitioner scholars. Brianna trusted that committee members’ feedback at the dissertation defense would determine the final format submitted to the Graduate School. Despite the Graduate School’s official position on deferring to the chair and committee to determine quality and its claim to judge first submissions based solely on compliance with the formatting template rather than content, the students’ co-authored dissertation document was immediately rejected by a non-faculty graduate school editor due to its having two authors.

The students were placed in jeopardy of not being able to graduate on time if they could not meet the first submission deadline by submitting a draft that the Graduate School would approve, and Brianna called upon colleagues and other faculty members for assistance. After difficult conversations among administrators at the school, college, and university levels who had not been involved in the editor’s initial rejection of the document, it became clear that despite the written policies described above, the students would have to separate their co-authored document into two single-authored documents that were judged by these administrators—not the chair or the committee—to be sufficiently distinct before they would be accepted. Miriam and Ana recalled being particularly disturbed by an email stating that the students would be required to “disentangle” their co-authored document since careful synthesis was an essentially embedded and intentionally valued aspect of their collaboration. Brianna, Miriam, and Ana refuted the notion that the co-construction of the dissertation and knowledge itself could survive what would amount to an excision. This process would require the students to compartmentalize knowledge with regard to the dissertation content, process, and product—reflecting an epistemological position that they did not share—by engaging in the impossible, unethical, and emotionally fraught task of arbitrarily assigning sole authorship to thoughts and words at which Miriam and Ana had arrived together. Brianna and the students thought that such a task would mischaracterize and diminish the nature of the collaborative research content and process that had produced the dissertation and that was integral to the students’ work as practitioner scholars.

After university colleagues at all administrative levels had further conversations, the students were ultimately allowed to include several co-authored chapters in each document. Nevertheless, the students were required to divide the original document into two and add independently written chapters to each separate document in order to pass first submission, for which they were granted an extended deadline. Brianna quickly realized her own powerlessness as the chair as well as the powerlessness of the committee in this process; administrators and colleagues pressured her to do whatever necessary to get the students through first submission, which included developing outlines to guide the division of the students’ document, which she philosophically opposed. Both advisor and committee had been effectively stripped of the autonomy and academic freedom ensured in official Graduate School documents, and a high quality product of practitioner scholarship was mangled in order to look more like two traditional five chapter dissertations, which were less cohesive, relevant, and rhetorically sound than the original document.

**Lessons Learned From the Critical Incident**

In examining the critical incident, we have identified two connected lessons upon which we elaborate. The first lesson relates to the concept and practice of collaboration. While CPED articulates the value of collaboration in its principles and some programs have explicitly embedded it in their dissertation policies, few descriptions exist regarding the nature, experience, and value of collaboration to the students as practitioner scholars. We argue that, consistent with the epistemologically constructionist underpinnings and ideals of practitioner scholarship, collaboration can transform not only the format of the dissertation product but also the content and process, as well as the context, application of the research, and the researchers themselves. The second lesson emerges from our experience of conflicting understandings and epistemological assumptions about co-authorship held by stakeholders involved in the critical incident. We articulate our understanding and experience of co-authorship as a collaborative, constructive process. This process extends beyond the instrumental goal of producing a finite document that meets narrow conceptions of rigor as mastery of individually accumulated knowledge and offers potential for enacting change.

**Collaboration in Practitioner Scholarship: Miriam and Ana’s Experience**

Drawing upon Bhavsar and Ahn (2013) and Siry, Ali-Khan, and Zuss (2011), we experience and define collaboration as a dialogical, reflective, interactive process and relationship in which peers value, learn from, ethically negotiate, and apply different perspectives, ideas, and strengths. Our collaboration extended beyond, and organically encompassed, co-authorship. For example, in addition to co-authoring the dissertation document, the students shared methodological approaches, conferred about data analyses, maintained a collaborative reflective journal, and co-presented preliminary findings.

Our experience of collaboration as a dialogic relationship is consistent with social constructivism, which emphasizes the power of social context and relationships in the development of thought, language, and meaning (Bhavsar & Ahn, 2013 citing Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky, 1986). This emphasis on the power of context and relationships further relates to social justice and Freire’s (2007) call for humility in recognizing that “I cannot make myself alone, nor can I do things alone. I make myself with others, and with others, I can do things” (p. 73). Furthermore, he asserts that pride and self-sufficiency counter efforts to address social injustice. We relate our experience to Freire’s (2007) call for communication between active subjects who are open to discovery while resisting “bureaucratization of their minds” (Freire, 2007, p. 99); our collaborative processes actively nurtured creativity, discovery, purpose, and meaning and resisted assumptions of knowledge, knower, and known as compartmentalized, technically separate entities. Working in collaboration deepened our beliefs about the nature of knowledge, social problems, and the role of relationships in learning and enacting change, and countered technical rational understandings of problems as composed of discrete parts rather than interdependent systems. Collaborating to describe and address intersecting problems of practice specifically opened doors to new and significant learning and points of view, provided access to broader repertoires of knowledge and skills, and enhanced our abilities to advance change through our professional positions.

Throughout our collaboration, we took risks in our explorations with and through the support of each other and clarified our beliefs and understandings as we developed phillia, a kind of friendship based on trust and respect that emerges through opportunities for ethical reflection (Siry, Ali-Khan & Zuss, 2011). While collaboration can take many forms, we characterize our experience as marked by mutual respect, adventurousness, curiosity, and cycles of critical questioning and listening (Freire, 2007), which the students especially developed through co-authorship, a specific form of collaboration that entails a dialectical process of thinking and recording creatively co-constructed ideas.

**Co-Authorship: A Challenge to Technical Rationality**

The students’ co-authored eight-chapter dissertation represented a break in content, process, and format from the traditional, individually written five-chapter dissertation, and challenged prevailing manifestations of technical rationality. The nature of their co-authorship similarly reflected a break from technical rationality and associated individualistic notions about the nature of knowledge, rigor, scholarship, and intellectual ownership. We first discuss practical details of the students’ collaborative writing process, then discuss how they benefitted from the process, and, finally, describe how their enactment of collaborative writing challenged technical rationality.

**How the students co-authored.** Practically speaking, although they had different writing styles, they were flexible about structure, open to discussing nuances in meaning, and interested in sharing literature that they found insightful. Technology facilitated co-authorship, allowing them to write simultaneously or asynchronously, and affording flexibility regarding time, approaches to writing, and processing of divergent ideas. Using the Google Docs platform in which they could write and converse on the same document at the same time allowed them to simultaneously verbalize and refine emerging ideas. The “comment” and “suggesting” features also enabled them to work independently at different times while allowing the co-author to reflect on, accept, expand, question, or reject the other author’s writing. These practical aspects of writing together facilitated and reflected a process of collaborative co-authorship which evolved as a dialogic process, relationship, skill set, and art that they continually explored and refined together.

**How the students benefited from co-authorship.** As Siry, Ali-Khan, and Zuss (2011) propose, co-authorship resulted in the construction of ideas, perspectives, and research that developed on both individual and collective levels. The students experienced the collaborative effort of “writing in and around each other’s’ thoughts” (Siry et al. (2011), para. 20) as a delicate but valuable dance that pushed them from individualism towards a collective, constructive, ethical, and critical relationship in both research and practice (Altman, 2016; Pizano, 2016). Their co-authorship importantly served as a “metacognitive strategy to generate deeper thought and clearer ideas” (Bhavsar & Ahn, 2013, p. 14) as they questioned each other’s understandings and assumptions, and continuously clarified and made uncertainties and disagreements explicit. The process required each of them to remain critical while resolving differences and building consensus.

Co-authorship developed their willingness and ability to sustain respectful, critical, and open conversations, not only about shared views but also about divergent ideas; it also advanced commitments and skills that are not necessarily well developed through sole authorship but are important assets to practitioner scholars engaged with complex problems of practice. For example, the ongoing and intentional practice of collaborative writing helped Miriam become a more thoughtful and sensitive writer in her grant-related work as she experienced co-authorship as a form of dialogue in which thoughts interacted as they took form. She grew to understand “the final product was never the result of the knowledge or skills of one, but instead reflected a set of interconnected, ongoing interactions and values” (Altman, 2016, p.152).

**How we characterize co-authorship.** As Miriam reflected, “Writing with more than oneself in mind is a balancing act and an attempt to capture, communicate, or inspire emerging ideas, problems, or messages in a way that is both aesthetically appealing and resonates as true to more than one. Collaborative writing is also an act of trust…characterized by caring interactions and an ongoing, responsive balance of shared moments of engaged exploration along with allowing time for independent pursuit of one another’s curiosities and priorities (Altman, 2016, p. 152)*.*” Miriam emphasized that technically oriented, expert-derived, pre-determined criteria in writing represent a minimum standard, while the beautiful, meaningful, creative, and functional sides of writing occur in spaces where different voices and points of view come together. Within these spaces, the students experienced “collaborative writing as both empowering and a form of empowerment in which the limits and sources of words are less relevant than the meaning and function of the messages they convey” (Altman, 2016, p. 152).

The reciprocal, transformational nature of the students’ co-authorship applies to Bhavsar and Ahn’s (2013) differentiation between instrumental and developmental collaboration. On one hand, administrators holding technical rational assumptions arguably reduced their collaboration to the instrumental goal of producing a dissertation product that would allow them to graduate. On the other hand, they acted as practitioner scholars and epistemologically challenged technical rationality because, while they viewed the product as necessary to graduate, they prioritized and enacted collaboration as a collective, “socially constructed learning relationship” (Bhavsar & Ahn, 2013, p. 13). The administrators who initially required the co-authored dissertation to be “disentangled” seemed either to fail to recognize or to undervalue this interdependent relationship and instead to assume the nature of our co-authorship was simply instrumental by suggesting the writing consisted of discrete, separable parts. We experienced these assumptions and reactions to the students’ co-authorship as reflective of what Freire (2007) calls “authoritarian antidialogue” (p. 99) because it did not grant legitimacy to the students’ learning process and its context in practitioner scholarship.

**Challenging the Marginalization Imposed By Technical Rationality**

The nature of the students’ collaboration and co-authorship contrasted with technical rationality and illuminated unexplored epistemological assumptions affecting and reflecting uneven power dynamics associated with modes of scholarship, research, and collaboration. While we did not intend to engage in an epistemological battle, the vulnerable positioning of our distinct approach to the research content, process, and product in the critical incident point to the need to analyze how prevailing epistemologies may discourage alternative modes of scholarship, particularly that correspond with the goals of practitioner scholarship and the Ed.D. degree. The students’ efforts to engage with and portray the interconnected complexity of their contexts as practitioner scholars, collaborators, and co-authors were undermined by university administrators in favor of traditional notions of rigorous scholarship as an isolated act. Our experience suggests a need to encourage and grant legitimacy to, rather than suppress, the values, ways of knowing and learning, and voices of practitioner scholars.

Despite the obstacles we encountered, our experiences throughout this critical incident showcase the power of collaboration and co-authorship in overcoming socialized expectations about scholarship imposed by dominant forces. For example, if the students had individually responded to the rejection of their first submission, they may have complied with unjust demands regarding their work. However, they conferred and substantiated one another’s convictions that their scholarship was legitimate and our expectations to maintain co-authored content, and to assign co-authorship to that content, were reasonable and just. The students’ explicitly agreed not to be divided as they supported each other throughout the critical incident, including writing additional independent chapters and the collaborative dissertation defense.

The students’ partnership through collaborative design, reflection, analysis, and co-authorship transformed their understandings and abilities to apply informed understandings to problems manifested in their professional contexts; resulted in continued collaboration to tell the stories of their participants and their experience of collaboration, co-authorship, and this critical incident; and led to further collaboration and co-authorship in enacting change in policy and practice. This critical incident raises issues related to the value of collaboration and co-authorship to address problems of practice, and to the potential conflicts that arise when challenging technical rationality at a university, even when its programs, faculty, and policies have formally expressed alternative stances. The relevance of this incident transcends the experiences of two practitioner scholars and their dissertation advisor and exemplifies the need for consistency between policies and practices that protect academic freedom and allow for innovative approaches, including collaboration and co-authorship.

As a team, Brianna, Miriam, and Ana agreed that this incident was not only about completing individual degree requirements, but also about broader social justice issues related to how power, epistemologies, and modes of scholarship are understood and play out in institutions, specifically in Ed.D programs. Miriam and Ana’s collaboration initially empowered them in thought and action to counter the demand to disentangle a synthesized work and to negotiate a more ethical and respectful resolution that would allow them to graduate without compromising personal and scholarly integrity. More broadly, Brianna, Miriam, and Ana’s shared experience resulted in a commitment to each other and to other practitioner scholars that has surpassed the critical incident and compels the team to continue to tell their story in order to hold and gain terrain in this battle of snails. Striving for excellence in scholarship and for social justice through education requires that we openly question how our daily practices in and across educational organizations support or contradict our espoused beliefs and goals. It also requires that we continuously search for ways to consistently and systematically revisit and align policies and practices in order to better serve learners, teachers, scholarship, and the contexts and communities we hope to impact.

**Recommendations**

We recommend revisions to policies, procedures, and programmatic guidelines that reflect consistency between what is officially condoned and what is commonly practiced. These policies, procedures, and programmatic guidelines are necessary to support rather than stifle dialogue and scholarship. These recommendations include intentionally connecting the research content, process, and product in a manner that scholars consider most relevant to their problems of practice and research questions. For example, institutional policies regarding Ed.D. programs and dissertations should:

* Guarantee academic freedom and clearly define the role of advisor and committee in supporting the development of practitioner scholarship through dissertation content, process, and product to engage the role, interest, and learning style of the practitioner scholar (for example, see Western Carolina University’s program description[[5]](#footnote-5)).
* Assert that advisor and committee are responsible for determining rigor in research content, process, and product and advise candidates accordingly.
* Clearly lay out the power and responsibility of advisor and committee regarding content, process, and product. Limit administrative interference to technical formatting and/or cases in which unethical conduct or mismanagement jeopardizes the candidate’s research, practice, academic freedom or possibility of degree culmination.
* Explicitly recognize and value plural epistemologies, approaches to research processes, and formats for the final dissertation or capstone product (for example, see Illinois State University’s program description).
* Recognize the importance of collaboration for practitioner scholarship and encourage it (for example, see the University of Southern California’s program description).
* Articulate requirements regarding individual contributions to collaborative research processes and co-authored products (for example, see the University of Louisville’s program description).
* Establish approval systems that support collaborative approaches and co-authored products.

In addition, Ed.D. program coursework should clearly align with stated program goals and with the desired knowledge, attitudes, and skills that practitioner scholars need to develop to successfully and ethically enact sustainable change, including the ability to collaborate with others. Clear understanding of epistemological and methodological differences could better inform decisions about approaches to the research and support alignment between dissertation content, process, and product. Technical criteria for the dissertation should be considered minimums and not compliance standards.

Policies regarding dissertation products should clearly describe how they:

* Reflect scholarly, analytical, and ethical considerations of relevant problems of practice through their content, process, and product.
* Represent adequate fit between content, process, and product aligned with epistemological stances and theoretical paradigms (for example, see Texas Tech University’s program description).
* Demonstrate consistency with a signature pedagogy that supports practitioner scholarship.
* Represent options to apply knowledge to context, and make relevant contributions to practice and the overall field (for example, see Baylor University’s program description).
* Are organized in a format that is valuable to the field (to be determined by the candidates and their advisor and committee).
* Describe collaboration and co-authorship and expect that co-authorship be explicitly acknowledged in the dissertation document when co-authorship has occurred (for example, see North Dakota State University’s Graduate School policy).

Continuing to win ground in the battle of snails for epistemological plurality in doctoral education will require creative advising, program inquiry and evaluation, and strategic policy-making by Ed.D. faculty. We advocate policy language that supports practitioner scholarship’s challenge to the supremacy of technical rationality by broadening definitions of what counts as rigorous scholarship to include products that reflect epistemological diversity. Only by explicitly recognizing the distinct demands, affordances, and rigor of context-based research can higher education institutions empower practitioner scholars to bridge the research-practice divide and create solutions to educational problems of practice that improve outcomes for all students.

Table 1

*Program Descriptions and Graduate School Policies Regarding Research Processes and Formats at CPED Institutions[[6]](#footnote-6)*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **University and Program** | **Program Policies** | **Graduate School Policies** |
| 1. Arizona State University, Education in Leadership and Innovation | https://education.asu.edu/degree-programs/doctoral-programs/leadership-and-innovation-edd  Students conduct multiple cycles of inquiry throughout the program and learn research within their own workplace. Students share their research at the end of each academic-year semester through roundtables, posters and symposia in a public doctoral research forum. *The culminating requirement is an action-research dissertation.*  *Leader-scholar communities, formed at the end of the first year and consisting of five to seven students and one faculty member, meet regularly for the second and third years of the program to supply academic and personal support. Through LSCs, students support each other, under faculty guidance, in the conceptualization, implementation and study of change initiatives.* Students register for required research and dissertation hours as part of the LSC requirement. Each student's LSC leader serves as the dissertation chair, along with two additional committee members who ultimately make up the dissertation committee. | https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and%20procedures.pdf  *The written doctoral dissertation is based on an original and substantial scholarly work that constitutes a significant contribution to knowledge in the student’s discipline.* The dissertation research must be conducted during the time of the student’s doctoral studies at ASU, under guidance of ASU Graduate Faculty, and in accordance with the office for Graduate Education policies and procedures. The composition of the dissertation is defined by the degree program with the approval of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education. |
| 1. Baylor University, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership | **Curriculum and Instruction**  http://www.baylor.edu/soe/ci/index.php?id=66185  All Ph.D. students complete dissertations that are theoretical, experimental, or analytical in nature, dominantly focusing on "why" questions. Only in rare circumstances do Ph.D. students complete applied dissertations. *In general, Ph.D. dissertations focus on "why" questions and Ed.D. dissertations focus on "how" questions. Most Ed.D. students, moreover, complete dissertations that focus on applied K-12 problems. Ed.D. dissertations may be experimental in design using qualitative and/or quantitative data, but their focus is typically on practical problems that practitioners (e.g., teachers, curriculum directors, and school districts in general) are facing in professional school settings.* All Ed.D. students, moreover, are encouraged (and if possible required) to complete an internship during the last year of their program. An internship is optional for Ph.D. students. The Department of Curriculum & Instruction includes faculty who hold both Ed.D. and Ph.D. degrees, which means that they are able to mentor students who have the desire to pursue either the Ph.D. or the Ed.D. degree.  **Educational Leadership**  http://www.baylor.edu/soe/eda/index.php?id=871109  *Candidates complete a capstone experience/dissertation-in-practice documenting their efforts to address real-life complex problems of practice, analyze values, persuasively present data-based solution options to a superintendent of schools and policy body/board or agency head, and develop a plan for appropriate implementation.* | http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/185171.pdf  The Graduate School allows two dissertation/thesis types. The decision about which option to use must be made by the student and dissertation or thesis advisor, not by the student alone. The Standard Format has been the most commonly used format for dissertations and theses for decades. The body of the dissertation resembles a book manuscript, including an introduction, literature review, and other chapters that conform to disciplinary conventions. The Manuscript Format allows for the body of the dissertation or thesis to include one or more articles that have been published or are prepared for publication in an academic journal. A general introduction (for all projects) and conclusion (for projects with multiple manuscripts) are still required, and most dissertations will include a literature-review chapter and reference section that covers the entire work. The introductory and concluding chapters should provide an overarching context for the project, including a short explanation of the overall research agenda as well as the importance and consequences of this research. Ideally, these sections will be intelligible to a lay reader…  **•** *The thesis or dissertation author must be the lead contributor to the work submitted, normally represented by sole author or first author on all manuscripts. In cases of multiple authorship, the contribution of each author (not just the dissertation writer) must be explained in the Introduction or separate attribution page***.**  • For previously published work, the student must provide the University with a letter of copyright release from the journal or publisher. This is submitted as a separate file to Beardocs. |
| 1. Boston College, Educational Leadership | http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/academics/departments/eahe/graduate/PSAP/whychoosepsap.html  *Culminating dissertation-in-practice research conducted by a small team of students on the problems of practice in educational leadership.* | http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/academics/doctoral\_programs.html  *Each doctoral candidate is required to complete a dissertation that demonstrates original and independent research and that represents advanced scholarly achievement.* The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the major department and the research performed under the direction of a faculty advisor. The manuscript must be prepared according to style requirements of the departments, and of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. |
| 1. Brigham Young University, Educational Leadership | http://education.byu.edu/edlf/programs/edd\_faq.html  The EdD Program and its faculty will support candidates as they concurrently complete their course work and dissertations.  *What are the requirements of the dissertation? We have moved to a hybrid dissertation model, which is a journal-ready article that adds a full literature review and methods section as appendices.* | https://graduatestudies.byu.edu/content/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation-information  Requirements for Degree: Successful completion of dissertation. *Students will complete a dissertation that will include the preparation of a submissible article for a peer-reviewed journal.* |
| 1. California State University, Fullerton, P-12 Leadership, Community College Leadership | http://ed.fullerton.edu/edd/future-students/distinctive-program-characteristics/  Individual Dissertation Advising  *Students are part of small group classes (4-6 students) where a faculty member works with students to provide support in the development of the dissertation proposal beginning the 1st semester.*  Our faculty at Cal State Fullerton receive the most generous dissertation load compensation in the region – this translates to more time, support, and attention for students during the 3rd year. | http://catalog.fullerton.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=121  The academic unit, through the student’s adviser and/or committee, is responsible for the academic content and English usage in the dissertation or thesis and for the student’s correct use of forms of documentation and bibliography. |
| 1. California State University, Los Angeles, Educational Leadership | http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/ccoe/aase/edd-educational-leadership  To provide students with peer support and faculty advising and mentoring from entry to the doctoral program through completion of the dissertation process, each session students will enroll in small lab courses (laboratories of practice) led by faculty members whose scholarly and research expertise match students' interests. *In this way, students not only benefit from the collective knowledge, experience and interest of a diverse cohort but also from the ongoing collaboration and participation in research-related activities that small peer-group settings can best provide.*  All students complete an independent research project as part of the final doctoral dissertation. | http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatethesis/review  Thesis/Dissertation Reviewers will not review or correct subject content, research quality, punctuation, or grammar. |
| 1. Duquesne University, Educational Leadership | http://www.duq.edu/academics/schools/education/defl/edd-educational-leadership/dissertation  A dissertation in practice is required for Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Program graduates. Each member engages in a strategic project focused on improving quality in schools and learning environments for children and youth.  *Candidates may choose from three types of dissertations in order to align their research with their own unique, strategic leadership initiative:*   * **Improvement Research**   A disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the practitioner to improve and/or refine practice. * **Policy Analysis**  The process of identifying a policy and the problem it was intended to solve, analyzing the history and context of the problem and policy, assessing the impact of current policy and/or the alternatives to the policy, and making recommendations. Candidates may choose an analysis of an existing policy or may choose to advocate for the creation of a new policy. * **Program Evaluation** The systematic collection, analysis, and use of data to inquire into the effectiveness of an educational program. | http://www.duq.edu/Documents/education/\_pdf/dissertation/dissertation-guidelines.pdf  *Dissertations/theses will be individual projects. Students wishing to work together may address two related research questions, may share information from literature reviews, and/or may share data sets, but they will not co-author the same dissertation/thesis.*  These guidelines represent common standards across all doctoral programs in the School of Education. Where these guidelines are silent, each program may provide more specific guidelines unique to their particular process so long as they are not in conflict with these common guidelines. The reader should refer to the guidelines specifically developed for the program in which the student is enrolled regarding topics on which these guidelines are silent.  *The text of the dissertation or thesis is usually divided into chapters. A typical format for a conventional study in education or psychology is as follows:*  CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION.  The introduction describes the research problem or research question and lays out the reasoning behind it. This reasoning is sometimes called a theoretical argument. It justifies the study, in terms of a need for the information it will provide, in order to develop or test a theory or to understand, explain, or further describe an educational phenomenon. Refer to the APA manual for additional information about the introduction.  CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW.  This chapter reviews what has already been written in the field on the topic of the research. The literature cited should support the theoretical argument being made and demonstrate that the author has a grasp of the major ideas and findings that pertain to his or her topic. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning literature reviews.  CHAPTER III - METHOD.  The method chapter should give sufficient detail about the methodology used that the study could be replicated. Sections in a Method chapter often include, but are not limited to, the following: participants, instruments, materials, procedure, and analysis. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.  CHAPTER IV - RESULTS.  This chapter presents the results of the analyses, usually in order by research question, and any results of further analyses (that is, analyses that were not proposed but which were carried out).  Results should be presented without interpretation; interpretation is reserved for the discussion in chapter V. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.  CHAPTER V - DISCUSSION.  Results are interpreted in light of the research questions and discussed in conjunction with other literature. Limitations of interpretation and implications for further research may be presented. Refer to APA manual for additional information concerning methods sections.  An alternative format for the same kind of study is a four-chapter version that more closely approximates the sections of a conventional journal article:  CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND LITERATURE REVIEW  CHAPTER II - METHOD  CHAPTER III - RESULTS  CHAPTER IV - DISCUSSION  *The configuration of the chapters should depend on the contents to be presented. The five- or four-chapter configuration is not a requirement.* |
| 1. Fielding Graduate University, Leadership for Change | http://www.fielding.edu/our-programs/school-of-leadership-studies/edd-leadership-for-change/  Our faculty are continuously and actively engaged with each student and his or her learning plan. Fielding’s EdD provides a self-directed pathway for students to identify, explore, and pursue a personally and professionally relevant dissertation topic. Students develop customized learning plans to study their unique interests. *Through a combination of project-based learning and competency-based instruction, students learn how to help solve real-world education problems in their communities of practice.*  Dissertation exploration begins early in the program. You are required to complete an action-oriented or theoretical dissertation that contributes new knowledge to at least one of a wide range of research areas. You will have the opportunity to focus on a topic of your own choice and will complete your dissertation with the guidance and support of your dissertation committee. | http://catalog.fielding.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=92  The student is responsible for the dissertation under guidance from the faculty members and readers on the dissertation committee. This responsibility can in no way and to no extent be externalized to others. *The student is fully responsible for the substance, methodology, quality, completeness, and appropriateness of the dissertation, and must understand all of the work sufficiently to be able to present it independently and justify and explain it to others.*  *Students sometimes receive assistance from other than committee members and readers with tasks such as editing, data collection, data management and data analysis. None of these tasks may be delegated completely to another individual. Assistance from someone other than a committee member or reader implies that this person has a secondary role in terms of effort and decision-making responsibility.*  *The dissertation committee members, and in particular the committee chair, should be consulted regarding assistance prior to obtaining it. In addition, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application requires, among other things, detailed specification of the process of collecting data from participants. This is expected to include descriptions of who will be conducting the actual data collection, what the qualifications of such individuals are, and how they will be supervised by the author of the dissertation. The students should seek their guidance regarding how much assistance is appropriate and how much might exceed acceptable levels in the judgment of the committee. The student must identify in the dissertation those individuals who provided approved assistance and describe what was provided.*  Failures to comply with this policy should be referred to the Committee on Academic Integrity as described in the policy on [Academic Honesty](http://catalog.fielding.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=96#academic-honesty). |
| 1. Fordham University,   Administration and Supervision | <http://www.fordham.edu/info/21015/doctoral_degrees/8495/administration_and_supervision_edd>  [N/A] | http://www.fordham.edu/info/20997/current\_students/3254/doctoral\_procedures  Your doctoral dissertation is a capstone to your academic experience at the Graduate School of Education. Through your critical review of the literature, you will demonstrate your in-depth knowledge and understanding of a select facet of your chosen field. Through your selection of a research problem, you will take that knowledge and understanding to a new level--one that expands or refines recognized definitions, that applies extant knowledge in new settings, or that searches for alternative definitions, causes, or results. Your research design, methods, and analyses will provide evidence of your capacity to function as a contributing colleague in your field.  Your dissertation represents a substantial investment of your intellectual capital and personal energy. It will stand as a significant professional credential throughout your career. Your dissertation also will reflect upon the Graduate School of Education's reputation for academic excellence.  *Each dissertation is the work of an individual doctoral candidate,* and as such, you, the doctoral student, have the primary responsibility for conducting research and developing a dissertation document that meets the requirements and standards of the Graduate School of Education. Your dissertation must present original work and conform to academic and professional ethics codes and procedures.  Use the following sequence for assembling the components of your dissertation and see sample pages in Appendices B-K. Some dissertations may require additional or fewer chapters and may use chapter titles different from those listed above. Consult with your mentor for advice on chapters and chapter titles. *Note that some dissertations have more or fewer than five chapters.* |
| 1. Georgia Southern University, P-12 and Higher Education Leadership | http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/edld/p-12-leadership/p-12-ed-leadership/  **Key features include**   * + *Enrollment in cohort groups organized to support learning and professional networking*   + Instruction in the Tier II portion of the program is 75% online and 25% on-campus (main campus in Statesboro, GA)   + Curriculum stresses practical knowledge and skills for preparing scholar-practitioners to become transformational leaders   **Overview of Program**  **Tier III is the portion of the program in which** candidates conduct their doctoral research project and write the dissertation. *Actually, candidates will begin initial preparation as early as their first semester in Tier II when they will work in teams to prepare extensive bibliographies in broad areas of inquiry related to their research interests. In the second year of Tier II, candidates prepare a comprehensive review of literature that will inform their doctoral research project.* The project is designed to be action-oriented research that focuses on real problem in real school or higher education settings.  <http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/edld/dissertation/>  The Capstone Project in our program is the Dissertation in Practice document. *As a college of education, we have agreed to maintain the 5 Chapter structure as a required design for the dissertation document. To this end, we provide our students with these 5 options to align our efforts with the Dissertation in Practice.*  **1. Traditional Research Dissertation**  This option is for Ed.D. students particularly interested in producing knowledge in response to a research problem from within a disciplinary or theoretical perspective. The quantitative research dissertation may seek to test or generate hypotheses or to establish generalizable propositions. The qualitative research dissertation may seek to explain phenomena or events by exploring the multiple meanings experienced by individuals, to explore and advance theory, or advance an argument. Mixed methods research dissertations involve both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to provide a better understanding of a research problem through more comprehensive evidence than if either dataset had been used alone.  **2. Program Evaluation Dissertation**  This option is for Ed.D. students particularly interested in exploring the effectiveness of educational interventions and developing implications for practice. The Program Evaluation Dissertation will identify, clarify, and apply defensible criteria to determine the effectiveness of an educational program, project, process, policy, or product. The program evaluation is intended to improve student learning and achievement or institutional effectiveness. The program evaluation dissertation must address a significant program that involves sizeable budget expenditures and affects a substantial number of people. The program evaluation dissertation will use accepted evaluation models, methods, and accepted practices. When program evaluations are done well, they have the scope and depth of a traditional dissertation.  **3. Policy Formation Dissertation**  This option is for Ed.D. students interested in impacting education issues through the review, research, and development of educational policy. This option begins with the review of an educational issue ranging from federal involvement in public education to accountability and standards to something as specific as vouchers, charter schools, or safety on campus. Through this review, new or revised policy recommendations and implications are developed by considering internal requirements, external requirements, existing policy, and stakeholder recommendations. Methodologies for data collection and analysis most useful in completing a policy formation dissertation include quantitative methods, educational assessment, legal research, historiography, and document analysis. Policy formation dissertations can include implementation plans.  **4. Organizational Problem Analysis**  **Dissertation**  This option is for Ed.D. students particularly interested in exploring an issue, problem, or need in a school, district, or postsecondary campus to develop and implement plans for improving organizational effectiveness. The focus is ultimately on improving student learning and achievement and institutional effectiveness. Tasks and skills used in an organizational problem analysis (OPA) dissertation include: understanding and using local data sources; using data to evaluate and document performance; using research to guide decisions; identifying/prioritizing organizational needs; understanding the structure and logic of problem definitions; establishing an improvement vision and performance goals; analyzing causes systemically and objectively; employing multiple perspectives in causal analyses; applying cost-benefit analyses, organizational values, and ethical criteria to solutions; and using appropriate technologies to support problem analysis, decision making, and communication. OPA dissertations will often require mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies.  **5. Systems Analysis Dissertation**  This option is for Ed.D students particularly interested in exploring an educational concept based on order and the interdependence among phenomena within the system of education whether at the micro, macro, or supra level. The focus of the dissertation is using the study to break down existing wholes into their constituent parts or elements for the purpose of depicting the relationship of the parts to the whole and to each other. At its base level, the student will include an analysis of the purpose, the content, and the process of the system. Each system will have a purpose, the content is the sum of the operations and functions of the system, and the process is the operations and functions in which the content is engaged to accomplish the purpose of the system. Students will have developed a sound and relevant understanding of system’s theory to inform their research design. Methodologies for data collection and analysis include quantitative methods, historiography, document content analysis, and mixed method(ology) research. | <http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/new-current-students/graduation-checklist/>  [N/A] |
| 1. Illinois State University, Educational Administration and Foundations-P-12 Administration | <http://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/doctoral/eaf/4dissertations.pdf>  Although a traditional research dissertation is typically completed by approximately 2,000 candidates for the Ed.D. annually, numerous universities have begun to offer alternative capstone assessments. *These alternatives include both individual and collaborative projects.*  We believe that *Critical Analysis* in leadership is characterized by thoughtful analysis that links scholarship and practical application. Scholarship is treated comprehensively to address the problems of renewing our educational system for the 21st century. *Practical Wisdom* is leadership performance characterized through developed implications of scholarship *FOR* practice in both general and particular terms. Scholarship and the craft wisdom of practice are treated dynamically and systemically. It is to this level of performance that we all aspire, the level at which our schools and EAF join together to share responsibility for creating a 21st century educational system. The four Ed.D. dissertation options, based on emerging practice in educational leadership programs, are briefly described on the following pages, and complete descriptions of the four options are presented as attachments. Each requires significant commitment of time and effort to produce an extended piece of writing. Preparation of the final written product will require extended review of bodies of literature relevant to the project. These dissertation options extend opportunities for students to demonstrate *Critical Analysis* and *Practical Wisdom* in the culminating assessment of the EAF program.   1. **Traditional Research Dissertation**   The “research dissertation” is a genre, and deserves inclusion as an option for Ed.D. students particularly interested in producing knowledge in response to a research problem from within a disciplinary or theoretical perspective. The quantitative research dissertation may seek to test or generate hypotheses or to establish generalizable propositions. The qualitative research dissertation may seek to explain phenomena or events by exploring the multiple meanings experienced by individuals, to explore and advance theory, or advance an argument. Mixed methods research dissertations involve both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to provide a better understanding of a research problem through more comprehensive evidence than if either dataset had been used alone. Students undertaking the traditional research dissertation are expected to have taken the appropriate courses in educational research methodology.   1. **Program Evaluation Dissertation**   The “program evaluation dissertation” is a genre, and deserves inclusion as an option for Ed.D. students particularly interested in exploring the effectiveness of educational interventions and developing implications for practice. The Program Evaluation Dissertation will identify, clarify, and apply defensible criteria to determine the effectiveness of an educational program, project, process, policy, or product. In every case, the program evaluation is intended to improve student learning and achievement. The program evaluation dissertation must address a significant program that involves sizeable budget expenditures and affects a substantial number of people. The program evaluation dissertation will use accepted evaluation models, methods, and accepted practices. When program evaluations are done well they have the scope and depth of a traditional dissertation. Students undertaking the program evaluation dissertation are expected to have taken the appropriate courses in evaluation research methodology and assessment of learning.   1. **Policy Formation Dissertation**   The “policy formation dissertation” is a genre, and deserves inclusion as an option for Ed.D. students interested in impacting education issues through the review, research, and development of educational policy. This option begins with the review of an educational issue ranging from federal involvement in public education to accountability and standards to something as specific as vouchers or charter schools. Through this review new or revised policy recommendations and implications are developed by considering internal requirements, external requirements, existing policy, and stakeholder recommendations. Methodologies for data collection and analysis most useful in completing a policy formation dissertation include quantitative methods, educational assessment, legal research, historiography, and document analysis. Policy formation dissertations include implementation plans, possibly with the cooperation of the Illinois State University Center for the Study of Education Policy.   1. **Organizational Problem Analysis Dissertation**   The “organizational problem analysis dissertation” is a genre, and deserves inclusion as an option for Ed.D. students particularly interested in exploring an issue, problem, or need in a school or district to develop and implement plans for improving organizational effectiveness. The focus is ultimately on improving student learning and achievement. Tasks and skills used in an organizational problem analysis (OPA) dissertation include: understanding and using local data sources; using data to evaluate and document performance; using research to guide decisions; identifying/prioritizing organizational needs; understanding the structure and logic of problem definitions; establishing an improvement vision and performance goals; analyzing causes systemically and objectively; employing multiple perspectives in causal analyses; applying cost- benefit analyses, organizational values, and ethical criteria to solutions; and using appropriate technologies to support problem analysis, decision making, and communication. Students undertaking the OPA dissertation are expected to have taken the appropriate courses in educational research methodology. OPA dissertations will often require mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies. | <http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/FormattingGuidelines2.pdf>  *Many departments have both a traditional style thesis/dissertation and a journal style thesis/dissertation.* Please check with your adviser to determine which style you should write.  **Traditional Format**  When formatting your thesis/dissertation, follow the formatting guidelines when preparing the pages. You may also use the Word template to help with the process. Please note that there are some items in the template you will need to change (i.e. thesis/dissertation, school/department, degree, date, names of committee members, etc).  **Journal Format**  When preparing the front sections of your thesis/dissertation, follow the formatting guidelines when preparing the pages. You may also use the Word template to help with the process.  Each chapter is often a different journal article. An optional introductory first chapter or summary last chapter, or both, may be included. In each journal article chapter (i.e., article), the section headings, tables, figures, and references/literature cited must be formatted according to the specifications of the journal to which you plan to submit the article. Accordingly, each chapter may be formatted differently. |
| 1. Johns Hopkins University, Doctor of Education | <http://education.jhu.edu/Academics/doctoral/EdD/dissertation.html>  **Applied Dissertation**  Students examine a Problem of Practice (POP) which is an area of concern that can be investigated through a review of current practice within the organization or that they have observed within their professional context. This POP becomes the focus of the dissertation research. *The Applied Dissertation is embedded within the Ed.D. program coursework, which provides students with a unique opportunity to examine an issue important to the organization in which they are employed. During the first year in the program, students examine their articulated Problem of Practice to identify underlying causes and associated factors. During the second year, students develop a potential solution, such as an intervention or policy change, and a plan to study the implementation and predicted outcomes. Students will demonstrate mastery of first- and second-year competencies through written and oral comprehensive assessments, which will serve as indicators of readiness for conducting their applied research. Students will then evaluate the effectiveness of this solution as their Applied Dissertation (Year 3).* Characteristics of the Applied Dissertation that make it unique to this program include:   * Written assignments focus on the student's Problem of Practice; * Coursework leads students to consider solutions that hold the potential for significant change or impact within their organization and/or have implications for policy; and * Dissertation components are embedded within coursework and distributed across the three years of the program.   *Although somewhat different from a traditional dissertation in its completion and focus, students are nevertheless expected to demonstrate mastery of the relevant literature, to obtain extant and/or collect additional data, and to interpret the results in light of previous studies.* | <http://guides.library.jhu.edu/etd/formatting>  [N/A] |
| 1. Johnson & Wales University, Educational Leadership | <http://catalog.jwu.edu/programsofstudy/arts-sciences/edd-educational-leadership-edd/providence/>  Students are required to submit a dissertation that demonstrates they have acquired the technical and professional competencies associated with educational leadership and the ability to conduct research. The dissertation identifies an issue of concern, reports on the existing body of knowledge, and presents significant research that would advance present information. *If the research and dissertation are collaborative, clearly delineated individual components will reflect each student's substantive contribution to the report and its defense.* | [N/A] |
| 1. Loyola Marymount University, Educational Leadership for Social Justice | http://www3.lmu.edu/resources/LMU\_Search.htm?q=dissertation+guide&x=0&y=0&sitesearch=lmu.edu  *A doctoral dissertation is designed to be an independent, problem posing, research study conducted by the doctoral student under the supervision of a faculty member, the dissertation chair.* Dissertation Elements and Structure An LMU doctoral dissertation must include the following elements based on the recommendations of the 2010 Doctoral Taskforce:   * Use leadership for social justice as a focusing lens * Literature review/knowledge base * Research question * Acknowledge lens/theoretical framework * Methodology * Rationale/contextual analysis * Findings/evidence   *There is a traditional outline or structure for dissertations that students are expected to follow to varying degrees. The conventional dissertation structure is one example of how such a comprehensive work can be organized logically and effectively. How strictly you follow these conventions should be a personal decision and one that you negotiate with your dissertation chair. If you decide to deviate from this tradition, you should have clear reasons for doing so. Ask yourself: How does the organizational structure I am proposing advance the message I want to convey about my topic and my position as a researcher?*  *The components of the dissertation listed in Table 1 are standard elements in a complete framework for your doctoral dissertation. This structure allows for the logical flow of ideas from each phase of the dissertation research. The background, statement of the problem, and research questions lead into a review of the literature and research that serve as a foundation to your understanding of the topic. The literature review also introduces the methodological background in the study of your topic. The methods section that follows the literature review details the methods you employ in your study, the study design and the rationale for these choices. The methodological decisions you describe build on the research foundation that you detail in the previous literature review section. The findings you report and analyze in Chapter 4 are the results of the methods detailed in Chapter 3. Ultimately, Chapter 5 allows you to come full-circle, dealing again with the answers to the research questions set out in Chapter 1, the implications of these answers for policy and practice, and the recommendations for research that will further our knowledge in this area of study, in essence, raising new research questions.* | http://library.lmu.edu/generalinformation/policiesprocedures/submittingthesesanddissertations/  [N/A] |
| 1. Lynn University, Educational Leadership | http://www.lynn.edu/academics/colleges/education/programs/edd-educational-leadership  Each candidate must complete a minimum of two critical assignments per class and a culminating original research study, referred to as the Dissertation in Practice (DiP). | No information from the Graduate School, but the description below was retrieved from a news article on the school website: http://www.lynn.edu/about-lynn/news-and-events/news/lynn-welcomes-inaugural-ed.d.-class?searchterm=capstone  *The new program (the Educational Doctorates for Practitioners) will not require the traditional dissertation but rather have candidates working as a cohort to complete an extensive capstone research project.* |
| 1. Miami University, Educational Leadership | http://miamioh.edu/ehs/academics/graduate-studies/doctoral-programs/doctorate-education-educational-leadership/program-requirements/index.html  As the culminating experience that demonstrates the scholarly practitioner’s ability to solve problems of practice, the Dissertation in Practice exhibits the doctoral candidate’s ability “to think, to perform, and to act with integrity” (Shulman, 2005). Students begin exploring topics and possible dissertation inquiry questions during their first year of coursework, and will begin to build competencies that will support the dissertation throughout the program. *Students may choose from a range of formal learning projects as their dissertation of practice for the Ed.D; a students’ work environment and personal interests drive the posing of the dissertation question. The dissertation of practice should clearly reflect major themes studied within program coursework, and will be different for each student (or group of students working together).* | http://www.miamioh.edu/\_files/documents/about-miami/Graduate\_Student\_Handbook.pdfDissertation Requirement *(Graduate Handbook 4.5.A.3)* Because the doctoral degree is primarily a research degree, students must demonstrate the capacity for independent research by writing an original dissertation on a topic in their major field of study. |
| 1. Michigan State University, Educational Leadership, K-12 Administration | https://education.msu.edu/ead/k12/edd/program-requirements/*By the end of the second summer, Capstone teams and projects need to be well specified and team present their project proposals to a panel of faculty and partners for approval.**Year III is dedicated to completion of Capstone Projects. Students register for two courses each semester, giving them two kinds of support for their work. Capstone projects are team projects, and each team has the support of a clinical coach through EAD 981A and 981B Capstone Project. Teams also benefit from guidance of a faculty member through EAD 982A and 982B Capstone Seminar.* *At the end of the final spring semester, teams present and defend their Capstone Project to a faculty / stakeholder panel, submitting an extensive account of their work. Each DEL student also submits the complete portfolio of performance assessments aligned to the MI Central Office Administrator Standards, as demonstrations of leadership, including the assessments documenting individual contribution to the group Capstone.* | https://grad.msu.edu/etd/formatting-guide  [N/A] |
| 1. North Dakota State University, Education (Institutional Analysis or Occupational and Adult Education Options) | https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/\_migrated/content\_uploads/EdD\_in\_Education\_-\_Institutional\_Analysis\_04.pdf  https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/\_migrated/content\_uploads/EdD\_in\_Education\_-\_Occupational\_and\_Adult\_04.pdf  [Identical requirements for both program options.]  Students proceed through their respective degree programs with the assistance and guidance of a faculty advisor and an advisory committee. *The student develops a plan of study, completes a qualifying examination process, submits a dissertation proposal, and completes a dissertation following the procedures outlined by the Graduate School, the Education Doctoral Programs faculty, and the student’s advisory committee.* (See the program web site and the Graduate Bulletin for further detail about the expectations for the degree.)  Students in the Ed.D. program in with an option in [either option] complete an original research project in the form of a doctoral dissertation. This dissertation should seek to advance knowledge through the application of theory related to the field of institutional analysis. An Ed.D. dissertation is more application-oriented and aims to design a project that utilizes current research to inform practice and create a bridge between theory and practice, as well as contribute to knowledge in the field. The student’s advisor and committee will support and mentor students through this process. | https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/graduating\_students/dtp/co\_author/  The doctoral dissertation, master’s thesis, or master’s paper is a marker of the student’s academic and professional abilities. As such, the student and the student's committee hold primary responsibility for issues of content, language use, and format. The Graduate School will review the disquisition to ensure that its formatting is consistent with NDSU’s format guidelines before degree posting is authorized.  *If co-authored materials are included in the disquisition, a clear and complete description of the student’s contribution must be included. No co-authored materials can be included in the disquisition if the student's contribution is modest, even though the student may have been included as a co-author. The placement of the mandatory description of the student’s role must be in a footnote indicated at the chapter heading in which the co-authored material appears.* |
| 1. Regis College, Higher Education Leadership | http://www.regiscollege.edu/academics/eddhel-curriculum.cfm  *ED 901 Capstone I: Design*  The capstone is student-centered, independent research project that requires the comprehensive working knowledge and command of all Methods of Analysis and Evaluation and Problem Based Methods courses in this culminating and integrative experience*. In this first capstone course, candidates will identify a policy/problem in higher education leadership, conduct a literature review, design qualitative and quantitative approaches, testable hypothesis and all other research design elements.* Students will present their research proposal for their capstone project at the end of the course.  *ED 902 Capstone II: Implementation/Evidence*  *The second capstone course focuses on the implementation of the research design in ED 901 and the gathering of necessary data to test hypotheses in an effort to empirically support or not support the research questions.*  *ED 903 Capstone III: Analysis/Outcomes*  *The third capstone course requires students to analyze, interpret and report the results of the data analysis in ED 902. A final written report in a professional format suitable for publication accompanied by an oral presentation provides the opportunity for students to defend their research and demonstrate their integrated knowledge and cumulative growth throughout the program. A final portfolio is also required prior to completion of this final degree requirement.* | <http://www.regiscollege.edu/UserFiles/File/academics/catalogs/academic-catalog-2015-2016.pdf>  The capstone project for the EdD in Higher Education Leadership is in lieu of a traditional doctoral dissertation consistent with the capstone guidelines and recommendations of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). It is still expected to represent a seminal or substantial contribution to knowledge in which the student exhibits scholarship that is practitioner-based and policy-oriented, demonstrating the candidate’s ability to conduct independent research. All other core and concentration courses in the EdD program must be successfully completed prior to enrolling in the first capstone course (ED 901). *Within the traditional thesis, candidates typically work independently in consultation with one fulltime faculty member. In contrast, the capstone project is completed within the framework of three courses for each cohort. The instructor of record for each of the three capstone courses will serve in lieu of a traditional thesis committee and provide guidance and advice to each candidate enrolled within the course. Unlike the traditional thesis format, candidates will also benefit from the consistent collaboration and input of their peer candidates as colleagues throughout the three capstone courses.* |
| 1. Rutgers University | http://gse.rutgers.edu/content/how-edd-education-program-works  The Ed.D culminates with a year-long dissertation experience. The dissertation requires students to identify and investigate a problem of practice systematically using relevant research literature, and inquiry methodology. | http://gse.rutgers.edu/content/edd-dissertation-style-guide*Ed.D Dissertation Style Guide* It is presumed that the previously published material used in the thesis or dissertation represents the original work of the student. In the event that that is not the case, it has no place in the thesis or dissertation. In those fields in which the student typically works alone on the research and writing of the thesis or dissertation, it is expected that the writing will be his or her own. *In those fields in which it is conventionally the case that work is done in close collaboration with others this may not be the case, but material written by others as part of a joint project should be referenced as such.*  *In the case of coauthored material, comparable acknowledgment must be supplemented by a clear indication of the contribution of the author of the thesis or dissertation. In all cases, the major substance of the thesis or dissertation must be the original work of the student submitting it.* |
| 1. San Francisco State University, Educational Leadership | http://edd.sfsu.edu/content/program-milestones  Year 3 of the program is designed to provide continued support and guidance in the conduct of dissertation research and the writing of the dissertation. *Students attend class one half day on alternate weekends, meeting with faculty and their cohort to work through issues of data collection, analysis, and writing.* | http://grad.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/forms/thesis-dissertation-guidelines.pdf  [N/A] |
| 1. Seattle University, Educational Leadership | https://www.seattleu.edu/education/edlr/degree-requirements/  *The EDLR at SU includes a capstone Thematic Dissertation in Practice research component, requiring each student to conduct inquiry relevant to information needs of a learning organization. Students form thematic dissertation groups led by at least one doctoral faculty mentor and organized around broad, complex, organization-based issues or problems relevant to leadership. Lines of inquiry are tied to the professional concentration areas supported by the EDLR Program: K-12 leadership, Adult/Postsecondary/ Higher Education, Spirituality, Public/Non-Profit Leadership. The research concludes with a culminating project-based dissertation and leadership defense.* | [N/A] |
| 1. Texas A&M University, Curriculum and Instruction, PK-12 Educational Administration | **Curriculum and Instruction**  http://tlac.tamu.edu/node/43  **PROGRAM DESIGN**  Major themes presented in the College's mission statement and vision form the three intertwined goals of the Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction: Leadership, Discovery and Application of Knowledge. We offer a terminal professional degree for educational leaders in curriculum and instruction contexts serving teachers and administrators in K–12 public and private education. We place emphasis on developing educational leadership knowledge and skills in curriculum and instruction. The program aims to extend mid-career individuals' prior experiences in teaching and learning environments to prepare them for new roles of leadership in one or more of the following domains of practice:   * Leadership roles in school change and improvement initiatives; * School or district curriculum leadership; * *Professional development of colleagues;* * Parent and community involvement; * Preservice teacher preparation and supervision within school contexts; * Contributions to the teaching profession through service to professional organizations, school districts and state government steering committees; * Successful experiences with external funding efforts; * Organizational management.   **PROGRAM'S MINIMUM CRITERIA**   * Minimum of five years of successful teaching experience; * Earned master's degree; * Three professional references attesting to the applicant’s teaching expertise, interpersonal skills and leadership skills; * Writing samples addressing various educational and instructional issues.   **KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM**   * Online curriculum; * *Supportive thematic group membership;* * Measures of continuing success in the program; * Professional internships (300 hours total in two semesters); * Record of study   **PK-12 Educational Administration**  http://eahr.tamu.edu/pathway-through-doctoral-program  This phase of your program is less structured. You will be working closely with your chair as you analyze your data and begin writing your dissertation. This happens in multiple ways: in face-to-face meetings, through phone calls, and by email. *Some faculty meet monthly with all their advisees who are either approaching or are at candidacy, and this provides some degree of group support during this period. There are informal doctoral writing groups that are formed on campus or in other cities, and we will help connect you with existing groups, or assist you in forming your own group. The writing stage can be a lonely time and it is helpful to be connected to other doctoral students who are also writing.* | http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Thesis-and-Dissertation-Services/Prepare-Your-Document#0-Pre-submittalRequirements  [N/A] |
| 1. Texas Tech University, Educational Leadership | http://www.depts.ttu.edu/education/graduate/psychology-and-leadership/educational\_leadership.php  Participants in the Educational Leadership Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program complete action research that culminates in a Dissertation in Practice (DIP). The dissertation research is the second (or third or fourth) in a series of studies conducted over the course of the three-year program. In the above course sequence, you will note the P1 End of Phase Assessment, P2 End of Phase Assessment, and P3 End of Phase Assessment. In each phase, you will be assessed on your growth as a leader in education. *Through successive action research projects, students will practice and refine research skills in an applied setting while making a difference in their local school/district. The dissertation represents a more sophisticated and complete iteration of a process that is a career-long quest to discover local knowledge, create local change, study the effects, and implement more informed change. You will be a better consumer of research after this course of study*  *Dissertation in Practice (DIP)*  *The DIP is a scholarly endeavor that is also authentic to schools and districts. It will have lasting impact on a complex problem of practice. The specific features of the DIP are as follows: 1. The DIP identifies a researchable, complex problem of practice that has been vetted with the student’s school district leadership. Note: The problem of practice is a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner. 2. It demonstrates use of rigorous and appropriate methods of inquiry to address the identified problem of practice. 3. It shows the potential for positive impact, change or intervention on the stated problem of practice. 4. It demonstrates the practitioner’s ability to act ethically and with integrity (human subjects). 5. It proposes strategies for realizing a positive impact on individual and community professional practice, policy, and /or future research in the field. 6. It demonstrates the integration of theory and practice to advance professional knowledge and to impact the field. 7. It demonstrates the practitioner’s ability to communicate effectively to an appropriate audience in a way that addresses scholarly professional practice* | http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/students/current/THDGuidelines.php  [N/A] |
| 1. University of Arkansas, Educational Leadership | http://edle.uark.edu/degrees/edd-educational-leadership.php  Each cohort weekend will be focused on a theme that connects theory with practice and includes mini-lectures by scholars and practitioners in the field, facilitated discussion groups, and lively debate of critical issues facing school leaders. *The intent of the cohort weekend is to build relationships, introduce students to leaders in the field and expose them to interactive, hands-on learning experiences that lend themselves more easily to the face-to-face environment.* | https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/\_resources/forms/graduate-handbook.pdf  *H.**Theses or Dissertations Consisting of Published/Publishable Articles and/or Co-Authored Works*  *Manuscript Style vs. Published/Publishable Papers Style*  *Published/Publishable Papers Style*  *Using Published Material in Manuscript Style* *Co-Authored Published Works in Manuscript Style* *In situations where more than one graduate student from the University of Arkansas has co-authored a published paper, it is acceptable for both graduate students with guidance and advice from their major professor(s) (thesis/dissertation advisor) to use the published work in their thesis/dissertation as appropriate for that individual student. Theses/dissertations are intended as original bodies of work and no student may submit a thesis/dissertation that is identical to, or contains extensive content that is identical to another student’s thesis/ dissertation. Additionally, it is not acceptable for a student to submit a thesis/dissertation that is completely comprised of co-authored works in which they are not the lead author. (Lead author is defined as the writer/researcher who was the major contributor to the work involved in creating the paper.) Students who are the lead author of an article may reuse the entire article without significant modification using the Published/Publishable Papers style above.* |
| 1. University of Auckland, Education | <http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/programmes/postgraduate-programmes/edd-programme-home/edd-structure.html>  Programme Highlights   * *Ongoing regularly scheduled cohort-based meetings, gatherings, hui, or wānanga which adds peer and whānau support to the support provided by the co-ordinators, lecturers and supervisors*   Dissertation in Practice  The Dissertation in Practice is a scholarly endeavor that impacts a complex problem of practice. | <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/teaching-and-learning/postgraduate-research/undertaking-your-research/theses-and-dissertations.html>  A thesis or dissertation is the written report of a research study undertaken in fulfilment or partial fulfilment of a graduate degree such as a doctorate, masters degree, bachelors (honours) degree, or a postgraduate diploma. It is an undertaking that allows you to explore areas or problems in detail, and develop and utilise your thinking and analytical skills. Your thesis or dissertation should demonstrate a capacity for independent thinking, contribute to existing scholarship and must meet international standards for such scholarly research.  *3.6 Joint ownership A work of joint authorship will arise if you have collaborated with one or more persons to jointly create a work. For it to be a work of joint authorship, the contribution of each author is not distinct from the other authors. If the work is a work of joint authorship you will own the copyright in that work jointly with that person or persons. This means you cannot copy or publish that work without the written permission of your co-author(s). Specific contributions by individuals should be recorded in the Co-Authorship Form.* |
| 1. University of Florida, Curriculum, Teaching, and Teacher Education, Educational Technology | **Curriculum, Teaching, and Teacher Education**  https://education.ufl.edu/curriculum-teaching/edd/  This program is not intended to prepare educators for positions in research-intensive universities. It is intended to prepare practicing educational professionals to draw on educational theory and research, and the expertise of colleagues and UF faculty to address the pressing problems of practice facing educational leaders today. The following features are distinct:   * *The program is cohort based with participants working together as a community of learners to tackle common and individual problems of practice.* * Courses specifically link theory and research to problems of professional practice within participants’ contexts. * Course assignments support educators in application of and inquiry about their learning.   *Participants in the program will form one cohort with a maximum of 25 students per group. As cohort members, participants must support the success of all members by actively participating in facilitated discussions, bringing evidence of student and adult work and working collaboratively on activities such as inquiry, peer review of papers, and coaching professional development experiences.*  **Educational Technology**  https://education.ufl.edu/edtech-edd/  *A cohort-based, online community of practice combined with individual and small group mentoring helps students persist and succeed in attaining their doctoral degree.* All activities, assignments and research are scaffolded to synthesize theory, research and practice and emphasize relevance to professional practice. Information literacy and other support services are provided throughout the program. | <http://www.graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/Guide-for-ETDs.pdf>  *Your supervisory committee chair is responsible for the level of scholarship found in your thesis or dissertation. You must show a high level of professional competence, and only your supervisory committee can give you the guidance and instruction needed to achieve this goal (p.7).*  *Inclusion of coauthored articles is not allowed; portions and materials contributed by the student may be used however. Regardless, it is the student’s and the Committee Chair’s responsibility to ensure that the student has appropriately addressed all copyright issues or concerns that may arise. Material produced by coauthors should be so noted and cited appropriately. It is the supervisory committee’s responsibility to ensure that the thesis or dissertation reflects a sufficient level of original and scholarly work by the candidate (p. 26).*  Dissertation**:** A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the ability of the author to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research. It must describe significant original contributions to the advancement of knowledge and must demonstrate the ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data. *A dissertation includes a statement of purpose, a review of pertinent literature, a presentation of methods and results obtained, and a critical interpretation of conclusions in relation to the findings of others. It involves a defense of objectives, design, and analytical procedures* (p.34). |
| 1. University of Georgia, Adult Education | https://coe.uga.edu/academics/degrees/edd/adult-education  Innovative features of this program include:   * Action research dissertation uniquely integrates practice and research * *Work with a team to lead change in an organization, and research the process along the way* * Coursework and critical milestones directly support your action-research dissertation throughout the degree * *Cohort format creates a vital collaborative learning community* * Intensive retreat experience fosters development of the cohort * Internationally renowned faculty specialize in adult education and/or human resource and organization development   Coursework can be completed in 3½-4 years | http://grad.uga.edu//wp-content/uploads/2014/09/theses\_and\_dissertations.pdf  The thesis or dissertation must be the original work of the student. *The student must also be the first author of any journal articles included as chapters.* |
| 1. University of Hawaii, Professional Education Practice | https://coe.hawaii.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/CohortIIEdDHandbook.pdf  The signature pedagogy of the EdD in Professional Educational Practice involves inquiry-based teaching and learning—inquiries that require student engagement in two major projects that center on problems of practice. *The first is a group consultancy project and**the second is an individual action research or practitioner research project referred to as the “dissertation in practice.” In addition, the UHM College of Education believes in the importance of putting the results of research in the public sphere and of students’ justifying the results of the projects and demonstrating their impact on practice.*  The Professional Practice Dissertation (EDUC 720) The professional practice dissertation (dissertation in practice) is a practitioner inquiry project, corresponding to, but different from, a traditional dissertation in the PhD program. *The focus of the professional practice dissertation is on making an original contribution to practice rather than an original contribution to knowledge. The project, conducted over four semesters of the program, is an opportunity for each member of the cohort to pursue a project of personal professional interest. As the emphasis of the professional practice dissertation project is on seeking, in an informed way, solutions to problems of practice, the approach to be pursued is also different from traditional dissertation research work. Professional practice research problems arise in the professional experiences of practitioners and actively involve participant researchers in an investigation into their own practice. The process involves a period of research and planning, followed by implementation of a plan of action, implementation of the plan, data collection, and analysis and reflection on the results. A written report and public presentation of the report are important later stages in the process, but the main work of the project, as stated earlier, involves the preparation and implementation of a plan of action dealing with a problem of practice.* | http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/authorship-acknowledgement  *The student must be the sole author of his or her thesis or dissertation, a co-authored manuscript is not permitted. While contributions from others are allowed, the principal contribution to the manuscript must originate from the student. For example, contribution from a faculty adviser should not exceed the student’s own contribution.* |
| 1. University of Louisville, Educational Leadership and Organizational Development | <https://louisville.edu/education/degrees/CEHD-Doctoral-Handbook16.pdf>  *Students pursuing their Ed.D. degree can either choose to complete a traditional dissertation, or they can choose to pursue the group manuscript model. Each student choosing to participate in the group manuscript model must author one publishable manuscript aligning around the group's common problem of interest. Each group member must individually author a publishable introduction, an individual review of literature, an individual methodology/ methods section, an individual set of findings, and an individual discussion. As a whole, the group is responsible for collaboratively completing a common introduction of the problem of interest, a common set of implications for future research, and a common executive summary to be delivered to the district) Generally speaking, the traditional five-chapter dissertation is recommended for candidates that intend to engage in research careers within the academe while the manuscript option may be a better alternative for those whose professional goals are more aligned with the practitioner. The determination of the extent to which the dissertation meets these two goals is left to the professional judgment of the Dissertation Committee.* | <http://louisville.edu/graduatecatalog/degree-requirements>  Standards for the Preparation of Thesis and Dissertations are available on the website of the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies. Alternate standards must be approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs if in conflict with this standard. |
| 1. University of Mississippi, Educational Leadership | http://education.olemiss.edu/academics/programs/ed\_leadership\_edd.html  *The program requires an applied dissertation-in-practice in which candidates will engage in planning, implementing, assessing and revising a three-year organizational improvement project. Candidates must receive permission from the appropriate officials to engage in the intensive project.* | http://gradschool.olemiss.edu/thesis-and-dissertation-manual/thesis-dissertation-manual-1/  *Traditionally, the doctoral dissertation has been the written record the candidate’s individual, original research and scholarship that has successfully advanced the limits of human knowledge.* The topic must be appropriate to and significant in the academic field, require a mastery and exhaustive exercise of research techniques, and demonstrate critical thought and facility of expression. The dissertation must, in the professional opinion of the graduate faculty, make an original contribution, and it must demonstrate the candidate’s fitness to continue the advancement of knowledge in the student’s competency. |
| 1. University of Missouri Columbia, Educational Leadership | https://education.missouri.edu/degree/educational-leadership-edd/#curriculum  Instruction methods vary to enhance your learning. *You will meet face-to-face for a traditional classroom experience, work in teams for a collaborative and dynamic experience, and have online classes to help with busy schedules.* All classes are problem-based and provide opportunities for real-time application in practice. The culminating experience as a scholarly practitioner is the dissertation. | http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/dissertation-process.php  The dissertation must:  Be written on a subject approved by the candidate's doctoral program committee  Embody the results of original and significant investigation  *Be the candidate's own work* |
| 1. University of Missouri, St. Louis | https://coe.umsl.edu/mycoe/index.cfm?event=p2\_pe:viewProgram&program\_id=EdD  *In addition to the thematic learning community of practice format, the curriculum features Laboratories of Practice and a Dissertation in Practice as culminating activities. The Laboratories of Practice take the doctoral studies away from the University campus and to a context where theory, inquiry, and practice can intersect and the implementation of practice can be measured. The Dissertation in Practice allows the learning community to address a high leverage problem of practice through collaborative and connected work beyond what a single individual could do alone. Individuals contribute work that feeds into group work. The Dissertation of Practice is characterized by generative impact.* | http://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/admitted/dissertation.html [N/A] |
| 1. University of North Texas, Higher Education | http://catalog.unt.edu/preview\_program.php?catoid=14&poid=4059  *The principal goal of the EdD dissertation is the demonstration of the student's ability to solve practical issues in higher education by conducting independent research. The research design must be congruent with the modes of inquiry used in conducting research on higher education. EdD students are encouraged to conduct action research that applies theories in creating solutions for real-life issues in higher education*. | https://tsgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual  *3.3 Collaborative Writing*  *Although it is not uncommon for a group of students under a single major professor to be working on different aspects of a larger research project, theses and dissertations document the progress and results of individual student efforts. The Toulouse Graduate School (TGS) encourages each student to write their own introduction, as well as literature review and materials/methods sections, in a manner that shows how the study, set up, sample frame, etc. were relevant to their individual research. Co-authorship does not lend itself well to this goal and should be avoided.* |
| 1. University of South Carolina, Curriculum studies, Educational Technology | [N/A] | http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/thesisdiss.asp?page=acad&sub=etd  The role of The Graduate School in the thesis/dissertation process is two-fold: We validate the formatting of your scholarship and we act as the gateway for publishing your document electronically.  For Journal Articles as Chapters, or Manuscript Style:  Authorship  *You must be either the sole author or the first co-author of each article submitted as a manuscript chapter.* |
| 1. University of Southern California, Educational Leadership, Organizational Change and Leadership, Global Executive | **Educational Leadership**  http://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/ed-leadership/curriculum/ The Thematic Dissertation - Our Unique Approach *The EdD in Educational Leadership program offers innovative thematic dissertation groups, in which students work collaboratively with faculty and practitioners from the field to study a contemporary problem in educational leadership. Bringing together a strong combination of experiences and perspectives to understanding the problem, the group’s work culminates in a set of unique, complementary dissertations around thematically related topics.*  *Students write individual dissertations, but access their faculty group leaders and fellow group members for support, literature and research design recommendations, and feedback on drafts. Because their studies are related, group members hold each other accountable for staying on track and considering the freshest, most relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The camaraderie and built-in support motivates students to stay focused, which ultimately helps to shorten the dissertation process. Utilized by Rossier School faculty for more than ten years, thematic dissertations enable students to explore important questions and conduct research like administrators do in everyday settings–collaboratively.*  **Organizational Change and Leadership**  https://rossieronline.usc.edu/academics/edd/capstone/  The Dissertation in Practice  The Dissertation consists of a highly structured demonstration of a student’s problem-solving skills. *In collaboration with an organization of their choosing*, each student will:  Assess the status of an organization against a specific goal in keeping with the organization’s mission and vision  Investigate the causes that appear to be preventing the organization from reaching this specific goal  Create a strategic plan for achieving that goal, in consultation with other members of the organization and the relevant research literature on that topic  Propose an integrated action plan to address these causes  Propose an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of the action plan  **Global Executive**  <http://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/global-executive/curriculum/> Dissertation of Practice *The Dissertation of Practice results in an original and unique work of scholarship from each student, which must address an essential aspect of the topic and apply research and scholarship to clarify or solve a problem. The Dissertation of Practice is closely integrated into the coursework throughout the program to streamline completion of the degree.*  *The Dissertation of Practice is very deeply integrated into the curriculum and a student’s timely completion of the degree is contingent on participating in the thematic dissertation groups that are a hallmark of the program. These groups bring together a small number of students working on closely-related topics, or utilizing a common methodological approach. In this way, students benefit from a highly collaborative environment while still completing their own, individual dissertation. The program will make every effort to design these themes in such a way as to accommodate the broadest possible range of interests within the student cohort, and to place students in the group of their choice. The efficiency and supportive nature of this approach may, however, limit the range of potential dissertation topics in the interest of maximizing collaboration and integration of the research process into the rest of the curriculum.* | http://graduateschool.usc.edu/current\_thesis\_dissert\_05.html  University Policy on Multiple Authors and Creators When collaborative research products and creative works are disseminated, it is essential that the list of authors and creators accurately assigns credit among the collaborators for their intellectual and creative contributions (based on the standards/customs applicable to the field and/or the publication), and that appropriate means are also used to acknowledge others who have contributed to or supported the research or creative process. |
| 1. University of Vermont, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies | http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/doctoral/?Page=cess\_edd.html&SM=edd\_submenu.html  *The Ed.D. Doctorate of Education at the University of Vermont has been designed with a cohort approach to learning. In this approach, a new group of students are admitted each year and called a cohort. Each cohort will proceed through the first two years of the program together, enrolling in all required core courses. Program faculty will assist each cohort to develop into an effective learning community wherein students challenge and support one another. We believe that a cohort approach for adult learners fosters a spirit of community, maintains commitment, and leads to a higher completion rate as compared to other approaches to doctoral studies.*  *In addition, the composition of the cohort represents a variety of specialized interests including Pre-K-12 education, higher education and social services. Through knowledge acquisition, research, spirited dialogue and collaboration, students form lifelong professional relationships that often span decades.* | http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/pdf/Electronic%20Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Guidelines.pdf  *Subject Format Requirements*  *The Graduate College accepts either (1) the Standard Thesis or (2) the Journal Article Thesis. Consult your faculty Graduate Program Coordinator for the format appropriate to your program. It is the student's responsibility to meet all departmental requirements. Do not assume you may follow the format of another thesis or dissertation.*  *The Journal Article Thesis*  *Any article comprising a major portion of a thesis or dissertation must be the work of the student. The student must be the sole author or, if there is more than one author, the primary and first listed author of articles prepared for publication. In situations of more than one author, it is the responsibility of the studies/defense committee to determine that the research and writing is indeed that of the candidate for the degree.* |
| 1. Virginia Commonwealth University, Leadership | http://www.soe.vcu.edu/programs/ed-d-in-leadership/  Designed for those interested in critically examining leadership in education, our program provides learning experiences that allow students to research real-world problems of education and leadership. *Emphasis is placed on problem-solving and translational research, as well as team instruction and team learning.* Students will examine cases built around enduring questions in the field – plugging them into the national conversation and providing the real-world experience that will allow them to hit the ground running and make an immediate impact in their respective careers.  *Capstone requirements: Students must complete and defend a team-based capstone research project.*  EDLP 790. Capstone Development. 3 Hours.  Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Supervised research. *Client-based project.* Designed to develop and refine the skills applicable to the preparation of an acceptable description of a capstone project. Development of background, review of research, project objectives and methods for gathering data, in consultation with capstone chair and client. | http://graduate.vcu.edu/media/graduate-school/docs/pdf/ThesisandDissertationManualUPDATED7-19-16.pdf  *The thesis/dissertation manual provides a general set of guidelines approved by the University Graduate Council. However, the student's thesis/dissertation committee is the final arbiter concerning the thesis/dissertation’s final acceptability. The committee's responsibility includes approving style and format, and technical and professional competency.* |
| 1. Washington State University, Leadership in Education | <https://education.wsu.edu/graduate/edleadership/edd/dissertation/>  *Participants will choose from several organized, statewide research projects (reflecting research needs identified by the state’s school district leaders) as topics for their dissertations or they may elect an individualized project. Possibilities could include more traditional written dissertations, to piloted curriculum products, to film.* Regardless of the format selected, underlying learning outcomes of the final product will be similar and will include clear reflection of major learning themes from the Ed.D. program.  https://education.wsu.edu/documents/2015/10/2015-2016-edd-edleadership\_teachleadership-handbook.pdf  The College of Education contributes to the theory and practice of the broad field of education, and dedicates itself to understanding and respecting learners in diverse cultural contexts. *We facilitate engaged learning and ethical leadership in schools and clinical settings. We seek collaboration with diverse constituencies, recognizing our local and global responsibilities to communities, environments, and future generations.*  *Inquiry Model Inquiry is one of the major content strands of the Ed.D. Statewide program. A goal of the program is for students to develop an action inquiry stance to examine and collaboratively address authentic problems of practice in their professional work. To help students develop the skills to facilitate collaborative inquiry within their work settings, the Summer Leadership Institutes offer training in action research and support for design and completion of dissertation proposals.*  *Depending on the student’s study, each committee member scores the proposal using one of two rubrics for Action Research Dissertation Proposals or Tradition Research Dissertation Proposals.* | https://gradschool.wsu.edu/chapter-eight-c/  All doctoral programs require that a candidate prepare a dissertation. The dissertation is a scholarly, original study that represents a significant contribution to the knowledge of the chosen discipline.  *The doctoral committee is responsible for ensuring that the student has followed an appropriate format and that the content is acceptable.* |
| 1. Western Carolina University, Educational Leadership | http://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/CEAP/ceap-depts/humanserv/edd-degree-program/  The curriculum requires the completion of 52 credits, 43 of which must be taken at WCU. This will be completed by taking two core courses each semester (including summers) for 6 semesters, nine elective credits in the concentration, and the completion of a supervised disquisition.  Definition from CPED website http://cpedinitiative.org/node/705: For the disquisition, scholar practitioners work with other P-12 and community college practitioners, as well as WCU faculty to explore the problem in question. *The disquisition may take several forms. Possibilities include--but are not limited to--collaborative action research, portfolios and monographs. (Final determination of the format is made in consultation with the scholar practitioner's academic advisor.)* | https://www.wcu.edu/apply/graduate-school/students/Thesis-and-Disseration-Resources.aspx  [The Ed.D. is the only graduate degree that requires a dissertation, so guidelines refer to the disquisition; Ed.D. dissertation guide only available to students.] |
| 1. Western University, Ontario, Education | http://www.edu.uwo.ca/graduate-education/edd-fields.html?DoctorN113CF  The EdD program is composed of ten sequential, fully online courses, an eportfolio, and a final research project *(Organizational Improvement Plan major paper).* Course and program work take place year-round, allowing students to complete the program in three years. (Exceptions include parental leave, etc.)  This program values the professional knowledge that students bring to the program, and actively seeks to apply what students learn in coursework to their professional practice. As such, it is normal for applicants to be employed and providing formal and/or informal within their organization.  *To promote effective adult and online learning, and to enhance leadership in practice, the EdD program prioritizes teamwork, collaboration, and networking within and beyond the program. Students in this program may expect regular group activities, peer-to-peer learning, and synchronous (live remote) instructional sessions.*  *This program of study is a cohort model. Approximately 20 students will form each cohort. This cohort structure will provide ongoing support within the course work, enabling students to develop a professional community of practice. To ensure the integrity of the cohort model, continuous enrollment is required, and will necessitate that students complete all the required courses within the timeframe stipulated.* | http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current\_students/regulations/8.html  For each student writing a thesis, programs are required to establish a formal Thesis Advisory Committee for all thesis-based Masters and PhD students consisting of a supervisor and at least one other person. For information on SGPS Membership, please consult SGPS Membership.  *Every candidate for the Doctoral degree must complete a thesis. The thesis must indicate in what respects the investigation has increased knowledge of the subject. A candidate may not submit a thesis that has been previously accepted for a degree, but may, with the permission of the Graduate Program, incorporate material included in a previous thesis.*  SGPS accepts theses in either monograph or integrated-article format:   * *The monograph format organizes chapters around a central problem*. * *In the integrated-article format, the chapters treat discrete but related problems.* The work must have connecting materials to provide logical bridges between the different chapters, thereby achieving an integration of information.  Chapters may include published articles, submitted articles, and unpublished work in a publication format. *Although SGPS allows co-authorship of chapter materials, the candidate must be the principal author and have had a major role in the preparation and writing of the manuscripts.* Publication or acceptance for publication of research results before presentation of the thesis in no way supersedes the University's evaluation and judgment of the work during the thesis examination process.   *In the case of co-authored papers (chapters), the student must include a statement of authorship for each paper included in the thesis, indicating the nature and extent of contributions by others.* |

*Figure 1*. Components of the dissertation process shaped by programs’ epistemologies.



**Process of the Dissertation Research**

*How is it studied?*

**Format of the Dissertation Product**

*What is produced?*

**Content of the Dissertation Research**

*What is studied?*

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1. Listed members as of August 1, 2016 as per CPED’s website http://cpedinitiative.org/consortium-members [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. We presumed that these organizations would converge on having the content of the dissertation focused on problems of practice since that is a CPED principle, so we did not record policy language specifically addressing content. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Although we did not set out to collect data using Flanagan’s (1954) critical incident methodological technique, we adopt Cope and Watts’ (2000) definition of the term as “an emotional event [that represents] a period of intense feelings, both at the time and during its subsequent reflective interpretation” (p. 114). Critical incidents can be used to elucidate important, but often neglected, theoretical issues manifested in everyday life. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The “x” at the end of Latin is used in lieu of the “a” or “o” typically used in the Spanish language in order to avoid reinforcing a gender binary and instead representing a range of gender identities (see Reichard, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. All example policies can be found in Table 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Language regarding research processes and formats of final dissertation products are italicized. Bold font indicates a subheading. When program or Graduate School policies offer no additional guidance on doctoral work beyond general formatting guidelines, “N/A” is used. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)