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Preparing Doctoral Students For The Professoriate: An Ethnographic Study Of Students' Experiences In A Formal Preparatory Course

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PREPARING DOCTORAL STUDENTS FOR THE PROFESSORIATE:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES
IN A FORMAL PREPARATORY COURSE

by

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This dissertation, submitted by Mohammed Alkathiri in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Date

PERMISSION

Title   Preparing Doctoral Students for the Professoriate: An Ethnographic Study of Students' Experiences in a Formal Preparatory Course

Department Teaching and Learning

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Mohammed Alkathiri
November 21, 2016

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I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to several individuals, who have generously given me guidance and support to achieve this dissertation. First and foremost, I wish to thank my committee for the valuable feedback, support, and inspiration. I am sincerely thankful to Dr. Shafer, Dr. Ozaki, and Dr. Jensen for their time and the much needed support and encouragement that they offered to me; this was very much appreciated. A special thanks to my great advisor, Dr. Olson, who guided, assisted and encouraged me through difficult times. She was, and will always be, a great model of the distinguished professor, that she is.

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To my beloved mother, for literally everything.
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of doctoral students relating to the factors that influence their understanding, preparation and attitude toward the professoriate. Participants were enrolled in a formal course that was designed to prepare them for the professoriate. Acquainted with critical realist ontology, the researcher argued that it was necessary to investigate the understanding and preparation of doctoral students in order to better clarify the complex experiences that underlie their practices of making meaning and maintaining balance and well-being in the professoriate. The study was conducted using an ethnographic case study approach with multiple data collection methods that included observation, semi-structured interviews, member checking, and examination of related documents. Findings revealed themes regarding the opportunities and issues that doctoral students perceive with respect to their professoriate readiness and well-being.

Keywords: doctoral education, doctoral student preparation, the professoriate

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is the lifeline of any country aspiring toward development and prosperity. As we examine the history of American higher education, we can see that the institution underwent many critiques concerning the effectiveness of its structure (Austin, 2002a; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Nyquist, 2002; Thelin, 2011). Therefore, universities are urged to undertake intentional steps to prepare their graduates and equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to address today's challenges. Furthermore, universities seek well-prepared faculty who are able to promote these efforts to improve the quality of their graduates.

In recent years, American higher education has been criticized for the inadequate preparation of doctoral students who desire careers in academia (Austin, 2002a; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Cullingford, 2002; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). Scholars who discussed trends in higher education for the 21st century sought to encourage change in doctoral programs by rethinking current structure and purpose to better meet graduate needs in the 21st century (Nyquist, 2002; Thelin, 2011). As such, reforming doctoral student preparation experiences and elevating the quality of future faculty preparedness to work at the university level is now one of the main concerns for stakeholders in American higher education (Bieber & Worley, 2006; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010).

Challenging Higher Education for Doctoral Graduates

The contemporary system of higher education is complex and challenging. For example: "Quick growth in student populations, competition for resources, heavy teaching loads, and a lack of resources are often cited challenges" (Ouellett, 2010, p. 13). The expectations of both higher education institutions and academics are changing and increasing (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Cullingford, 2002; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). Faculty members need to be prepared with skills that allow them to understand the changes occurring, and skills that help them address new expectations and pressures (Austin, 2002a; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Bieber & Worley, 2006).

The role of professor has changed over time, and has become more demanding and uncertain (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2014; Ouellett, 2010). Further, there is a potential impact of new budget and policy requirements upon the faculty members and the institution (Austin, 2002a; Ouellett, 2010). At the same time, doctoral education itself has been influenced to an increasing extent by global competition, diverse population, new technology, national economic challenges, and the inability to take on a vision of doctoral education as a public instead of as a private good (Blaess, Hollywood, & Grant, 2012; Finkelstein, 2003; Thelin, 2011; Trower, Austin, & Sorcinelli, 2001; Ouellett, 2010). Calls to rethink faculty roles and make changes to meet the changing and increasing expectations of the 21st century are not new (Austin, 2002a; Cullingford, 2002; Lovett, 1993). According to Lovett (1993), "Reinvention of faculty roles and responsibilities to meet society's changing needs has been a constant theme in American higher education" (p. 26). A new model of doctoral education is needed to respond to the changing needs of society as well as to replace the old model that is

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"inadequate for the challenges confronting the professoriate of the 21st century" (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, & Weibl, 2000, p. 3).

Preparation for the Professoriate

Taking into consideration the societal demand for new faculty, institutions are making serious financial investments by hiring new faculty, while new faculty are dealing with critical decisions and personal sacrifices (Stupnisky, Weaver-Hightower, & Kartoshkina, 2015). Approximately 10% of doctoral graduates are able to obtain jobs in universities similar to ones from which they graduated (Gaff & Lambert, 1996). On the other hand, many doctoral graduates seek appointments that are not in academia, or at institutions that are different than the ones from which they attained their degrees (Austin, 2002b; Hoffer, Welch, Williams, Hess, Webber, Lisek, et al., 2005). Among doctoral graduates who obtained a position in academia, a large number of them feel unprepared for the required roles and expectations in higher education (Austin, 2002a; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Meacham, 2002; Sorcinelli, 1994). There is a gap between their doctoral preparation and job expectations (Bieber & Worley, 2006). Moreover, preparation that has been provided to new faculty is considered inadequate (Bieber & Worley, 2006; Cullingford, 2002; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). Many studies of new faculty mentioned the need for improved graduate preparation, with a realistic view of the nature of faculty work (Austin, 2002a; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin 2000; Trower et al., 2001). At the same time, it is urgent to have doctoral student preparation that responds also to the new trends of different career options for doctoral graduates.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies addressed the need for improved doctoral student preparation for the professoriate (Austin, 2002a; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Gaff et al., 2000; Rice et al., 2000; Trower et al., 2001). Researchers have contributed to a rich body of knowledge related to academic work, faculty success, and developing faculty members for their roles and responsibilities. However, preparatory courses designed as part of the doctoral academic curriculum seem to receive less attention. Rosensitto (1999) found that a high percentage of faculty (over 80%) supported the idea of including formal curricula designed to prepare doctoral students for teaching roles. The participants in Rosensitto's (1999) study were full and part-time faculty in four disciplines from all institutional types. Another recent study by Robinson and Hope (2013) confirmed a need for doctoral programs to include formal curricula designed to prepare doctoral students for teaching in higher education. Although both studies only addressed the need for incorporating teaching into a formal doctoral curriculum, the high percentage of supporters may suggest that formal courses are an acceptable strategy to prepare doctoral students for teaching and other roles as well. However, curricula in doctoral education have not changed a great deal in terms of preparing students for teaching roles (Robinson & Hope, 2013), as well as for other roles (Austin, 2002a).

According to Austin (2002b), "In the coming decade, various pressures on higher education institutions may encourage serious rethinking of faculty work and the related question of how to prepare new faculty members" (p. 116). Providing doctoral students with formal learning opportunities (i.e., formal curriculum, and formal training) related to

the professoriate that address faculty challenges as well as roles and expectations might be the answer to Austin's (2002b) question. Thus, this study adopted a qualitative approach to investigate doctoral student preparation for the professoriate through a formal course entitled "The Professoriate" (within the context of a doctoral academic program in higher education).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to study doctoral students' perceptions of factors that influenced their understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate. These perceptions were gathered from students who enrolled in a formal course (entitled The Professoriate). The researcher aimed to study participant experiences in preparation to work as professors, as well as the impact of the course on their views of the professoriate. The researcher investigated the value of student preparatory experiences in two doctoral academic programs in order to offer relevant explanations with respect to students' approaches to understand the professoriate, construct meaning, and maintain balance and well-being.

Many studies addressed the need for improved graduate preparation (Austin, 2002a; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Rice et al., 2000; Trower et al., 2001); however, the study of doctoral student experiences in preparation courses, designed as part of the doctoral academic programs, has received less attention. The goal of this study was to contribute empirical research to the field of higher education regarding doctoral students and their preparation for the professoriate through a formal course that was part of their doctoral program.

Conceptual Framework

In the past 15 years, higher education has rapidly changed in terms of its demographic, expectations and environment (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; O'Meara, Terosky, & Neumann, 2008; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Universities and colleges are facing large numbers of faculty retirements (Austin, 2002a), and the number of new faculty entering academia is increasing (Stupnisky et al., 2015). Many researchers indicated that the career of a professor is challenging and stressful and might negatively affect one's productivity, satisfaction, and overall well-being (Catano et al., 2007; Gillespie et al., 2001; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Stupnisky et al., 2015).

Furthermore, it is critical for new faculty success to have certain abilities that include the ability to understand job expectations, have work and personal balances, and maintain collegiality. This is shown by many studies (Austin, Sorcinelli & McDaniels, 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Mullen & Forbes, 2000; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008). Therefore, learning about the preparation opportunities for doctoral students who are seeking to join the professoriate is of significant importance. According to Freitas (as cited in Takahashi et al., 2014), "the academy is today a place of risk to health" (p. 215). The consideration of risks and challenges that new professors might face when they step into academia explains the need to conduct this study. In addition, the study sought to explain the significance or non-significance of providing doctoral students with formal learning opportunities about the professoriate, in general, and their future roles, in particular, before they finish a doctoral program. According to Austin (2002a), "We

should be greatly concerned with how we—as individuals, as members of the faculty of departments and institutions ... —prepare the next generation of faculty members" (p. 120). The current study, adopting a qualitative ethnographic case study approach, investigated doctoral student preparation for the professoriate within the context of doctoral academic programs in higher education.

The researcher studied the experiences of doctoral students enrolled in a formal course entitled "The Professoriate." The Professoriate course was designed to assist students to make meaning of their future career as professors, and to support their well-being by learning how to maintain balance between life and work. The researcher investigated the significance of taking this course by doctoral students, and how taking such a course might support their preparation for future challenging roles in higher education. Also, other themes that emerged were investigated (i.e., perceived challenges facing doctoral students in their studies; perceptions of the professoriate; perceived concerns with regard to working in the professoriate; students' preparatory practices and preparatory opportunities available to them).

Research Questions

Within this context, using ethnography as an interpretivist methodology (Glesne, 2011) was best suited for the purpose of the study. Thus, informed by Bhaskar's (1978) concepts of critical realism underpinning the conceptual theory of this research, the overall goal of the study was to develop an understanding of doctoral students' perceptions of factors that influenced their understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate. The primary research question was:

- What are factors that influence doctoral students' understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate?

To gather more specific information, the following sub-questions were explored:

- How do doctoral students formally and informally prepare themselves for the professoriate?

- How does a formal course such as "The Professoriate" influence the understanding and preparation of doctoral students toward the professoriate?

- What other concerns influence doctoral students' attitudes with respect to their future positions in higher education?

Theoretical Framework

This research study was conducted using ethnography and guided by the ontological meta-theory of critical realism. Because the foundation for the critical realism theory is ontological, it presupposes that reality exists independently of whether it is observed or experienced. From a critical realist perspective, reality cannot be completely perceived, because one's perception of reality is influenced and formed by one's theoretical beliefs and interests (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). Although the available discourses always intervene with how one realizes the world, empirical evidences can be attained from those approachable aspects of the world (Houston, 2001; McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Sayer, 2004). Critical realism informs empirical research through an unconstrained approach of thinking and understanding, while allowing for construction of particular theories that emerge from the topic being studied (Cruickshank, 2007; Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002; Sayer, 2004). In other words,

"For critical realists, the ultimate goal of research is not to identify generalizable laws (positivism) or to identify the lived experience or beliefs of social actors (interpretivism); it is to develop deeper levels of explanation and understanding" (McEvoy & Richards, 2006, p. 69). This research sought to investigate the understanding and preparation of doctoral students to better clarify the complex experiences that underlie their practices of constructing meaning and maintaining balance and well-being in the professoriate.

In *A Realist Theory of Science*, Bhaskar argues that "there is an ontological distinction between scientific laws and patterns of events" (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 12). An ontological distinction exists between three "domains" of reality: the real, the actual, and the empirical (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 56). The *real* domain is relevant to the underpinning philosophy of the current research where "structures" (physical and social) and "mechanisms" (behavioral and social functioning) generate "events" that make up a phenomenon (Bhaskar, 1978; McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Sayer, 2004). In other words, an action or condition, which might be visible or invisible, direct or indirect, can result in change and produce "tendencies." By examining results or effects of an action or condition, one would be able to understand and explain a phenomenon (Houston, 2001; McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Sayer, 2004). In this research, the tendencies are doctoral student differential preparation, understanding, and approaches concerning the professoriate. The second domain of reality, according to Bhaskar (1978), is *actual*,

REAL DOMAIN	ACTUAL DOMAIN	EMPIRICAL DOMAIN
An action or condition (visible or invisible, direct or indirect) can result in change and produce tendencies that can -potentially- generate a phenomenon.	The phenomenon occurs whether or not experienced.	The phenomenon *is* experienced. Development for a form of understanding about the phenomenon takes place/can be pursued.

Figure 1. The Ontological Domains of Reality in Critical Realism.

where all events whether or not experienced ("activated") are happening. Finally, the *empirical* domain is when the phenomenon is experienced, and a form of understanding about it can be developed. In Figure 1, the three domains of reality in critical realism are illustrated.

According to Bhaskar (1998), tendencies in the *real* world are evidence for an existing reality that is independent of one's perceptions. In other words, reality exists whether or not a person is aware of it. Explaining understandings about the tendencies can be achieved through careful recording of what is seen in the *empirical* domain and recognizing all events that are happening in the *actual* world (Bhaskar, 1998). Further, understanding tendencies can reveal the underlying meanings in the *real* world. In this research study, the underlying meanings are the basis for determining whether or not a course on the professoriate is meeting doctoral student needs to become better prepared for the professoriate.

Consistent with those perspectives concerning the nature of reality, Scott (2000) proposed that, "the essential ontological relation which educational researchers need to examine is the relationship between structure and agency or enablement and constraint" (p. 3). This research study explored the way in which the structure (i.e., a formal preparation course in a doctoral program) and agency (i.e., doctoral students' preparation) have an effect on each other. Although qualitative research is inductive in nature (Janesick, 1998), "there are inductive and deductive elements involved in all types of data analysis" (Scott, 1996, p. 60). According to Wilson and Chaddha (2010), ethnographic studies can be "neither strictly deductive nor inductive, but represent a combination of both" (p. 29). This research study had deductive and inductive elements, as it was theoretically grounded on critical realist ontology (deductive), and it aimed to develop understanding based on the collection and analysis of data (inductive).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although the two terms "faculty work" and "professoriate" are very related to each other, they do not refer to the same thing throughout this research. Instead, the term, "faculty work," is referring to specific roles of a professor, such as a researcher, a teacher, and an advisor. The same use of the term was found in the literature to describe roles and types of work that professors do (e.g., Austin, 2002b; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2014; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). On the other hand, the "professoriate" was used in this study as a broader term referring to the post of a professor.

Historical Development of the Professoriate

The ways in which professors pursue their work, and the principles and values that underpin what they do, have been studied for the past several decades. The nature of the professoriate has developed bringing new responsibilities and challenges for early career professors. In the 1960s and 1970s, the professoriate focused on scholars and their research work (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Faculty success in the professoriate was realized by their success in research and publication. Ultimately, research was the assumptive standard for faculty work, and was later expanded to include teaching and service.

In *Creating the Future of Faculty Development: Learning from the Past,*

Understanding the Present, Sorcinelli et al. (2006) labeled five stages of faculty development: scholar, teacher, developer, learner, and networker. Although the suggested labels concerned faculty development, they also reflected the change in the role of faculty and the nature of working in the professoriate.

The first stage of faculty development began in the mid-1950s into the early 1960s. Sorcinelli et al. (2006) labeled this stage as the Age of the Scholar, where the universities utilized the scholarly work of faculty as the primary indicator for success in the professoriate. Teaching and service were not of apparent interest for universities or people in the professoriate. At this time, doctoral programs seldom provided any formal training in teaching.

The period from the mid-1960s through the 1970s was labeled as the Age of the Teacher. Sorcinelli et al. (2006) indicated that the professoriate developed to include excellence in teaching during this period of time. Because universities had focused primarily on research and scholarly work, they lacked the resources to improve and support their faculty members in teaching.

A significant shift toward a new understanding of the professoriate took place when the foundation of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) was developed in 1974 (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). The POD was concerned with educational development in higher education, which became an important feature of that stage (Ouellett, 2010).

The Age of the Developer came about in the 1980s (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Progress occurred regarding the work and nature of the professoriate. Universities took

an essential role in supporting their faculty development by establishing educational units and considering new approaches to teaching, especially in undergraduate programs.

Sorcinelli et al. (2006) called the 1990s the Age of the Learner. During this period, interest in teaching as part of the professoriate developed to require more knowledge and skills regarding student learning. At this time, teaching through the pedagogies of student-centered learning became fundamental for success in the professoriate.

The 2000s were described as the Age of the Networker. According to Sorcinelli et al. (2006), this stage has increasingly diversified the professoriate, student body, and pedagogies. The expansion of instructional technologies and assessment was challenging. Professors are now expected to serve institutional, professional, and international needs (Ouellett, 2010).

Although faculty work involved research, teaching, and service, more roles and responsibilities have become part of the faculty workload (Fitzgerald, 2014; Ouellett, 2010). According to Ouellett (2010),

> Today, the demands placed upon faculty members and the complexity of their roles and responsibilities continue to evolve at an astonishing pace. Consequently, our understanding of what constitutes 'faculty development' and our language to articulate these changes in perspective will continue to evolve to reflect new conceptualizations (p. 8).

The idea of the professor as only a scholar who focuses on conducting research has changed, maybe permanently, to include more roles and responsibilities. This change in

the professoriate raises important questions regarding the ways in which doctoral students prepare themselves to work and get involved in higher education.

The Professoriate in the Current Time

The history just described shows that the universities in the United States are committed to supporting their faculty members' development and success in their careers (Ouellett, 2010). However, the professoriate went through different stages where new concepts, responsibilities and challenges appeared. According to Lee (2010), "higher education has become increasingly global, exportable, competitive, and tied to national agendas" (p. 22). Recent trends in higher education make faculty work more challenging.

Trends Affecting the Professoriate

Faculty have new responsibilities as student enrollment has increased and the student body has become more diverse (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Lee, 2010; Ouellett, 2010). Compared to the past, there are more nontraditional, international, lower-income, LGBT, and first-generation college students (Lee, 2010; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Faculty in general, and newly hired faculty in particular, are facing demanding challenges that affect their work-life balance, health, and job/life satisfaction (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008).

Many studies attempted to identify the challenges that face the higher education system and affect faculty lives. There are different "factors" facing the environment for higher education institutions, and changing the expectations of professors (Austin, 2002a; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2103; Lee, 2010). More than a decade ago, Austin (2002a)

highlighted eight of "the most salient" forces that affect higher education. According to
Austin (2002a):

> strong forces are changing higher education: public skepticism and demands for
> accountability, fiscal constraint, the rise of the information society and new
> technologies, the increasing diversity of students, new educational institutions, the
> increasing emphasis on learning over teaching, the emergence of postmodern
> ways of knowing, and dramatic shifts in the nature of faculty appointments (p.
> 122).

Similar challenges appeared to continue in later years shaping the current professoriate
(Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Gappa et al., 2007; Lee, 2010; O'Meara et al., 2008; Schuster
& Finkelstein, 2006; Romero, 2014). For example, Lee (2010) identified seven
"developments in higher education" that led to changes in programs and practices (p. 30).
The developments that are shaping today's higher education include:

1. Learning technologies, such as learning platforms and online courses and
   programs;
2. Globalization which reflects student diversification and the
   competitiveness of higher education;
3. Development of the assessment field and increasing emphasis on the
   scholarship of teaching and learning;
4. Accreditation and quality requirements;
5. Institution involvement in wider communities;
6. Decreased parent involvement; and

7. Increasing number of part-time positions (Lee, 2010, p. 30).

Currently, the professoriate is faced with many challenges and changes that raise this question: are faculty members aware of and prepared for such challenges? According to Austin (2002a), "the significant point is that the forces for change have direct implications for the kinds of lives and work that those entering the academy as faculty now and in the near future will experience" (p. 121). In the next section, a discussion of how these changes affect faculty work and well-being in the professoriate is presented.

Challenges in the Professoriate

Scholars reported a decrease in job satisfaction and an increase in workload among faculty due to feelings of demanding pressure concerning teaching, publishing, accountability, and tenure process (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Rice & Sorcinelli, 2002; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015). Earlier and more recent research on "new faculty" and "faculty success" revealed that faculty experience higher levels of stress, demand on time, and pressure to fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008). Moreover, faculty who served for more years in academia had lower job satisfaction (Stupnisky et al., 2015).

Faculty job-stress increases and satisfaction decreases over time, despite the rewards and benefits one may attain (Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Sorcinelli, 1994).

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Specifically, the work lives of new faculty are more likely to be associated with an increase in stress within the first few years. In a longitudinal study done by Sorcinelli (1994), 33% of new faculty in the first year of the study considered their work life very stressful. In year five of the same study, the percentage of faculty who reported their work life as very stressful increased to 71%. Factors that contributed to new faculty stress include: "time constraints in research and teaching; lack of collegial relations; inadequate feedback, recognition, and reward; unrealistic expectations; insufficient resources; and the lack of balance between work and personal life" (Sorcinelli, 1994, p. 474). Stupnisky et al. (2015) conducted a mixed methods study to explore the factors that contribute to the success of newly hired faculty members. The researchers found four main factors that affect new faculty success in the professoriate. The factors include the ability to have clear job expectations, to develop positive collegiality with others, to mantain balance (personally and professionally), and to work in a location close to family. These factors have direct and indirect effects on faculty success, job and life satisfaction, health, and level of stress. Female faculty were found to have more issues related to personal balance, health, and life satisfaction. The study also revealed an important finding concerning working in the professoriate for a longer time. According to Stupnisky et al. (2015), "faculty with more years of service had lower job satisfaction and perceived departmental support" (p. 368). Stupnisky et al.'s study confirms the findings of other early studies that also found the job satisfaction of professors decreases over years (Stupnisky et al., 2015).

The complex and changing environment of higher education institutions imply that there are many challenges facing current professors and graduate students expected to enter the professoriate. "Quick growth in student populations, competition for resources, heavy teaching loads, and a lack of resources are often cited challenges" (Ouellett, 2010, p. 13). Sorcinelli et al. (2006) conducted a comprehensive research study to identify the main challenges that faculty members experience in higher education institutions. Within a range of reported challenges, the top five were as follows:

1. Maintaining balance concerning complex faculty roles;

2. Ability to assess teaching and learning for diverse students;

3. Influence of technology in higher education;

4. Addressing part-time faulty concerns; and

5. Leadership development for chairpersons and at institutional level (pp. 104–105).

Although current professors face these challenges, we can expect the same challenges will be faced by graduate students when they start a career in the professoriate. The nature of academic work has never been more challenging, which makes the professoriate a challenging career that requires purposeful preparation to align with a person's needs, activities, and plans.

Challenges Facing the Faculty

The environments, resources, and public expectations of the professoriate have been changing for decades (Gappa et al., 2007; O'Meara et al., 2008; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Parts of this change in the professoriate led to

difficulties and unforeseen issues that faculty have had to experience. A great deal of literature has been published that reflects faculty experience in the professoriate as containing critical challenges, such as: unclear expectations, lack of work-family balance, lack of fiscal resources, problematic tenure and promotion systems, demoralizing campus climate and work environment, and lack of control over demanding workload (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gappa et al., 2007; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; O'Meara et al., 2008; Romero, 2014; Rosser, 2005; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008).

One of the major challenges that faculty face in higher education is the change in public expectations of higher education, as well as public skepticism about the work of a professor (Austin, 2002a; Romero, 2014). Austin (2002a) was prescient when she predicted that, "new expectations and pressures from the broader society characterize the current environment for higher education institutions and will likely continue into the future" (p. 121). The public skepticism seemed to specifically focus on the faculty, which creates a negative image of them. As a result, faculty are assumed to have no control over their work or do not seriously consider their roles and expectations (Austin, 2002a). Furthermore, higher education institutions seem to be unclear about what to expect of their professors. Many scholars found that faculty are struggling due to uncertain job expectations and confusing explanations of their responsibilities within their institutions (Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Mullen & Forbes, 2000; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Rice et al., 2000; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trower & Gallagher,

2008; Trotman & Brown, 2005). Public criticism, especially in legislative discussions, seems to continue on certain topics such as: the quality of undergraduate education; more efficient allocation of money and resources; graduates' preparation for the workplace; and how faculty spend their time (Austin, 2002a; Romero, 2014).

Another major challenge that appears to have a direct effect on the professoriate is fiscal challenge (Fitzgerald, 2014). In many cases, universities are required to meet more expectations, despite the fiscal constraints they have (Austin, 2002a). Therefore, as Austin (2002a) stated, "faculty members are expected to control costs, engage in entrepreneurial activities, and respond to multiple demands with diminishing resources" (p. 121).

The expansion of new technologies is a third challenge affecting the scope of faculty work (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Romero, 2014). The new technologies have allowed for more access to education and shifted an industrial society to an information society (Austin, 2002a). As a result, universities have adopted new technologies to provide courses and programs, and forced faculty to work with them.

A fourth challenge in the professoriate of today is the growing diversity of the student body (Austin, 2002a; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Romero, 2014). Higher education is facing "an increasing diversity in terms of students' backgrounds, expectations, needs, and motivations" (Austin, 2002a, p. 121). The role of professor becomes more demanding in terms of meeting student needs and expectations. Moreover, the globalization of higher education demands faculty to interact with an international agenda and competition (Blaess et al., 2012).

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A fifth challenge that affects faculty work is the great emphasis on teaching and learning processes and student learning outcomes (Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). For example, accrediting bodies have changed guidelines for reaccreditation to include student learning and outcomes that required program review and plans for improving teaching quality. This shift in higher education caused a change in professorial roles to involve more emphasis on learning and assessment than in the past (Austin, 2002a; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). This emphasis reflects higher expectations in general from the public (Austin, 2002a).

Finally, there are changes in the faculty body that reflect further challenges in the professoriate. According to Austin and Sorcinelli (2013), "Nationally, the number of non-tenure-track faculty members and part-time faculty members is steadily increasing, particularly as universities and colleges implement cost-cutting strategies" (p. 88). Pre-tenured faculty are significantly more tense and stressed in comparison to tenured faculty (Hill, 2009). Lee (2010) described the increase in part-time instructors as "an outsourcing" in higher education of the faculty roles. The part-time faculty and adjunct faculty members are "often under-acknowledged members of the academic community" (Ouellett, 2010, p. 11). This change in faculty body indeed requires rethinking of full-time and tenure-track faculty work (Austin, 2002a; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Hill, 2009; Ouellett, 2010; Stupnisky et al., 2015), as well as reconsidering the efforts intended to prepare doctoral students for the professoriate.

Last but not least, career choices that are available for graduates should be considered when preparing doctoral students. According to Austin (2002a), doctoral

graduates "will enter situations where they will be expected to be 'complete scholars' and others situations that call for the 'differentiated academic'" (p. 124). These pressing issues in higher education call attention to provide better preparation opportunities for doctoral students to be prepared on related topics. Ouellett (2010) touched on the topics that should be considered in doctoral student preparation programs.

> For example, with new and junior faculty members, we now see an increased demand for better balance between work and life, support for the challenges of dual-career couples, and an acknowledgment of the demands of parenting as well as taking care of aging parents (Ouellett, 2010, p. 10).

Topics are not solely focused on faculty roles and expectations inside the institution, but also include other topics that may have an impact on a future professor's life.

Doctoral Student Preparation

According to Hoffer et al. (2005), the average time for doctoral degree completion is ten years in all disciplines. Approximately 57% of doctoral graduates join the professoriate, and another 35% of graduates work at post-doctoral positions (Hoffer et al., 2005). Interestingly, more than 50% of doctoral graduates have more interest in teaching than in research (Gaff et al., 2000; Golde & Dore, 2004). Nonetheless, many doctoral graduates could feel unprepared for the broad nature of roles and expectations of their new positions in academia related to the academic environment of the institutions where they accept positions that are different than those from which they graduated (Austin, 2002a; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994). Furthermore, the lack of formal

training given to new faculty means they must "hit the ground running" in order to perform the demanding roles and expectations of professor (Whitt, 1991).

According to Austin and Sorcinelli (2103), "various factors affecting higher education have important implications for faculty members and therefore for the abilities and skills to address through faculty development" (p. 86). Faculty members are expected to fulfill various roles that include teaching, research and service (Ouellett, 2010). These roles require faculty to hold more responsibilities such as new course preparation, advisor, grant writer, dissertation chair, committee member, and service roles. In addition, doctoral graduates are expected to develop a wider set of skills and knowledge that is beyond their disciplinary knowledge (Melin & Janson, 2006; Nyquist, 2002; Sorcinelli, 1994). According to Melin and Janson (2006), "industry and public organizations both need highly advanced experts with scientific experience, but also with managerial and administrative skills, as well as cultural and social competence" (p. 116). Austin and McDaniels (2006) proposed four categories for competencies that are critical to successful doctoral student development in the 21st century: "(1) conceptual understandings; (2) knowledge and skills in key areas of faculty work; (3) interpersonal skills; and (4) professional attitudes and habits" (p. 417). It is critical to assist doctoral students to acquire the knowledge and skills that are important for their success in the professoriate. In addition, the high rate of attrition is a decade-long serious issue in doctoral education that would also support a reconsideration of the doctoral education structure and doctoral student preparation (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Kim & Otts, 2010).

Approximately 50% of doctoral students drop out before completing their

doctoral degrees (Bagaka et al., 2015; Devine & Hunter, 2016; Wao, 2010). Studies have

indicated that the attrition rates for doctoral students range from 33% to 70% (Kim &

Otts, 2010; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). In addition, there is an increase in time that

doctoral students in the field of education take before they complete their doctoral

studies, when compared to students in other fields of study (Wao, 2010). In response to

the concern about the increase in time to complete doctoral degrees, many studies have

examined factors that contribute to this trend of attrition (Devine & Hunter, 2016; Maher,

Ford, & Thompson, 2004). Many factors described in the literature (e.g., academic and

social integration, economic integration, advising relationships, and personal attributes)

correspond to the challenges that adults experience in daily life. Adults are challenged to

discover, analyze and integrate information from diverse sources, assess competing

interests, communicate and collaborate with diverse people, and make important

decisions (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). According to Gardner (2008),

"Socialization has been shown to be a determining factor in doctoral student success and

retention" (p. 125). Literature articulates that there is a positive impact of better

preparing doctoral students on reducing the attrition rate (Bagaka et al., 2015; Gardner,

2008). Moreover, there are other benefits for preparing doctoral students for the

professoriate to students, institution, higher education and society (Austin, 2002b; Ferron,

Gaff, & Clayton-Pedersen, 2002; Gaff & Lambert, 1996; Lechuga, 2011; Nyquist, 2002).

Strategies to Prepare Doctoral Graduates for the Professoriate

The literature on doctoral student experience reflects a great interest in studying preparatory strategies. Socialization and mentoring are two of the most known preparatory strategies for students who desire a position in the professoriate. The following two sections present a brief review of these two strategies which have been adopted in preparatory programs and initiatives.

Socialization. Many studies considered socialization to be critical for doctoral student academic success (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Gopaul, 2011; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008). Bragg (1976) was one of the earlier scholars who studied doctoral student socialization, and her work, *The Socialization Process in Higher Education*, is cited by numerous studies. According to Bragg (1976), there is an intended outcome of the socialization process that is "the acquisition of the specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms, and interests of the profession that the individual wishes to practice" (p. 6). Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) proposed a similar definition, and defined four interactive stages for socialization process to graduate schools that include Anticipatory, Formal, Informal, and Personal.

Students start the first stage of socialization process (Anticipatory) when entering graduate school and seeking information about the profession. The second stage (Formal) takes place when students interact with faculty members and senior students. "Communication at this stage is informative through course material ... and integrative through faculty and student interactions" (Gardner, 2008, p. 128). The third stage

(Informal) occurs when students form an understanding of the roles and responsibilities, and act in response to them. The final stage of socialization (Personal) is when "individual and social roles, personalities and social structures become fused and the role is internalized" (Weidman, et al. 2001, p. 14). At this last stage, students become able to identify and recognize who they are, and what roles and goals they want to be achieving. Yet, student commitment is required throughout the process at all of the stages.

Through socialization to the graduate school environment, students become familiar with their professional roles (Austin, 2002b; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner, 2008, 2010b; Weidman et al., 2001). Bragg (1976) identified three types of interaction between a student and his or her environment: (a) student-educational setting interactions; (b) student-faculty interactions; (c) student-student in the program interactions. All three types of interaction are necessary for students to achieve the intended outcomes of socialization. Also, the faculty role is essential in the student socialization process (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2008, 2010b; Weidman et al., 2001) which includes the interaction with students in the courses that faculty teach (Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2008).

Purposeful socialization can take place in courses where faculty have primary roles in the process. According to Bragg (1976): "The faculty members transmit their attitudes, values, and behavioral norms both formally –through the structures they establish and through the courses they teach– and informally –through individual advising and supervising of study and through social activities" (pp. 19-20). There are also other factors for the success of student socialization to the graduate environment that

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include understandable learning objectives and clear assessment criteria for courses and programs (Gardner, 2010a; Gopaul, 2011). The current study investigated the socialization practices and experiences of doctoral students that occurred during The Professoriate course as well as within their doctoral program.

Mentorships. Mentorship is another strategy to prepare doctoral students for faculty roles and responsibilities that was studied by many scholars. According to Smith (2007), mentoring is "a particular mode of learning wherein the mentor not only supports the mentee, but also challenges them productively so that progress is made" (p.277). Within graduate education, the use of mentoring originally was intended to prepare doctoral students for scholarly aspects of the professoriate, yet its use has expanded to include preparation for other professional roles and responsibilities (Bagaka et al., 2015; Dobie, Smith, & Robins, 2010). Mentorship for doctoral students is "a method of socialization utilized within graduate study programs" (Bagaka et al., 2015, p. 325). Mentorships facilitate student socialization to the professoriate norms, values, habits and procedures (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Dobie et al., 2010; Lechuga, 2011; Weidman et al., 2001).

Mentors can be faculty members, co-workers, or equal peers (Chandler, Kram, & Yip, 2011; Smith, 2007). The development of the whole person is the desired outcome for mentorships (Smith, 2007). Mentors should provide both personal and professional support to students (Lechuga, 2011). Relationships between students and mentors can be developed informally, or assigned formally by a program (Bagaka et al., 2015; Chandler et al., 2011). Scholars have asked for more research that identifies and compares the

impact of formal and informal mentoring (Chandler et al., 2011). The ideal relationship (formal and informal) between students and mentors is one that: mutual, reciprocal, beneficial, and responsive to the student needs (Dobie et al., 2010). According to Lechuga (2011), "faculty-graduate student mentoring relationships are a significant aspect of the graduate education experience that foster student success" (p. 757). Moreover, the quality of mentoring relationships has an impact on student personal, choice and career developments (Dobie et al., 2010), and will positively benefit the mentor as well (Lechuga, 2011).

It is important to notice that research has found that mentoring may also discourage doctoral students to pursue a career in the professoriate (Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006). In a longitudinal study, Paglis et al. (2006) found that students were less committed to pursue careers in a research university (as their mentors), because "observing the pressures and conflicting demands of their advisers left them questioning whether it was possible to achieve work/life balance as a faculty member in a research university" (p. 471). Therefore, doctoral students should be presented with realistic views of the professoriate and challenges they may confront, and also be assisted with skills and strategies that may help them cope with the expected challenges. This current research study aimed to study doctoral student experiences taking a course that addressed professorial challenges and to provide strategies to overcome such challenges.

Initiatives to Prepare Doctoral Graduates for the Professoriate

Preparing Future Faculty program. At the national level, there have been initiatives that aimed to better prepare doctoral students for the professoriate (Gaff et al.,

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2000; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). Interestingly, "little research or empirical evidence

to document problems in doctoral education or the need for improvement" was available

prior to such initiatives, especially Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program (Gaff, 2002,

p. 63). The PFF program strived "to transform the way aspiring faculty members are

prepared for their careers, moving toward an education that is informed by the kinds of

responsibilities faculty members actually have in a variety of institutions" (Gaff et al.,

2000, p. 9). According to Gaff et al. (2000), PFF went through four phases between 1993

and 2002. The first phase of PFF took place between 1993 and 1997, which aimed to

develop new program models for preparing faculty. The second phase was between 1997

and 2000. During the second phase, the goal was to institutionalize the new models of

faculty preparation. After that, the third phase was begun, supported by the National

Science Foundation, to implement PFF program in science and mathematics departments.

Later, the fourth phase of PFF started (1999-2002) to include more departments such as

humanities and social sciences. Ultimately, the PFF program attempted to remodel the

doctoral education to provide students with more practical opportunities that include: "(a)

increasingly independent and varied teaching responsibilities, (b) opportunities to grow

and develop as a researcher, and (c) opportunities to serve the department and campus"

(Gaff et al., 2000, p. 24).

     Re-envisioning the Ph.D. initiative. Another initiative entitled "Re-envisioning

the Ph.D." was initiated to encourage national conversations concerning doctoral

education outcomes in the 21st century (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). The initiative

aimed to address many issues in doctoral education such as the length of time to degree

completion, lack of diversity in the Ph.D. student body, unprepared graduates for wide options of professional opportunities, lack of interdisciplinary work in doctoral education, and lack of graduate commitment to the service of the community (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). The initiative revealed conflicting views among stakeholders about purpose, enrollment and training in doctoral education (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). Also, the Re-envisioning the Ph.D. Initiative provided resources and recommendations for the most effective practices to improve doctoral education (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000).

Graduate Education Initiative. A more recent initiative to improve the Ph.D. program's structure in humanities and social sciences was the Graduate Education Initiative (GEI) launched and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Ehrenberg, Zuckerman, Groen, & Brucker, 2009). GEI also aimed to investigate and solve the issues of the high attrition rates and extended time to degree completion (which are considered indicators for the lack of doctoral education effectiveness, especially in these fields) (Ehrenberg et al., 2009). Ten universities were invited by GEI to participate in the initiative (Ehrenberg et al., 2009). Several departments were asked to implement changes into their doctoral programs, such as clarifying expectations, conducting formal group advising, providing profession preparation, and changing coursework requirements (Ehrenberg et al., 2009). In addition, "the designers of the GEI encouraged departments to establish incentive structures that would promote students' timely progress through requirements they had to complete to earn the Ph.D." (p. 16). As a result, the impact of GEI on the attrition rates and time to degree-completion were "modest" (Ehrenberg et al., 2009, p. 28). Ehrenberg et al. (2009) stated that "although the GEI designers had the

explicit goals of reducing times to degree completion and attrition rates, it is not self-evident that both could be pursued at once, nor that they are consistent with promoting students' later academic careers" (p. 28).

Initiatives' outcomes on doctoral graduate preparedness. The outcomes from doctoral student preparation initiatives are questioned. Some initiatives such as Re-envisioning the Ph.D. appeared to have little practical impact, although they served a good cause by addressing issues in doctoral education and encouraging conversations about these issues (Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). On the other hand, more practical initiatives such as PFF and GEI were limited to a small number of universities as well as students at those participating universities (Ehrenberg et al., 2009; Gaff & Lambert, 1996). For example, only ten institutions participated in GEI (Ehrenberg et al., 2009). Funding was the main challenge that forced PFF to have a limited number of participants (Gaff & Lambert, 1996).

Conclusion

Doctoral graduates should be able to understand the faculty roles, responsibilities and expectations (Austin, 2002a; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gaff et al., 2000; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015), appreciate the purpose of higher education (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Thelin, 2011), and understand how an institution operates (Gaff et al., 2000; Sorcinelli, 1994). Moreover, new faculty are expected to have appropriate skills to work collaboratively with others (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gaff et al., 2000; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015), adapt to changing situations (Austin, 2002a), balance work life expectations

(Austin, 2002b; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015), have an active role in their department and university (Rhodes, 2001), and develop collegiality (Austin, 2002b; Stupnisky et al., 2015).

Success in the professoriate requires a purposeful preparation that assists students for the purpose of addressing a full range of faculty roles as well as students' individual needs and interests. Preparing doctoral students with the appropriate knowledge and skills to understand the professoriate will allow them to better appreciate their roles as professors as well as to attain higher status in positions in and outside of academia (Austin, 2002a; Gaff et al., 2000). Nonetheless, doctoral students typically have tight schedules and not much spare time to participate in extra meetings, activities, and workshops. Doctoral students often work their classes around other responsibilities (e.g., working while taking classes or raising families). In fact, whether or not a doctoral student has work or family obligations, seeking a doctoral degree is a time-consuming process. The preparation initiatives that have been adopted gave conflicting messages concerning the impact of doctoral students' preparedness for the professoriate (Ehrenberg et al., 2009; Gaff & Lambert, 1996; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). Literature on doctoral preparation provided seldom include discussion on the topic of preparing doctoral students for the professoriate through formal courses that are included in doctoral programs. Therefore, the preparation of doctoral students for the professoriate through formal courses (as part of a doctoral program) needs to be investigated. This research study aimed to contribute to the literature regarding doctoral students and their preparation for the professoriate through a formal course taken as part of a doctoral

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program. This research study focused on the experiences of doctoral students taking a

formal course entitled "The Professoriate." Conducting this research study was important

for identifying the impact of such a course on doctoral students' understanding,

preparation, and attitudes toward the professoriate.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

According to Cruickshank (2007), "qualitative research is essential for any substantial sociological inquiry into how structure and agency are interrelated" (p. 5). The methodology of this research study relied on an interpretive qualitative approach that allows for investigation into "things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). From a critical realism perspective, the knowledge obtained from the current research study can potentially be used to bring more clarity to current interpretations of reality.

Ethnographic case study methodology was best suited for the purpose of this study. According to Wilson and Chaddha (2010), ethnography allows researchers to examine "behavior that takes place within specific social situations, including behavior that is shaped and constrained by these situations, plus people's understanding and interpretation of their experiences" (p. 549). In addition, case study research allows for deeply investigating "a few cases" with a view to "collect large amounts of data and study it in depth" (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p. 17). In his book, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Creswell (2015) identified three types of ethnographic designs: realist, case studies, and critical studies. "Case studies focus on a program, event, or activities and provide a detailed

description and analysis of a case based on extensive data collection" (Creswell, 2015, p. 485). The researcher used multiple data collection methods, and provided a detailed description of the students and their experiences in the Professoriate course. Therefore, the use of the ethnographic case study approach in this study was appropriate, as disciplined practices of triangulation and analysis were considered and maintained (Glesne, 2011).

In this chapter, the qualitative method and procedures that were used to conduct this study are described as follows: (a) design of the study, including a description of the Professoriate course; (b) the process of gaining access and participant recruitment; (c) informed consent and related procedures; (d) data collection methods; (e) procedures for ensuring trustworthiness of the study and minimizing the researcher's bias; and (f) analysis methods.

Design of Study

The goal of the current research study was to gather information and insights from doctoral students at a Midwestern university regarding the formal opportunities they had experienced in their doctoral program to become well prepared to work as professors in higher education. Specifically, the significance of doctoral students taking a professorial preparation course during their doctoral program was investigated. The purpose of this research study was to highlight and explain the primary factors that influenced doctoral students' perceptions, attitudes and meaning-making related to the professoriate. Also, the study aimed to offer recommendations for educators and stakeholders, based on the findings, to help doctoral students form realistic views and be better prepared for their future career in higher education. Thus, the researcher studied the experiences of

doctoral students enrolled in the course entitled "The Professoriate" at a Midwestern university in the United States. The researcher used pseudonyms to refer to participants throughout this study.

The Professoriate course was only offered once each year on this university's campus. Therefore, convenience sampling was used for collecting data. The researcher collected data in the Fall semester of 2015, and then continued the research process until the Summer of 2016. Multiple data collection methods were used in this study. These methods included: field notes and observation of The Professoriate class, semi-structured interviews, member checking, and examination of students' reflection assignments and instructional documents.

In Fall 2016, there were 11 students enrolled in the course. The researcher attended the class for the entire semester and conducted the observation part of the study. During this time, the researcher collected as much information as possible through field notes, observation, and document collection. The goal of this phase was to collect data related to student interactions, the class climate, and the course (including the instructor, topics, teaching strategies, and instructional material). For the interview part of the study, ten participants were interviewed. Only one female student (Anna) was not able to sit for an interview and then withdrew from the study related to her tight schedule. The interviews were conducted during the Summer of 2016. After data collection, the researcher transcribed the interviews and then conducted the analysis. Next, member checks and peer debriefings were conducted. Further discussion of the research process is presented in the following sections.

The Professoriate Course

Participants were enrolled in a three-credit formal course entitled "The Professoriate." The course was offered during the Fall 2015 semester. Class meetings were held on Wednesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Twelve class meetings took place throughout the semester. The instructor was a distinguished full professor who spent over 40 years in the profession.

Syllabus. The instructor provided a detailed syllabus and syllabus addendum. A comprehensive syllabus gives students "an immediate sense of what the course will be about, what they will learn, and how their academic progress will be evaluated" (Davis, 2009, p. 21). The syllabus included general information about the course (e.g., the course title, the class time and location); information about the instructor (e.g., her name, department, office address, office hours, phone number and e-mail address); a description of the course; an overview of the course purpose; learning goals; the conceptual framework; the course assigned textbooks; a list of the assignments; assigned readings and activities by date and topic; and information on grading procedures. The syllabus addendum included policies and assignment guidelines. Through the use of a syllabus, student misunderstandings about the due dates of assignments and grading criteria can be minimized (Davis, 2009).

Content. The course was described in the syllabus as a study of the American professoriate through different perspectives: historically, scholarly, popularly, and contemporarily. The course was also intended to explore and examine certain topics, such as: new faculty transitions into the professoriate; the expectations for teaching,

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research and service in accordance with different types of institutions; the impact of employment laws on faculty members; issues related to the tenure and promotion process; negotiation practices and strategies for new contracts and positions; and administrative work in academia. In Appendix A, the complete list of weekly topics can be seen.

Material. There were two required textbooks for the course. One was Robison's (2012) book, *The Peak Performing Professor*. The other textbook was Perlmutter's (2010), *Promotion and Tenure Confidential*. In addition, several handouts were given to students during class or shared on the course's Blackboard site (see a list of titles of handouts under Appendix B).

Conceptual framework. The course adopted an evolving conceptual framework that included three major themes: students as learners, as practitioners, and as advocates. Based on this conceptual framework, learning was realized as an active process, where students co-construct new ideas through a community of learners based on their current and past experiences (Kumar & Refaei, 2013; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). According to Caffarela (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007), "the process of learning which is centered on learner need, is seen as more important than the content; therefore, when educators are involved in the learning process, their most important role is to act as facilitators, or guides" (p. 284). The role of the instructor was to facilitate student learning. Students were given opportunities for communicating their experiences, reflecting on their understanding, and sharing their thoughts with each other.

Teaching. The course was discussion based, overall. However, the instructional activities were not limited to discussion. For instance, the course included various activities (e.g., listening to the instructor and speakers, readings, presentations and writings). Twelve guest speakers gave presentations to the class. The speakers were assistant, associate and full professors working in various positions at universities and colleges, such as: program director, journal editor, department chair, dean, and president. Also, speakers were from different departments (e.g., Music, Aviation, Law, Medicine, and Teaching and Learning). The instructor was facilitating the class assisting participants to learn from her, from speakers, and from each other. A community of learners was at the core of the course.

Goals. The course goals pointed that student will be able to demonstrate the following

- A realization for the professors' roles and responsibilities;

- An appreciation for the professor's work in higher education;

- An understanding for the ways in which they can become effective professors in different types of higher institutions; and

- A recognition for other's contributions and perspectives concerning the professoriate.

Each of the course goals was learner-centered, which focused on the student role of learning rather than focusing on the professor's role of instruction (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Course requirements. Students were required to complete readings and assignments on predefined dates. There were four required assignments. The

assignments (100 total points) included: three journal articles reviewed (10 points each); four reflections on topics from the course (5 points each); and an individual project (50 points). For the article review assignment, students were asked to write a 3-to-5-page summary of a recent peer-reviewed article. Each student had to choose an article concerning the professoriate. Students summarized the chosen article's purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, and findings. In addition, students were directed to provide a critique of the article. The other assignment was writing reflections. Two 2-to-3-page reflections were required on each textbook. Students were expected to reflect on their learning from each textbook and then discuss how they would apply this learning to information from class discussions, or from their own life as educators. The last assignment was the completion of an individual project. Three options were available for student to complete the assignment. The first option was to create a career plan based on a guide provided by the instructor. A career plan was described as beginning with "today" and going throughout stages until the final stage. This final stage was each student's self-anticipated career conclusion. The second option for the individual project was writing a conference proposal. The third option was to write a research paper. Oral presentations were part of all of these assignments. A written detailed description of each assignment was provided to students as well exemplary work of former students posted to the Blackboard site for the course.

Class equipment and normal procedures. The Professoriate course was held in a room in the Education building, which had been recently renovated. The room was of a good size, clean and bright. It had one door and wide windows. There was a white

board, a computer, a projector and a podium. Class would usually begin at 4:00 p.m. The instructor was always the first person who arrived into the classroom. She would arrange student seats and tables in a "U" shaped setup.

The instructor always kept students' name cards which students had made on the first class meeting. These name cards included students' names on the outside, and students' information inside (i.e., student's doctoral program, his/her advisor, and his/her phone number). The instructor would attach name cards to seats. If there were assignments from a previous week, the instructor would put them inside these cards for students to take after they arrived in class. The instructor used these cards to instantly recognize who was missing each class period. In case there was a student missing, the instructor would wait for him/her for few minutes before she began the evening's instructions.

Students usually arrived to class a few minutes early, sat in their seats and generally visited with those next to them while others were getting ready for the beginning of class. When all students arrived and before the professor began her instructions of the evening, she made announcements and answered any questions that students might have had. If there was a speaker coming to class on that day, the professor would introduce him/her and then the speaker began his/her talk or presentation. During speakers' presentations, the instructor would frequently encourage students to share their perspectives and ask questions. During the class, students were engaged in a community-of-learners environment, where they shared their perspectives, discussed topics, took notes and asked questions. On weeks after an assignment was due

(i.e., a reflection paper or an article review), the professor would ask students to briefly share their assignments with other class members.

After approximately one-half of the class time was spent, the class would take a short break. During break time, students were allowed to leave the room and come back; however, students would usually stay and have snacks. Snacks were brought to class every week by the professor or one of the students. The professor would usually end the class by a reminder of the next week's agenda. When the class was dismissed, the professor was always the last person to leave.

Gaining Access and Participant Recruitment

The site of this study was a class in a Midwestern university, where The Professoriate course was held. The participants were doctoral students taking the course. The researcher had to gain access to the class in order to conduct the study. Undertaking a qualitative study can be challenging for researchers (Glesne, 2011). When "asking people to let you immerse yourself in their environment, observe them, and ask them questions, it is important to first establish rapport with the person or people who will allow you entry into their lives" (Farber, 2006, p. 369). Therefore, the professor who was teaching The Professoriate course was asked to be the gatekeeper. With the assistance of the gatekeeper, the researcher was able to attend the course, explain the study to students, answer their questions concerning the study, and obtain their consent to be part of the study. In her role as gatekeeper, the professor also helped with arrangements for interviews by making specific referrals for participants who could not be reached through their university e-mail accounts.

Table 1
Participant Demographic and Discipline Information

Discipline Category / Participant Pseudonyms		Overall Sample Count ($n = 11$)	
		Male	Female
Aviation	(Jacob and Luke)	2	
Nursing	(Amelia and Jennifer)		2
Biology	(Kevin and Anna)	1	1
Occupational Therapy	(Kayla)		1
Physical Therapy	(James and Emma)	1	1
Psychology	(Layla)		1
Astrophysics	(Sarah)		1

Note. *n*=number of participants.

Participants. For the purposes of this research study, participants had to be enrolled in The Professoriate course during the Fall 2016 semester. Eleven participants were enrolled: four male and seven female students. Participants were doctoral students, with the exception of one male student (Luke) who was in a graduate certificate program and had plans to enroll in a doctoral program. The participants came from two doctoral programs: Teaching and Learning (two males; and six females) and Educational Foundations and Research (one male; and one female). All participants were working either full-time or part-time jobs. Furthermore, all participants were married with children, with the exception of one female participant (Sarah) who lived with roommates. Participants were from different disciplines and at different stages of their programs. In Table 1, detailed participant discipline information and their pseudonyms for this study are provided.

Informed consent and related procedures. Prior to beginning this study, the researcher went through the process of obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB works to protect the rights of participants in research. The IRB approval has to be obtained before the recruitment of participants. Thus, the researcher applied for IRB approval during the Fall 2015 semester in order to start the early data collection process (i.e., observation and field notes). Another IRB approval was obtained in order to conduct interviews during the Summer 2016 semester.

After the IRB review and approval process, Informed Consent forms were drafted (one for the observation part of the study, and another one for interviews). Each Informed Consent form explained the purpose, benefits, and the potential risks of the study as well as participant's role in the study. In addition, the consent forms highlighted the procedures which the researcher was using to preserve confidentiality of participants.

With the assistance of the gatekeeper, the researcher was able to meet participants on the first day of classes and explain himself and the study to them. After answering participant questions, each participant was given a copy of the Informed Consent form and agreed to participate in the first phase of the study (observation). For the second phase of the study (interviews), the researcher sent an invitation letter to participants through their university email accounts. Participants who could not be reached through their emails were invited by phone with the assistance of the gatekeeper. On the day of interview, the researcher met with the participant in a quiet room. The researcher explained the study to the participant as well as its benefits and potential risks related to participation. After explaining the study and participant rights, the participant gave

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written consent. Another copy of the consent form was given to each participant for their reference.

Protecting participant anonymity. The researcher implemented certain procedures in order to ensure the confidentiality of participants. For example, interview meetings were held in private places such as closed meeting rooms and offices. The researcher kept the identifiable records (e.g., audio recordings of the interviews and the signed consent forms) in safe cabinets, separate from the transcribed data and only accessible to him or the IRB staff, in case of auditing. The researcher did not use the real names of the participants in order to protect their identities. Pseudonyms were used to describe each individual throughout the study (see Table 1).

Data Collection

Observation. During the Fall 2015 semester, the researcher attended The Professoriate course and had the role of "participant-as-observer" in the class. The researcher was involved in the activities of the class; however, the class members were aware of his activity as a researcher (Gold, 1958). The purpose of observation was to investigate "subjective meanings and experiences constructed by participants in social situations" (Robson, 2002, p. 314).

Related documents. The researcher collected documents related to the research topic. Documents included students' reflection assignments and instructional documents that provided more information about The Professoriate course (e.g., syllabus, policies and assignment guidelines, lesson handouts, and the results of course formative assessment). The study of related documents allowed the researcher to explore the topic

being researched in-depth (Glesne, 2011), and gather more evidence "providing

additional perspectives on the holistic context" (Musson, 1998, p.16).

Interviews. During the Summer 2016 semester, ten participants were

interviewed. Although the researcher was seeking to include all eleven students who

took the course, one female participant (Anna) withdrew due to her unavailability to sit

for an interview. The researcher used open-ended questions that focused on the research

questions underpinning the study. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and then

analyzed in order to identify emerging themes.

An interview protocol (see Appendix C) was developed using Jacob and

Furgerson's (2012) suggestions on writing successful ethnographic interview protocols.

The interview questions covered four categories, that included: (a) interviewee

background; (b) understanding, concerns and attitude toward the professoriate; (c)

preparation for the professoriate; and (d) The Professoriate Course. The interview

protocol served to ensure that the researcher was covering all topics related to the

research questions during the interviews. The use of an interview protocol was helpful,

because

> it also extends to the procedural level of interviewing and includes a script of
>
> what you will say before the interview, script for what you will say at the
>
> conclusion of the interview, prompts for the interviewer to collect informed
>
> consent, and prompts to remind the interviewer the information that she or he is
>
> interested in collecting (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 2).

All interviews took place in a private room and lasted for an average time of 45 minutes.

Member checking. Member checking is an important quality assurance process in qualitative research (Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). After transcribing the interviews, the participants had the opportunity to review the transcribed material, check their statements, and verify the accuracy (Carlson, 2010; Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). According to Maxwell (2005), member checking is

> the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings of what you observed (p. 111).

Using the member checking strategy in this research was important to ensure that participant thoughts and ideas were accurately represented.

Trustworthiness

Although the ethnographic case study approach had limitations in terms of generalizing the findings, it allowed for investigating the research questions through recognizing the "lived reality" of people of the case (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001, p. 3), and listening to their voices (Scott & Morrison, 2006). However, the validity of qualitative research has been controversial (Glesne, 2011). According to Maxwell (2005), validity threats are the extents to which research findings and conclusions might be wrong. Therefore, the researcher used certain strategies to increase the trustworthiness of this current research study.

The researcher spent extended time in the field in order to develop trust as well as to immerse himself in the culture of the participant group (Glesne, 2011). Triangulation

of data collection and the multi-level analysis were applied to increase the degree of reliability (Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). For example, the research included multiple data sources, thick description, member checking, and peer debriefing. In addition, the findings section includes a detailed section on each theme presenting sufficient evidence obtained (i.e., participants' quotes) which should contribute to the internal validity of the research, and will also show that the findings came from the research and the data collected.

Minimizing the researcher's bias. The reflection on the researcher's location within the qualitative research process is important in order to provide "clarification of research bias" (Glesne, 2011, p. 49). According to Maxwell (2005), it is impossible for qualitative researchers to conduct research in isolation from their "theories, beliefs, and perceptual 'lens'" (p. 108). Other scholars agreed as well. For example, Scott and Morrison (2006) stated that "it is literally not possible to observe anything without some pre-conceived schema to understand it" (p. 130). Therefore, it is important to understand how the researcher's beliefs and assumptions might have a positive or negative impact on the study (Maxwell, 2005). This caution helped the researcher to take steps to avoid any impact of his "pre-conceived schema" (Scott & Morrison, 2006).

Scholars suggested that researchers should identify their biases and make notes of their assumptions throughout the research process and then make adjustments to the process as required (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). The "pre-conceived schema" in the current research study was not only drawn from critical realist ontology, but also from the researcher's previous experiences and knowledge. The researcher was

a graduate student in a Teaching and Learning doctoral program, who had previously taken The Professoriate course in the past. Also, he was pursuing a Ph.D. degree in order to become a professor in higher education. Thus, the researcher not only was taking his place as a researcher, but also as one of the targeted population. Understanding the researcher's beliefs about the course and his location within the research that was conducted allowed him to be aware and reflexive upon his own biases concerning the topic being studied (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005).

In addition, the researcher used certain strategies to ensure that the data collected were representing the participants' thoughts. For example, using an interview protocol allowed the researcher to focus on participants' words, rather than thinking of next questions. Also, the researcher made sure to ask participants for clarifications and explanations on unclear answers to avoid any misinterpretations. The use of member checking also allowed the participants to confirm that their beliefs and thoughts were accurately presented. In order to further minimize the bias in current research and support trustworthiness, peer debriefing was performed. A doctoral student performed peer debriefing for this study. She had good knowledge as a qualitative researcher and had never taken The Professoriate course. Consultation from colleagues who have good knowledge of qualitative methodology can contribute to the credibility of study (Powers, 2005).

Data Analysis

There is an ongoing process of data collection and analysis when conducting qualitative research that the researcher keeps developing throughout the study (Creswell,

2013). For example, the researcher in this study was analyzing data immediately after having one data collection set and while conducting new research (Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). This strategy allowed the researcher of the current research to progressively shape the study (Glesne, 2011). It also allowed the researcher to simultaneously code, analyze, and discover areas that needed to be further investigated. The process of discovering new information continued until data saturation occurred (Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), "Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible" (p. 1408).

After transcribing recorded interviews into written text, the researcher used a thematic analysis technique to analyze the raw data. The researcher examined the data with the research questions in mind in order to identify key concepts and patterns. As a result, codes were initially identified. Through the process of coding, recoding, identifying relationships, and reduction of the data, categories emerged. The researcher then reviewed these categories forming themes which represent participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). As a result, five prominent themes emerged in this study. The researcher studied the relationships between recurring patterns and themes to seek understanding, and make interpretations of the text. Based on the emerging themes, assertions were developed. Table 2 summarizes the codes, categories, themes, and assertions. In the finding section, the researcher used quotes from the raw data to establish and emphasize the significance of findings.

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Table 2

Summary of Data Analyses

	Codes	Categories	Themes	Assertions
Theme 1	Levels of difficulty, balance issues, lack of time, work obligations, family obligations, difficult on the family, PhD program requirements	Perceived challenges facing doctoral students in their studies.	Participants and their families encounter several challenges.	Doctoral students and their families navigated their way through several challenges due to lack of balance, work and family obligations, and PhD program requirements.
Theme 2.1	Research, publishing, administrative, teaching, advising, service, doing service on campus, being on committees, departmental stuff, developing relationships, being part of a university community, community service, community involvement	Perceptions of the Professoriate: Professors' work and roles.	Participants indicated various roles and responsibilities of faculty.	Doctoral students perceived that a professor has multiple roles and responsibilities.
Theme 2.2	A lot of work and/or responsibility, busy, stressful, daunting, uncertain, ongoing learning, Flexibility, autonomous, exciting, enjoyable, worthwhile, rewarding, making a difference, helping students	Perceptions of the Professoriate: Nature of work in the professoriate.	In this study, participants perceived faculty work as demanding and uncertain, but also flexible, enjoyable and rewarding.	Doctoral students perceived that working in the professoriate can be not only uncertain in terms of the job expectations, but also of a demanding nature in terms of time spent on work and related responsibilities. Yet, they perceived the job to be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding. They also appreciated the autonomy that professors have in their work.
Theme 2.3	Dedication, time investment, hard work, self-directness, internal motivation, knowledge of work expectations, knowledge of tenure process, field knowledge, teaching skills, organizational skills; relationships with students; collegiality	Perceptions of the Professoriate: Perceived attributes for success in the professoriate.	Certain attributes were perceived by participants as most important to succeed in the professoriate.	Doctoral students perceived that professors can achieve success in the professoriate through dedication (i.e., hard work, time investment, internal motivation); knowledge of job expectations; and developing relationships with students and colleagues.

Table 2 cont.

	Codes	Categories	Themes	Assertions
Theme 3	Pressure of higher education, the value of higher education, higher education politics, less autonomy, increasing expectations, lack of tenure-track positions, academic hiring, lack of funding and/or budget, higher education high costs, competitive work climate, finding new different meaning, professional balance, personal balance, job burnout	Perceived concerns with regard to working in the professoriate.	Participants expressed certain concerns with regard to working in the professoriate.	Doctoral students have concerns working in the professoriate because of the demanding nature of the work and higher education pressures.
Theme 4	Informal self-training, past job experience, class interactions, no socialization, no networking, no mentoring, no orientation, narcissistic professors, lack of time, family obligations, work obligations, lack of information, no preparation opportunities within the doctoral program, no preparation opportunities within the job, doc seminars do not prepare for the professoriate, program focuses on research, lack of balance	Preparatory practices and/or opportunities.	Participants perceived some past job experiences and class interactions as preparatory practices for the professoriate. Yet, no other preparatory practices were exercised within the Ph.D. program related to several reasons/challenges.	Doctoral students perceived lack of formal preparatory opportunities within their programs. Also, they perceived lacks of time and balance as challenges that prevented them from taking advantage of informal preparatory opportunities.
Theme 5.1	Detailed course, comprehensive, speakers, presentations, discussion, reflections, article reviews, research papers, readings, diversity, community of learners, means of communication, feedback, thorough answers, career trajectory	Students' perspectives about the course and its value: The course had various learning opportunities about the professoriate.	Participants perceived that the course provided various learning opportunities that focused on the professoriate.	The Professoriate course was significant to students because it provided various opportunities to learn about and prepare for the professoriate.

Table 2 cont.

	Codes	Categories	Themes	Assertions
Theme 5.2	Positive adjectives (helpful, important, enjoyable, impactful), real, accurate, better understanding, big picture, new to student, different disciplines, speakers' experiences, instructor's stories, instructor's life experience	Students' perspectives about the course and its value: The course helped participants to have better understanding and real perspectives concerning the professoriate.	Participants had better understandings and real perspectives of the professoriate.	The Professoriate course was significant to students because it helped students to have a better understanding and realistic views into the professoriate.
Theme 5.3	Define one's self and/or goals, make a plan, job considerations, career options, practical textbook, different disciplines, integration into one's practice, gave confidence	Students' perspectives about the course and its value: The course allowed participants to reflect on their own practices and plan for their careers.	Participants had opportunities to reflect on their experience and plan for working in the professoriate.	The Professoriate course was significant to students because it allowed students reflect on their current experiences as educators and then plan for what they want to achieve in the professoriate in the future.
Theme 5.4	Recommended, official for credit courses get student's attention, commitment, doc students are busy to participate in informal activities, better opportunities in formal courses	Students' perspectives about the course and its value: The course met participants' needs through a formal setting.	Participants perceived that the course formal setting helped them to be committed in their learning and preparation.	The Professoriate course was significant to students because its formal setting met students' needs and better suited their doctoral status which was a barrier to involvement in informal preparatory practices.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study was to examine the perceptions of doctoral

students in a Midwestern university concerning the factors that influenced their

understandings, preparations and attitudes toward the professoriate. Also of interest was

how a course such as "The Professoriate" would influence the understanding and

preparation of doctoral students for the professoriate. Five prominent themes emerged

that pointed out the experience of doctoral students with regard to their understanding of

and preparation for the professoriate. The five themes were (1) Perceived challenges

facing doctoral students in their studies; (2) Perceptions of the professoriate (i.e.,

perceptions of professors' work and roles, nature of work, and attributes for success); (3)

Perceived concerns with regard to working in the professoriate; (4) Students' preparatory

practices and preparatory opportunities available to them; and (5) Students' perspectives

about the course and its value (i.e., the course allowed for: various learning opportunities,

better understanding and real perspectives, reflections on participants' own practices, and

meeting participants' needs through a formal setting). In this chapter, the themes are

presented as well as narratives and stories to support the findings.

Perceived Challenges Faced by Doctoral Students

The first theme to emerge from the current data was participants' perceptions of

challenges in doctoral programs. All participants were working part-time or full-time

jobs at higher education institutions while doing their PhDs. They had different reasons for pursuing a PhD degree. However, all reasons were work-related. Some of the participants were required to have a doctoral degree by their current or earlier departments. Others were pursuing a PhD in hopes of being promoted or attaining tenure positions in the future. In general, participants believed that a PhD degree would help them to enter academia, making them more desirable to higher education institutions. For example, Kevin, who was working full-time and then part-time due to a budget cut, described his goal of attaining a PhD degree by saying, "My hope is to actually enter the professoriate to find a tenure track position, whether at a 4-year or 2-year school, wherever best fits with me." Jacob, who was working full-time in Aviation, said, "If I ever leave here and want to teach somewhere else, I'm going to need a PhD. So, it makes me more marketable."

Despite the participants' reasons for pursuing PhD degrees, they had to navigate through several challenges related to lack of work and personal balances. Participants were married and raising families (except for Sarah who was single). Participants found that the life of doctoral students contained a great level of difficulty. They used different words to describe their doctoral journey, such as: "hard, difficult, tough, harder, tougher, and really hard." Work and family obligations were overwhelmingly recurrent perceived challenges among all participants. "It's tough doing school with my kids, but I actually think it's tougher trying to do school while working," Layla said. The difficulty was not only on students, but also on their families.

Moreover, doctoral programs' structures contributed to the participants' lack of work and personal balances. Jacob recalled and compared his experience as a Master's and as a PhD student:

> The PhD was a lot harder because I had to take two classes at a time to meet the residency. For whatever reason going from one to two was really hard, because it took me two nights that I couldn't see my boys that they're playing soccer or whatever events. Those evenings I couldn't make it.

Another model of doctoral programs, cohort-based, was also challenging to students and their families. James, who has a large family, described his cohort-based doctoral program as "more difficult on the family, being gone that many weekends, especially in the summertime."

Participants found it challenging to balance family, work, and school. All participants were facing balance issues due to one reason or another. Kevin described his experience in this way: "It's been work to try and balance everything especially when we have a house and a wife and kids and then a job and then a doctoral degree on top of it." These obligations and lack of student balance led to other issues such as lack of time, which resulted in the inability to participate in other social or learning activities (see also Preparatory Practices section).

Perceptions of the Professoriate

Other themes that emerged in this study revealed participants' perceptions of the professoriate. Participants' perceptions included perceptions of a professor's work and roles, nature of work, and attributes for success in the professoriate.

The Professor's Work and Roles

Participants perceived that professors hold multiple roles and responsibilities such as teaching, research, service, advising, collegiality, and being part of a university community. Participants were already working at higher education institutions. Therefore, they had a sense of the multiple roles and responsibilities of the professor. In fact, many participants were already performing multiple roles at their jobs. For example, Kayla, who was a non-tenure-track lecturer in the Occupational Therapy department, had to perform multiple roles although her contract was "eighty percent teaching." She was teaching two four-credit face-to-face classes and an online class, advising students, serving on multiple committees, and doing service to the community. Emma, who was working two jobs at the time, explained a professor's multiple responsibilities. "It's not just being in the classroom. It's doing research. It's doing service, things for your 'whatever you pick.' Your community, your profession, your national organization."

Nature of Work

Demanding. Participants perceived that working in the professoriate is demanding. For instance, when Kayla was asked the question: What is it like to become a professor? She immediately responded: "Busy." Other participants agreed also. "From my perspective, the title, a professor, the true meaning of it, is a lot of work," Amelia said. Jennifer said, "it's not a nine-to-five job." A professor's work was perceived as "daunting," "overwhelming," "challenging" and "stressful." For instance, James, who was working full-time, considered the professoriate to be stressful, because

he himself would often feel stressed and overloaded in his current position at a higher education institution.

Participants perceived that the professor's post as demanding and that professors are always invoking their responsibility. Luke, who was working a full-time job, explained how the professoriate is different from other professions, from his point of view:

> When I say you're always working is you're also always looking for opportunities that would be able to be shared in a classroom. I think that's different from other vocations where some locations you walk out of your building, or your domicile, or your vehicle, or whatever it may be, and you are off work and you're not expected to do anything related to work, but in the professoriate you are constantly aware of what's new, different, how do I make my courses continue to be relevant in changing times.

Luke and other participants shared this idea that professors need to be constantly working in order to meet the demand of the job as well as to become respected and successful in academia (see also the section entitled Dedication found on p. 62).

Uncertain. Another perceived characteristic concerning the professoriate nature of work was uncertainty. Participants felt that the professoriate can be uncertain, because of unclear expectations and untold responsibilities that they end up doing. Jennifer, a long-time faculty in a Nursing department, advised newcomers that "There's a lot that's not up front that you don't realize that you're going to be responsible for. I think that would be important for someone to know." In fact, she was still dealing with untold

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responsibility. "There's sometimes expectations that I wasn't prepared for, or wasn't told I was going to be responsible for. That has been challenging," Jennifer said.

In addition, Emma felt frustrated when she applied for an open position due to "vague" expectations. She commented:

I need to know what I need to do. It can't be vague. I learned from that, that next time I can't be vague. I've got to just go to the person and say, 'What are you judging me on? What are the expectations,' and I need to know up front.

Vague, untold, and unclear expectations for working in the professoriate resulted in students being uncertain about the nature of a professor's work. This uncertainty about the job expectations can affect student's preparatory practices and attitudes toward the professoriate, because the students do not know what they will be doing or how they will be evaluated.

Exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding. On the other hand, regardless of the participants' perceptions of the nature of the work, they perceived the job to be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding. Sarah felt excited because the professoriate would allow her to make a difference. "Hopefully, no one can stump that out of me. I think that's the most exciting thing about becoming a professor," Sarah said. Other students such as Amelia also showed a similar attitude, "[I am] Excited because I know the field that I'm in. I'm helping people. We're doing that through the students, and I'm also giving students the opportunities to change their lives."

Participants had positive attitudes toward becoming professors. James explained one way in which he enjoys the professoriate, that "just hanging with the students, even if

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you're not talking about physical therapy stuff, but just talking about life. I think is really

fun." He continued, "they [students] don't realize it, but they teach us just as much as we

teach them … I really enjoy that." Also, Jennifer had "a great deal of satisfaction"

assisting students in achieving their goals. She pondered:

> My favorite stories are when the students call me after they've taken their
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> licensure exam, and say that they've passed, because of, 'Oh I was taking this
>
> question and I remembered something that you said in class.' That's a really
>
> good feeling, because it's really about helping them to be successful. And I do
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> get plenty of calls from people and emails, and it's not always requesting a
>
> reference, sometimes it's just to say, 'I passed. I'm on my way.' That feels good.

Other participants shared similar thoughts. For instance, Luke said, "There are times,

with students, that you both feel rewarded when they are successful, when they mature or

they have an achievement." He continued, "I would say I feel that it is a worthwhile role.

I feel that what I'm doing is bringing value, it's bringing future value." The desire to be

helping students and making a difference was a prominent factor for positive attitudes

toward the professoriate among participants.

Autonomous. Participants appreciated the autonomy and flexibility that

professors have. "There's flexibility and you have the ability to work independently and

work on things that you're interested in," Layla said. The autonomy of a professor's job

was perceived as very important. In Jacob's words, it is "the best thing" in the

professoriate. The flexibility and autonomy in the professoriate often were mentioned

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together. For example, Kevin mentioned the autonomy of professors as a reason for the flexibility of their jobs:

> I like the scheduling, the autonomy that you have as a faculty member where you're able to set your own schedule in a lot of ways. It gives you that ability to be flexible with family life or other activities as well.

Although the work of a professor can be demanding and uncertain with regard to its nature, participants valued the afforded autonomy and flexibility. Participants perceived that working in the professoriate could be enjoyable and rewarding.

Perceived Attributes for Success

In this study, certain skills and attributes were perceived as most important to succeed in the professoriate. Perceived skills and attributes that successful professors have included: dedication (i.e., hard work, time investment, and internal motivation), understanding of job expectations, and the ability to develop relationships.

Dedication. The first prominent theme concerning a professor's attributes for success was dedication (which included hard work, time investment, and internal motivation). According to Amelia, "It takes a lot of dedication, time, research, hard work to get to that level. To be a professor." All participants agreed that professors must work very hard to be successful. In fact, some participants were frustrated that some people might not appreciate the hard work that professors do. "I don't think people realize how much work it takes to get there," Amelia said. Jacob also agreed when he shared one of his concerns with regard to work in higher education, that "everybody gets the view of higher education as the professors are lazy and don't do much, and I just don't find that to

be true of my life and even my colleagues." Along with hard work, time investment also was perceived as an important indication for success in the professoriate. Luke commented:

> As far as what I've observed, those people who are respected in their fields and who are doing well are investing a lot of time personally or otherwise in what they do. In terms of what they do as faculty members is indistinguishable from what they do personally.

Participants perceived that being a professor requires a different lifestyle in which personal and professional lives emerge and one is constantly learning and developing.

Because the work of a professor is autonomous, participants agreed that a professor has to be internally motivated in order to succeed on his/her job. "You need to be very self-directed and be able to do whatever it is you need to do on your own time frame," Layla said. Participants used different words to describe internal motivation required by professors such as being "self-directed," "self-starter," "committed," "internally motivated," and "passionate."

Understanding the job expectations. Another perceived attribute for success in the professoriate was the professor's understanding of job expectations. According to participants, this understanding would save professors from falling into dull and heavy work, burn out, or emotional exhaustion. Kevin contributed to this idea:

> You need to make sure that you're being prepared from an academic standpoint of having the experience needed to do the position but also having an understanding of what is required of you once you get into the position, too, because if you're

not adequately prepared for all the little things that they're going to ask you to do when you're a faculty member, you'll get burnt out very quickly or you won't do them, or you won't stay in that position for too terribly long.

Other participants had similar ideas. For instance, James found it important to have a good understanding of job expectations and to parallel that with one's own interests. He reflected:

Even though you think I'm working and I'm a teacher, if 40% of your day or 40% of your week is devoted to doing something you don't like, that's going to affect you emotionally and you're going to most likely carry that home to your family.

In addition, participants perceived that it is important for professors, especially newcomers, to get involved in discussions and seek knowledge about financial situations, policies and contracts, and tenure processes at institution.

Developing relationships. The professor's ability to develop positive relationships with students and colleagues was perceived as one of the successful professor's attributes. "You [as a professor] have to be willing to sort of form that community with the people in your classroom, and the other people that you teach with," Jennifer said.

With students. Participants shared several reasons for developing relationships with students. Healthy relationships with students will help students learn better. James believed that the student-professor relationship should go beyond the classroom. "You have to be able to interact with the students. Not only inside the classroom, but outside the classroom. I'm a firm believer of that," James said. Other participants had different

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thoughts, although they agreed on the importance of student-professor relationship. For example, Layla reflected that:

> One thing that I think is important with being a professor is you have to relate to students, but you also have to make sure that you can draw the line so that you're not their friend, but you're also not their enemy.

Kayla had similar thoughts, that a professor should be "empathetic with students, but also be able to keep the relationship where it's at, too." Overall, participants perceived that the ability to develop positive relationships with students is an imperative attribute for successful faculty in the professoriate.

With faculty. Furthermore, the ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues was perceived as important for success in the professoriate. Jacob referred to positive relationships among colleagues as being collegial. "I think you have to have collegiality to be a good professor," Jacob said. Participants gave several benefits of a positive relationship with other professors. For example, James suggested that developing relationships with other professors can help one to learn from their experiences. "Asking different faculty, what do they suggest. What's worked in the past, what hasn't worked in the past. Having that open communication where you can discuss with others, I think is important," James said. Moreover, participants perceived that positive relationships will allow for more collective work and collaboration among professors, which is expected in the professoriate of today. Kevin explained that:

> The biggest skill [is] being able to interact well with others. It's not a research in it of itself, an academic is not a solo act anymore. Everything is done

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collaboratively, so being able to work well with other people is another big aspect that you need to function and to succeed in the professoriate.

The ability to develop relationships with students and colleagues was perceived as an attribute for successful professors in the professoriate.

Other attributes and skills. There were other attributes and skills that some participants found important for professors to have, such as understanding of one's field, teaching, research and organizational skills. However, these attributes and skills were less prominent overall. Participants seemed to believe that professors should "definitely" acquire these attributes and skills. Therefore, it is natural for professors to have such skills, to a fair extent. According to Amelia, "You [as a professor] need to be able to do research." Kevin stated that "you [as a professor] need to have a good understanding of your field." In addition, Kayla said, "I think that you definitely need to know a content area, but also need to know how to teach [it to] the students that you have." Also, Emma commented, "I think that to be a successful professor, you need to have fairly decent organizational skills."

Preferred work for participants. Participants' preferences of work in the professoriate were not the same. The majority of participants, in this case six people, preferred doing more teaching, or only teaching. It was not surprising that all of them were in the Teaching and Learning doctoral program. To other participants, the ideal work was doing both teaching and research (two participants who were in Educational Foundations and Research doctoral program). "My dream job would probably be half

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teaching, half research," Layla said. The last two participants wanted to do more administrative work, such as being a program director or working at a higher level.

<div align="center">

Perceived Concerns

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Participants had certain concerns with regard to working in the professoriate. These concerns included two major components: the perceived nature of work in the professoriate and higher education pressures.

Perceived Nature of Work

Participants had solid perceptions of the professor's work and roles. Participants perceived the nature of work in the professoriate as challenging and demanding. Therefore, they had concerns about how this demanding work might affect them and their families. Feeling burned out in the professoriate was perceived as a critical concern to participants. In their current positions, many participants were already feeling stressed, that they did not have enough time, or that their work was too much. Layla expressed negativity concerning the professoriate, saying, "Sometimes you can feel burned out, if that's a feeling. When you have a lot of work to do and you're working at night and that sort of thing."

Lack of balance was another concern for participants related to the demanding nature of work in the professoriate. Some participants found that lack of balance is inevitable. Others were preparing themselves and learning how to balance. For example, Kayla was concerned about being a professor because of her inability to balance family and work. She stated that "Learning how to balance life and work … that's one of my biggest concerns." Also, Kevin was concerned about the demanding work of tenure-track

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faculty. The amount of time and efforts that tenure-track faculty need to put into their work in those pre-tenure years to get to that tenure position was a major concern to Kevin. He reflected on his plans to balance between his personal and professional lives when he gets into academia. "It's just making sure that I'm prepared to devote that amount of time and be able to work my family and other activities around, make sure that I'm giving enough time to everyone who needs it," Kevin said.

Participants perceived that the demanding nature of work in the professoriate would lead to competitive and unhealthy relationships among faculty. For instance, Luke was concerned that "collegiality and interdepartmental or intradepartmental relationships are not always good." Jennifer also shared similar thoughts that "Sometimes it gets a little competitive and it's not always that helpful." She continued, "Sometimes, it's people competing with each other for the same position or whatever. Those would be some concerns, I guess."

A competitive work-climate was perceived to be very concerning to participants. For example, "there is like this competition between everyone in the department as far as who's published more and who has grants. It's like everyone hates each other," Layla described. To at least one participant, things were worse. Emma had experienced this unhealthy climate due to competition in her department. Emma stated that "Some of the things I've been surprised at are the envy per se or the trying to get to the top by maybe not being so kind or helpful." The perceived nature of work in the professoriate was a prominent factor that affected doctoral students' well-being, readiness, and attitudes with regard to working in the professoriate.

Higher Education Pressures

Participants had concerns about certain pressures on higher education at the national level. These pressures included lack of job security, lack of funding, lack of autonomy, and inflation of job expectations and requirements.

Lack of job security. "Probably the biggest concern is actually finding a job," Kevin said. However, finding a job was not the only concern to Kevin as well as other participants. Participants expressed their concerns with regard to the lack of tenure positions. They perceived that there was this trend in higher education of non-tenure jobs, and few tenure or tenure-track positions. Layla noticed that tenure positions were no longer available, and that institutions were gradually drifting away from the tenure system. Kevin was also concerned, but more understanding of the situation. He explained that: "These days, it seems harder and harder to be able to find those tenure track positions, as people are remaining in academia longer so there's less retirees. It's getting to be more and more difficult."

During the observation, participants' questions about the tenure and the promotion process were overwhelmingly recurrent. This showed how concerned they were for their opportunities to get tenure positions. To other participants, non-tenure positions were inevitable, because their departments did not offer tenure or tenure-track positions at all. James, who was in Physical Therapy, claimed that "we're never going to be tenured, we're a year-by-year contract. I guess one of the concerns would be maybe not getting a contract for the next year." This lack of job security in non-tenure jobs (as

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well as the lack of tenure jobs) made participants concerned with regard to work in the professoriate.

Lack of funding. James described the importance of funding in higher education in a few simple words: "It always comes down to numbers, it always comes down to budget." Participants perceived that there was a lack of funding in higher education and found that to be challenging and concerning. Participants' perceptions on the issue of funding were not only related to their opportunity to get a job (or stay in a job), but also related to other issues that would result from this pressure. Kayla was concerned that institutions would stop quality programs that benefit students due to funding or budget challenges. She also was "concerned with the rising cost, not just the funding of the programs but the cost of tuition." She continued, "I think that with the higher cost and income gap widening, especially in America, there's going to be a lot less diversity, especially with the students that we see."

In addition, Jacob said that he studied funding issues in higher education and claimed that "spending per student has gone down," which really concerned him. In addition, he was concerned about faculty being underpaid due to lack of funding. "I don't think faculty are overpaid in any way, shape or form. I think in general, they're underpaid," Jacob said. On the other hand, he appreciated that people want to become professors regardless how much they would make. "You [as a professor] know that there's not a lot of money involved. You're doing it, because you like it," Jacob commented.

Lack of autonomy. Participants perceived the professoriate to be autonomous, and they appreciated that. However, participants also perceived that the professoriate is becoming less autonomous than it was. For example, James expressed his concern, "nowadays, sometimes you got to be more careful with what you say to students or how it's taken, it just seems like there's more lawsuits going on."

Furthermore, participants talked about politics in higher institutions and how they affect professors' well-being. According to Layla, "depending on where you work, there are some departments that have really hard to deal with office politics." Emma explained how these politics affected her and made her concerned:

> You [as a non-tenure faculty] can't really relax and be yourself when you're in a
>
> department trying to get a job ... If you slip or you say something they don't like,
>
> that could be held against you when you go for the job.

Lack of autonomy, along with prior mentioned concerns (i.e., lack of job security), had affected the ways in which participants perceived the professoriate.

Inflation of job expectations and requirements. Participants perceived that job expectations were increasing. Amelia was concerned that the job expectations can be demanding and challenging. For example, "you have to have this many publications by this year," she mentioned. It was not only the inflation of on-job expectations that participants were concerned about, but also the inflation of job requirements. Kayla described one of her major concerns with regard to higher education; it was the inflation of job requirements in Occupational Therapy:

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Within Occupational Therapy, ten years ago you could graduate with a Bachelor's, and now it's starting to trend towards a doctorate. I think with the increase in the price of tuition and the degree level, I think it will really discourage some people who would be amazing OTs from attending the program, and pursuing their degree in Occupational Therapy.

This inflation in job requirements also concerned Jennifer, who was teaching in a college of nursing. She was concerned that inflation in job requirements would compel her to leave teaching to do administration:

I do have a fear that once I have this degree [the PhD], that would be more of an expectation, and it's the teaching that I really love … I don't really love administration. I deal with it, but I don't love it.

Participants were intimidated by the perceived inflation of job expectations and requirements. Overall, the perceived pressures on higher education (i.e., lack of job security, lack of funding, lack of autonomy, and inflation of job expectations and requirements) were critical factors that affected doctoral students' attitudes toward the professoriate.

Preparatory Practices and Opportunities

Participants' practices for preparation and formal opportunities available to them were investigated throughout the process of this research study. Participants discussed the formal and informal preparatory opportunities in their programs. As a result, participants perceived a lack of formal preparatory opportunities within their programs.

Also, they reported certain perceived challenges that prevented them from taking advantage of informal preparatory opportunities.

Formal Opportunities

Participants perceived the importance of formal preparation for the professoriate. However, they varied in terms of the actual preparatory activities with which that they became involved. Prior to taking The Professoriate course, Luke, Jennifer, and Kayla were the only participants who participated in formal mentoring programs. Jacob was formally assigned a mentor through his department, but that was not part of an established mentoring program. Amelia and Jennifer (both in Nursing) had an orientation when they were hired. Amelia described the orientation as "terrible." She claimed that she walked away from the orientation knowing nothing. Jennifer also had a similar experience. She stated that "in our program, there wasn't a great orientation, so when I first started, I just felt like I had to seek out so many answers." The rest of the participants had never been involved in any "formal" preparatory programs.

To many participants, past or current job experiences were considered as preparatory practices that helped them to get a sense of the professoriate. "Working in academia has been eye-opening. As an undergrad, I had no idea what professors did behind the scenes," Sarah said. Participants appreciated the opportunities to work at a higher education setting because of the "informal training" that happens. Jennifer revealed that working in a university allowed for informal training through the interactions with experienced professors. Luke also agreed that newcomers could learn from interactions with other faculty. According to Luke, who was working full-time in

Aviation, "I feel like everyone around me is a mentor in some different level." He continued, "Everyone provides a little different perspective, and everyone seems somewhat free to be sharing different perspectives and I feel like I just gather those."

Although many participants perceived having past job experience as important, participants perceived that working in a university might not be enough to become fully prepared. For example, Kevin illustrated some reasons for how working as teaching assistants might not really help doctoral students to become well prepared for work in the professoriate. Kevin questioned the impact of teaching assistants' experiences on their readiness for the professoriate:

> As graduate students, some of us do some teaching here and there and we have an idea of it, but a lot of it is we are teaching with a mentor that is able to walk you through or provide you with a lot of the material that you need to use. You really, especially in the Biology department, just show up and teach. The mentor takes care of everything else. It's a shock for some students when they have to teach a course by themselves that they don't have all the information there and ready to go.

To other participants, like Layla, socialization with other professors can be challenging due to the difficulty of approaching other professors in some departments. Layla explained:

> The socialization piece is actually a challenge [for newcomers], because a lot of professors are narcissistic, but that doesn't mean you can't get along with them.

It's just how you approach them. That would be a challenge, in some departments

for sure, getting along with your colleagues or just talking to [them].

Overall, participants perceived that doing formal preparatory programs was important.

However, not all of them had been involved in such programs. Also, participants who

had participated in certain formal opportunities (such as attending orientations and doing

teaching assistant jobs) reported that these experiences were not really helpful. The

degree of involvement in formal preparatory programs was a perceived factor that

affected doctoral students' readiness and attitude toward working in the professoriate.

Lack of formal opportunities within doctoral programs. Participants were

from two doctoral programs. All participants perceived a lack of formal opportunities

within their programs. Participants were not able to name any formal preparatory

opportunities (other than The Professoriate course) within their doctoral programs. "I

seriously don't remember if there were opportunities for preparing," James said. In

addition, Layla confirmed the lack of formal opportunities in her program. "We didn't

have any specific opportunities for students that wanted to become professors," she said.

Informal Opportunities

Furthermore, participants did not get involved in "informal" preparatory

opportunities such as socialization, networking and mentoring within a doctoral program.

"I haven't really taken advantage of anything outside of course work," Sarah said.

Participants perceived that lack of time and balance were the main reasons for not being

involved in preparatory activities. James stated that "If I was told about them

[preparatory opportunities], it probably went in and out, because I knew that any other

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time devoted would probably push certain things over the edge." Jennifer described her lack of socializing and networking practices in this way:

I would say, [my socializing and networking practices] probably not a lot beyond the courses. Just because everybody is so busy, and you saw I have a family and I teach full-time ... I would say, no, probably not a lot. It's not that I don't have any interest in that, it's just that I don't have time right now to pursue that.

The perceived challenges in doctoral programs (see also Perceived Challenges in Doctoral Programs section) such as a lack of time and balance were perceived as reasons for not getting involved in preparatory activities. For instance, Kayla could not participate in informal socializing activities because of her work. "When I've seen where they've had meetings, they usually conflict with faculty meetings or when I'm teaching," she said. Luke was also not able to make time for any socialization and networking activities due to work and family obligations. Luke explained:

For me taking the courses is an above and beyond … I'm squeezing it in, and so to also go out with my classmates I don't know that I've actually made time for it because I'm so busy in other ways and I have a family life, so I haven't done that.

Participants wanted to get involved in informal preparatory activities like socialization, networking and informal mentoring. However, participants were not involved in preparatory activities within a doctoral program due to a perceived lack of time. Overall, participants were focused on taking classes and had no time for social or learning activities out of the classroom.

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Perspectives on The Professoriate Course and its Value

Because of the lack of formal preparatory opportunities within doctoral programs, and the lack of time and balance to get involved in informal preparatory activities, participants tend to prepare themselves through the courses that they take. "I think you glean a lot in the PhD program just in the classroom about how to conduct things and do things," Jacob said. In addition, participants reported that courses allowed them to meet other students from different disciplines, and learn from them. However, some specific courses such as doctoral seminars were not perceived as helpful toward preparing students for the professoriate. "The doc seminars helped prepare me, but that helped prepare me for writing my dissertation, getting my program of study, comps and things like that," James said. Other courses were less effective as well because they were not purposefully designed to prepare students for the professoriate. For instance, Emma, Layla and Amelia indicated that some courses did not necessarily prepare them to be professors. Kevin elaborated on this issue, saying, "From a classroom standpoint, you tend to see just the classroom aspect of your teacher." He continued, "You don't see all the things that go on behind the scenes to even get ready for that class, let alone doing research and service."

Overall, participants perceived the importance of interactions with professors in courses (especially professors who were approachable). Jacob indicated that student observation happens when watching a professor in the classroom is "valuable" even though that happens indirectly and unintentionally. Also, James commented on his experience learning from courses and interaction with professors by saying, "They're

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approachable, you can really learn a lot, even though it's hard work, you learn a lot through it." In contrast, at least one participant found it difficult and scary to interact with certain professors. Amelia said that she had a negative experience with a professor who was "more negative" to her, and provided her constantly with negative not-timely feedback. This experience made her "a little bit more afraid to go to them." Participants perceived interactions with professors as critical experiences that influenced doctoral students' preparatory attitudes.

Perspectives on the Course

The Professoriate course aimed to prepare doctoral students for the professoriate. Participants' perspectives on the course reflected that the course really helped them to be prepared for the professoriate. "It was beneficial and it helped me to understand what the professoriate entails," James said. Other participants agreed, too. For instance, Jennifer thought that the course was very important in terms of preparing students for the professoriate. According to Jennifer, "[The course] was really foundational to what we're all hoping to be doing when we're done with this degree. It really defined that foundation piece that you need to have. It's very important." In addition, participants indicated how they really liked the course. To Layla, The Professoriate was her favorite non-research course. "It was actually my favorite class that I took that wasn't research-related," she said. Also, James stated that "if I had to take another three credits today, that would probably be one of the three to five courses I would probably consider taking again."

Significance of the Course

Participants' perspectives with regard to the course emerged into four prominent themes which justified the significance of the course. The four themes included that The Professoriate course:

1. Provided the participants with various opportunities to learn and critically think about the professoriate;

2. Helped the participants to have better understanding and real perspectives on diverse topics concerning the professoriate;

3. Allowed the participants to reflect on their own practices and plan for their careers; and

4. Better met the participants' needs through a formal setting.

In the following sections, presentations of further information on each theme are provided.

Various learning opportunities. The course was designed to provide students with various opportunities that would help them to learn and critically think about the professoriate. Participants appreciated the community of learners in class, which allowed them to learn from the instructor, speakers, and other students. In addition, the completion of readings, reflection papers, article reviews and individual projects contributed to participants' learning and preparation.

Participants found the weekly readings to be helpful. There were two textbooks for students to read and reflect on. "One was *The Peak Performing Professor*, and then the other one was the *Promotion and Tenure Confidential*. I think those books were good

complements to each other," Luke said. Participants found both textbooks to be helpful, because they covered different areas of faculty work and the professoriate in general. According to Kevin,

> There were two books that we read. One was helping you to perform as a faculty member as your best, giving you tips and strategies in terms of how to manage the twelve different things that are going to be coming at you on a regular basis every day. [Strategies and tips included] The best ways to organize your time, organize your thoughts and be able to efficiently get your work done. The other book that we had was also very interesting, because it tells you a lot of the stuff nobody talks about publicly when it comes to promotion and tenure and how that process works, what things can hurt your chances, and what things can help your chances. Both those books are very interesting.

Overall, participants appreciated both textbooks and the learning opportunities that the textbooks provided.

In addition, participants were required to write reflections on the readings. Participants were also asked to orally present their reflections in class. After that, other participants were encouraged to ask questions or share their perspectives with regard to the topic that was presented. The reflection assignment was another learning opportunity that participants appreciated. Jennifer indicated this assignment as follows:

> I liked the reflection assignments, because it gave me an opportunity to read something and think about how I could integrate it into my own practice or profession. Then talk to other people about how they interpreted it. I liked those

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reflective kinds of assignments that were not 20 pages, but 2 or 3 pages, which is

manageable when you are an adult learner, and have a full life.

This assignment helped participants to critically think about what they read, what they

discussed in class, and how to apply this knowledge to their own practices. "The

reflections helped me think about what we were doing in class and then apply them,"

Layla said.

Another assignment was writing and presenting article reviews. Participants

found the assignment to be beneficial for their learning. James described the assignment:

"We had to look up certain articles regarding the professoriate and then write … two to

three pages, kind of wrap up of how it impacted us in the field." He continued, "I

enjoyed that, because it gave me a chance to realize how much is actually being written

on the professoriate, which is surprisingly a lot." The assignment helped participants to

explore the literature related to the professoriate and then critically think how that would

impact their own practices.

Participants were also required to complete an individual project. There were

three options for completing the project: creating a career plan, writing a research

proposal, or writing a research paper. Participants then present their project to the class.

The majority of participants did the first option (creating a career plan). Participants

appreciated the opportunity to plan for their careers through the completion of their

individual project assignments. For instance, Jacob stated that "career trajectory

assignment was the best for me." Also, Sarah appreciated the assignment that allowed

her to think of and plan for her future. "You [as a student] were supposed to pick the

position you wanted to have, percent of time you want to spend on things, [and] what university you want to work at." Sarah continued, "people will always ask me what I want to be when I grow up. I was like, 'Actually, I have a PowerPoint.'" Moreover, this assignment allowed Jennifer to realize her current position and plan ahead for her career. Jennifer explained

> My final project was a timeline, like a trajectory of how I wanted my career to go. I remember thinking that it was a little difficult at the time but yet, as I kind of plotted it out, and realized that it's kind of how things have gone, it was a nice guide. At the end, it was being the dean of the college of nursing which may or may not ever happen, but it's a nice goal to shoot for.

Participants appreciated the presentations of individual projects, which gave them the opportunity to learn from each other. According to Kayla, "you [as a student] could learn about the other people in your class and what they wanted to do. Where they were, where they're at, and where they're going. It helped me to line that up for myself as well."

Other learning opportunities were available to participants through the instructor and speakers, with the community of learners. Speakers who were in different positions and from different disciplines came to class and discussed topics of interest with participants. The discussion based format of class allowed participants to learn from the instructor, speakers, and other students. Participants appreciated this format and found it supportive for their learning. Jacob described the class climate as "very collegial." Other participants also expressed their appreciation for the way in which the class was

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managed. For instance, Jennifer commented that "people were encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions, and I always felt like everyone was respected when they did bring something to the table."

In addition, participants were able to learn from the instructor's experiences. For example, Emma appreciated that the instructor was open about her personal and professional experiences. "[The instructor's] stories of what's happened to her have been very eye opening," Emma said. "I give her credit. I don't think that I could share that much of my personal life that she does, but she does to help other people that may not have the ideal situations on the personal or professional." Furthermore, the instructor managed to provide different opportunities for students to get engaged in learning. She communicated very well, gave timely feedback, shared her real experience, invited speakers, and had the class at a restaurant. The instructor held the class at a restaurant for once, which was a positive experience for participants. Jennifer stated that:

> We actually went to a restaurant in the nearby area, and there were some guest speakers that came. We actually just got to socialize with each other, share a meal, and then we did have class, and we listened to the guest speakers. It was really nice to just be able to relax together. I appreciated that a lot.

Participants perceived that the class had various opportunities for students to get engaged in learning about the professoriate. Participants appreciated these opportunities and thought that such opportunities were supportive for their learning and preparation.

Better understanding and real views of the professoriate. Participants described the course as very helpful, important, impactful and other positive adjectives.

The course helped students to have a better understanding of the professoriate and the skills they need to work on to become successful. Through different assignments and community of learners, the course also provided students with opportunities to understand the broader concept of the professoriate. "It helped us understand the entire realm of education, not just in our little cage," James said.

Prior to taking the course, some participants were struggling to understand certain fundamental aspects of the professoriate. For example, Sarah indicated, "Before I started, I didn't even know the difference between assistant professor, associate, and full. That was news to me, the promotion and tenure stuff, no idea how it worked." The course allowed her to understand professors' ranks and gave her a clear idea of tenure and promotion process. Amelia did not know how to achieve tenure before taking the course. Emma reflected, after taking the course, that she now knows what it means to be a professor and the skills that she can improve on to be successful. Kayla mentioned that "the class really did a good job of presenting as many opportunities to understand the professoriate as possible." She continued, "I think that a lot of times, people think of being a professor, and you're either thinking research or teaching, and not knowing that most professors have to do both, along with service and some administrative roles." Participants reported that the course widened their perspectives to think about the professoriate and higher education in general. "[The course] just made me think about the whole big picture," Jacob said. Jennifer also confirmed that by saying "[the course] impacted me in that way that it helped me see a bigger picture than what I was looking at."

Participants thought that the course had positively influenced their ability to better understanding the professoriate. Kevin explained the impact of the course as follows:

I think the impact is going to be pretty big. For us as graduate students we're really going through a lot of this stuff for the first time. We're really going blind into a lot of situations that we just really don't know what to do, don't know where to go, don't know what the right answer is and being able to have these courses where you can bring these people in, who have gone through what you're going through. They can say here's what I did and it worked, or here's what I did and it didn't work.

In addition, Layla explained how the course enhanced clear ideas about various positions and responsibilities in the professoriate. According to Layla,

The course helps you understand what role you want to play in academia. Do you want to be a professor that teaches? Do you want to be a professor that does research and teaches? Or do you think you'd be more interested in academia or in the administration route?

Overall, the course was beneficial to participants in terms of acquiring an understanding and appreciation for the role of professor as well as others who work in higher education.

"I think I'm more aware of certain aspects of the professoriate. I'm more aware that it's just not teaching," James said. Emma was also aware of teaching but not aware of other aspects of the professoriate. Emma stated that "before I took the course, I had an idea of teaching … [but] I didn't have the idea of all the cultural relationships and the research and collegiality and things that could happen." The course also allowed Luke to

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consider other aspects of the role of professor that he did not consider before. According to Luke:

> The Professoriate was a wider swath, a wider perspective relating to more than just teaching. It was about a lot of different avenues related to the role. I think it gave me a wider perspective, and considering factors that maybe I hadn't considered before about the role.

Participants appreciated the course, because they were able to have real views of what the professoriate really is. "[The course] just gives you a really accurate view of what you're getting into," Sarah said. The course provided real views of the professoriate, but surprising to some participants. Emma was surprised at "the whole political thing" in higher education. "That's the biggest surprise I had when I took that course," she said. However, Emma reflected that discussing these topics "has been very helpful to me, because those are the things that I've put on the back burner, because I've spent so much time in class and studying and working."

The speakers who came to class shared their real stories and that was important for participants to get a clear view into the professoriate. Layla described the opportunities to learn from speakers as "the biggest impact." Layla indicated that "the biggest impact that the course made for me was the stories that the different speakers told about their experiences as professors, because it helped me realize what it's really like." Sarah stated that, "I feel like I have an inside look as to how the professoriate works." She explained, "Every week was a brand new experience ... Every single person had a new story to share. I learned so much from each of them."

Practical and reflexive. At the knowledge level, participants had better understandings and real views about the professoriate after taking the course, as described in the previous sections. Moreover, the course through its activities and assignments influenced participants' reflexivity with regard to the professoriate. Participants were able to identify what they want to achieve and how to achieve it. Jennifer said that the course assisted students identifying their strengths as well as the aspects that they could work on to be better. Emma reflected on how the course helped her in a practical way. She said that:

> [The course] helped me define myself and where I want to teach and what I want
> to teach in and what type of students I want to work with and then how to
> promote myself, which I'm very poor at.

The course also helped James to understand and prepare for promotion. "[The course] helped me identify what I should be looking for, what I should be thinking about doing now that might help me to be promoted," James said.

In addition, participants were able to plan for their career path. Participants appreciated that the course made them better prepared to be effective in different positions. Kevin reflected on the impact of the course:

> It was a very, very positive experience. You don't necessarily have a great
> understanding of the entire aspect of being a professor when you're just seeing
> things here and there. Having this class, going through this class, it really gives
> me a good impression of what I need to do to get into a tenure track position (but

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also once I'm in a tenure track position) what is requested of me, what is required of me, what do I need to do, [and] what things do I not necessarily need to do. Participants were able to think about certain aspects of the professoriate and their career in various critical ways. "[The course] made me think about how do I feel about administration or if I were to do tenure position, how would that go?" Layla reflected. Also, Luke applauded that the course helped students to plan their careers and expand their perspectives. According to Luke, the course encouraged students to think and ask themselves: "How should I think about this role? … How should I plan for it? … How do I think about my transition to that 10-year associate professor in a methodical way?"

The course had a significant impact on participants' attitudes toward the professoriate. For instance, Kevin described the impact of the course stating that, "it [the course] prepares you very well to succeed in the professoriate." Another participant, James, became more confident in his ability to succeed in the professoriate. "At times, with the course, I felt confident, it gave me more confidence to move forward as a professor."

The course encouraged students to examine their desires to work certain positions in higher education. "You're like, oh, I thought I wanted to be the dean of the school, but now I definitely don't, or actually, that sounds super exciting," Sarah said. According to Sarah, the course allowed students to make decisions concerning their careers. Sarah explained that:

This course would basically give you a good picture of it [the professoriate.] So you would know whether or not you want to get out of it at this point. Maybe at this point, it still isn't for you and now you know.

Also, Luke compared this course and courses in Aviation where students are given opportunities to reconsider their careers. Luke elaborated as follows:

Some people say, 'Do you know what? I don't want to be a professor.' I think maybe that's okay. Just like we have in our discipline as one of the courses … an intro to Aviation … Some people find out in the process they do not want to fly. It's not a bad thing. It just means that they're on a different path, so that's okay.

In fact, after taking the course, at least one participant expressed her thoughts with regard to choosing another path rather than being a professor. Amelia, who was a nurse, felt stressed because of the job expectations and the demanding nature of work in the professoriate. She said that:

Life happens and then the possibility of losing your job over it [the expectations of the college and/or university], kind of steers me away from that, that route. Maybe, I'll do the clinical track instead of that track of becoming a professor.

The course helped participants to go through a process of investigating their abilities and desires to become professors.

To participants who wanted to become professors, the course allowed them to think about and consider other job options based on their abilities. Emma indicated that she became more aware of other job options and willing to work in other types of institutions. Emma reflected:

I started thinking when I took the course that I was preparing myself to be an assistant professor and associate professor at a research university such as [this university]. When I got through the course, I threw some self-awareness … What I'm shooting for now is thinking that my strengths and what I want to do actually align more in community college or just being an adjunct professor, but I would like to have a full-time position teaching.

Working at a community college was the first choice for Emma. In contrast to Emma's preference, Kevin did not want to work at a community college. Kevin learned from the course that working at a research institution would be the best choice for his career future. Kevin explained that:

With my background, with my Masters in Biology, I can go work at a community or technical college teaching Biology. [However,] I like the 4-year school better, even with the promotion and tenure process, just simply because with a community college, you don't really have very many options to move up in the school since there's so much of a smaller hierarchy of people in a community college. I would be more interested in a 4-year [institution] where, after doing 20 years of teaching and research, you can move up to those more administrative positions to be able to enact change that you see over the course of your time there.

Overall, participants were able to reflect on their own practices and plan for their careers in the professoriate, based on what they had learned from the course.

Formal setting more suitable. Another aspect of the course that participants found beneficial was the formal setting. Participants supported that a formal course for credit within a doctoral program had a more positive influence on their preparatory practices and commitment compared to informal preparatory activities. Moreover, participants who had been in formal preparatory programs (such as formal mentoring) reported that the course enhanced their previous experiences. For instance, Kayla, who had attended a formal mentoring program, thought that the course helped her to "consolidate everything [that she learned from the mentoring program], and not feel quite as lost." Luke also compared between the course and a formal mentoring program that he attended. "They're different but very much complementary experiences. I recommend doing them both, actually." Luke elaborated:

> I felt like the Professoriate course was a good way to cap off the [Mentoring] Program. It was examining issues relating to the career path at a more critical level, because you do things differently for credit than you do for a program that is designed to be voluntary in nature.

The course allowed participants to do more critical thinking in comparison to a mentoring program.

Furthermore, participants indicated that they would be more commitment toward a formal course for credits than an informal course, despite that both courses would cover the same topics. Kevin went into detail on this idea and recommended formal preparatory courses over informal. Kevin explained:

I would think the best opportunity would make it a formal course. Because one of

the problems of having an informal course is as graduate students, we're already

busy. It's trying to get students in to actually go and attend the classroom and

attend the talks. We have these talks [in the EFR Department] but they're very

informal and I find myself finding it hard to get to all of them, just simply because

I have other things to do. If it's a four-credit course that you actually have to go

to and you have assignments and you have a grade, then as a student you feel you

can carve out that time for a class … if it's an actual class, I think that would be

best for students, because then it gives them not only that rigid [idea]: I need to be

in this room from this time to this time, but it also gives them a reason to say I

need to step away from my research to attend class or my faculty advisor's going

to let me go to attend class.

Participants also recommended taking the course by other students who want to become

professors in spite of their doctoral programs. Sarah said, "I think it [the course] would

actually be important for any major or any person intending to become a professor

regardless of a physics student or anyone." Kevin agreed too. According to him,

As far as preparing students for the professoriate, I really feel that this class is a

great opportunity that I would like to see expanded out. Almost every doctoral

student, I think, should take some version of this class.

Participants not only appreciated taking a formal preparatory course for credits but also

found it beneficial and recommended it over informal courses. Participants perceived

that formal courses as part of a doctoral program better suited their needs, taking into

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consideration the challenges that doctoral students experience (see also previous sections

under Perceived Challenges Face Doctoral Students). Furthermore, participants

suggested that doctoral programs should provide similar formal preparatory courses to

their students, especially who desire a position in the professoriate.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Many studies on doctoral students have explored the challenges that threaten doctoral students' success in their studies (Devine & Hunter, 2016; Maher et al., 2004; Wao, 2010). Furthermore, doctoral graduates face other challenges when they enter academia. A significant number of studies on new faculty and faculty success revealed that new faculty face challenges that might negatively affect their success and well-being in the professoriate (Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015). Therefore, there have been calls to prepare doctoral students who desire a position in higher education for the professoriate (Austin, 2002a; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gaff et al., 2000). Several preparatory strategies have been explored and adopted, such as socialization and mentoring (Bagaka et al., 2015; Dobie et al., 2010; Gardner, 2010a, 2010b). However, literature showed that less research, if any, has been conducted concerning doctoral students' experiences taking formal preparatory courses which were included in doctoral programs. The current ethnographic study aimed to contribute to the literature about doctoral students' experiences in a formal preparatory course that was part of their doctoral program.

In Chapter I, statements of the research problem and purpose were presented. Also, Chapter I included a description of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this research study. In Chapter II, a review of the literature was provided

in areas related to the current research study. The review of the literature covered several topics, such as: the development of the professoriate; trends and challenges affecting the professoriate in the current time; challenges facing faculty; and strategies and initiatives to prepare doctoral graduates for the professoriate. Chapter III contains a detailed description of the methodology, which included the design of the study, gaining access and participant recruitment, data collection, trustworthiness, and data analysis. In Chapter IV, the findings were presented, using quotes from the raw data to emphasize the significance of the study. A summary of the study and a discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter V. Recommendations for future research are mentioned when applicable, throughout this chapter. Finally, Chapter V is concluded with implications.

Overview of the Current Research Study

Using an ethnographic case study approach and informed by Bhaskar's (1978) concepts of critical realism, the researcher pursued to develop an understanding of doctoral students' perceptions of factors that influenced their understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate. The primary research question was: What are factors that influenced doctoral students' understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate? In addition, the following three sub-questions were addressed:

- How do doctoral students formally and informally prepare themselves for the professoriate?

- How does a formal course such as "The Professoriate" influence the understanding and preparation of doctoral students toward the professoriate?

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- What other concerns influence doctoral students' attitudes with respect to their future positions in higher education?

Multiple data collection methods were used in this qualitative research study, including: observation, collection of related document, interviews and member checking. The researcher conducted his observation of the preparatory course (The Professoriate) during the Fall 2015 semester. He attended the class and had the role of participant-as-observer. During this phase of the study, the researcher was able to immerse himself in the participants' culture, observe the class and collect related documents. After that, the researcher conducted interviews with ten participants, four males and six females, who were doctoral students in different stages of their studies in two doctoral programs. The interviews took place during the Summer 2016 semester. Next, interviews were transcribed for data analysis. Various strategies were implemented to increase the trustworthiness of this research study, such as spending extended time in the field, using different sources for data collection, as well as member checking and peer debriefing. Further discussion of these strategies were presented previously under the Trustworthiness section.

A thematic analysis technique was used to analyze the raw data. First, key concepts and patterns were identified in the form of codes. Next, categories emerged from the process of coding, re-coding and reduction of the data. Through the review of categories, themes were formed which represented participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). As a result, the study revealed five major themes. The researcher studied the relationships between themes to seek understanding and make interpretations. The

researcher then developed five assertions based on the study of emerging themes. These

assertions are presented and discussed in this chapter. The discussion highlight

influential factors which affected (directly and indirectly) doctoral students'

understanding, preparation and attitudes toward the professoriate.

<div align="center">**Assertions**</div>

Assertion One: Perceived Challenges in Doctoral Programs

Assertion One suggests that doctoral students and their families navigated their

way through several challenges related to lack of balance, work and family obligations,

and PhD program requirements. The current research study revealed that doctoral

students struggled to balance work and their personal lives. This lack of balance

contributed to the difficulty that doctoral students experience during their studies and to

the lack of students' involvement in informal preparatory activities. In addition, the

doctoral program's structure was perceived by some participants as a reason for their lack

of balance. Past research identified doctoral students' abilities to balance their work and

personal lives as a factor for doctorate degree completion (Brus, 2006; Stimpson & Filer,

2011). According to Brus (2006), doctoral students "struggle to balance their academic

pursuits with their personal lives and responsibilities" (p. 31). However, according to

Stimpson and Filer (2011), "work-life balance is a topic discussed more frequently in the

literature concerning faculty than graduate students in higher education" (p. 70).

Furthermore, according to Martinez, Ordu, Della Sala, and McFarlane (2013): "Although

work-life balance has materialized as a topic of study and stimulus for policy initiatives

in higher education, few studies have considered doctoral student work-lives" (p. 41).

The investigation of doctoral students' challenges in the current research study was important, because it highlighted the issue of imbalance in the lives of doctoral students. These findings suggest further research on this issue of doctoral students' lack of balance and its impact on doctoral students' success.

In addition, the perceptions of their program's structure as a reason for doctoral students' imbalances confirmed findings from other studies. For example, Hwang et al. (2015) conducted a mixed methods study to investigate doctoral students' perceived barriers in completing their doctoral degrees. They found that program structure, which included course sequence and flexibility of course schedule, was perceived as one of the six major barriers to complete doctoral degrees (Hwang et al., 2015). In addition, Martinez et al. (2013) found that the flexibility in doctoral students' school and work schedules might help students to attain their degrees. It also is important to notice that all participants in the current research study were seeking a doctoral degree due to work-related directives or reasons. This finding is consistent with the findings of several past studies that indicated that many doctoral students have an external motivation to complete a doctoral degree, including: gaining work benefits (Hinkle et al., 2014; Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jablonski, 2001).

Assertion Two: Perceptions of the Professoriate

Assertion Two was combined from three assertions related to doctoral students' perceptions of the professoriate. Doctoral students perceived that a professor has multiple roles and responsibilities. Also, doctoral students perceived that working in the professoriate can be uncertain and of a demanding nature. These perceptions about the

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work of professors were consistent with findings in previous studies. Past research on "new faculty" and "faculty success" reported that there are pressures on faculty to fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities, which result in demand on faculty time and higher levels of stress (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008). The doctoral students' perceptions of professors' work and its nature seemed accurate to the results from these studies. Also, the current study showed a higher level of awareness among doctoral students concerning faculty work and its nature.

Despite the nature of work, doctoral students in this study also perceived that working in the professoriate can be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding. Doctoral students reported that working with students was exciting and enjoyable. They appreciated that professors are afforded the flexibility and autonomy in their positions. This particular feature of the professoriate seemed to be critical to doctoral students who want to become faculty in the future. Interestingly, past research has shown that faculty with a higher perceived degree of autonomy have a lower intention of leaving the profession, and vice versa (Daly & Dee, 2006; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Furthermore, doctoral students perceive that working in the professoriate will allow them to provide a benefit to society and make a difference in students' lives. Doctoral students' positive perceptions about the professoriate seemed to be their intrinsic motivation for seeking a doctoral degree. Past research indicated the importance of motivation for doctoral students' success and persistence (Lovitts, 2008; Weidman et al., 2001). However, doctoral students'

motivation has been less studied overall (Leech, 2012). Therefore, the findings of the current research study suggest further investigation of doctoral students' intrinsic motivation in terms of the relationship to students' persistence to complete their degrees, as well as in relationship to their attitudes toward the professoriate.

Finally, doctoral students perceived three main attributes of successful professors, that included: dedication, understanding the job expectations, and developing relationships with students and colleagues. Doctoral students' perceptions of the nature of work in the professoriate seemed to influence their perceptions of successful professors. Therefore, dedication that included hard work, time investment, and internal motivation was perceived as an attribute for success in the professoriate. The other two perceived attributes (understanding the job expectations and developing relationships) were indicated as critical factors for success in the professoriate by earlier and recent researchers (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Mullen & Forbes, 2000; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008). Overall, doctoral students' perceptions of the professoriate influence their understanding of how to achieve success in the professoriate and their attitudes concerning working as professors.

Assertion Three: Perceived Concerns related to Working in the Professoriate

Assertion Three suggests that doctoral students perceived concerns with regard to working in the professoriate due to the demanding nature of the work and higher education pressures. Participants perceived that the demanding nature of work in the professoriate may affect their well-being. Also, they were concerned that working in the

professoriate may lead to feeling burned out, lacking balance, and working in a competitive work climate. In addition, doctoral students had concerns about working in the professoriate because of higher education pressures which included lack of job security, lack of funding, lack of autonomy, and inflation of job expectations and requirements. A significant number of studies indicated crucial challenges for faculty, such as unclear expectations, lack of fiscal resources, questionable tenure and promotion systems, demoralizing work environments, and lack of control over demanding workloads (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gappa et al., 2007; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010; Lee, 2010; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; O'Meara et al., 2008; Ouellett, 2010; Romero, 2014; Rosser, 2005; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli et al., 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman & Brown, 2005; Trower & Gallagher, 2008). The current research study confirmed that doctoral students have significant concerns with regard to working in the professoriate, which affect their attitudes toward the professoriate.

Assertion Four: Preparatory Practices and Opportunities

Assertion Four states that doctoral students perceived a lack of formal preparatory opportunities within their programs. Also, they perceived a lack of time and balance as challenges that prevented them from taking advantage of informal preparatory opportunities. There has been less discussion in the literature on formal preparatory opportunities within doctoral programs. This research study revealed a lack of such formal preparatory opportunities. Moreover, the perceived challenges that doctoral students experience in their studies (i.e., lack of time and balance) have an influence on

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students' informal preparatory practices. Past research confirms that students' social

integration with peers and faculty is important for doctoral persistence (Austin &

McDaniels, 2006; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Gardner, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Gopaul,

2011; Maher et al., 2004; West et al., 2011). Furthermore, doctoral students value

positive relationships with peers and faculty (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; West et al.,

2011). Participants in the current research study shared similar perspectives on the value

of positive relationships with peers and faculty. Nonetheless, findings pointed out a lack

of doctoral students' informal social activities due to a lack of time and balance. Past

research on socialization indicated that student commitment is required throughout the

socialization process (Weidman, et al. 2001). These challenges facing doctoral students

were perceived as barriers that affected their ability to be committed to or get involved in

informal preparatory activities. The findings suggest further research into the formal

opportunities available for students within doctoral programs and the barriers affecting

students' ability to participate in informal preparatory activities. Also, it is recommended

to conduct a study to measure and compare the impact of formal and informal preparatory

practices on doctoral students.

Assertion Five: The Professoriate Course and its Value

Assertion Five is a combination of four assertions related to doctoral students'

perspectives about the formal preparatory course (The Professoriate) and its value. The

findings from this study indicate that the formal course was significant in preparing

doctoral students, because it helped students to reflect on their experiences and have a

better understanding and a realistic view of the professoriate through various learning

Providing Real Views

Practical and Reflexive

Formal and For-Credit

Elements of
Significant
Preparatory
Course

Various Learning Opportunities
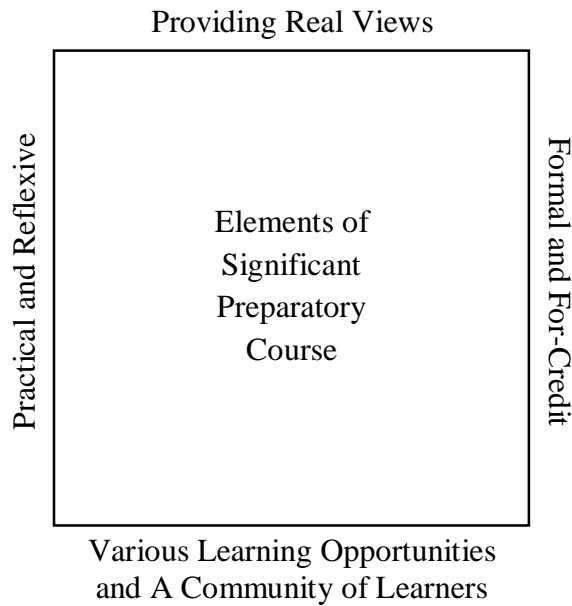and A Community of Learners

Figure 2. Square of Significant Preparatory Course

opportunities and a community of learners in a formal for-credit course. Four elements

emerged from participants' perspectives and justified the significance of the course. The

four elements are shown in Figure 2.

The course prepared students on the four categories that Austin and McDaniels

(2006) proposed for successful doctoral student development competencies. The four

categories include: "(1) conceptual understandings; (2) knowledge and skills in key areas

of faculty work; (3) interpersonal skills; and (4) professional attitudes and habits" (Austin

& McDaniels, 2006, p. 417). Also, the course helped students to address their challenges,

perceptions of the professoriate, concerns, and preparatory practices. Therefore, doctoral

students were able to have a better understanding and real views about the professoriate.

The participants claimed that they had a broader knowledge of the professoriate after

taking the course. In addition, the course facilitated doctoral students' abilities to reflect on their own practices and plan for their future career paths.

Overall, doctoral students found the course to be helpful in terms of making them more prepared for the professoriate. According to Bain (2004), students tend to learn effectively when:

(1) they are trying to solve problems (intellectual, physical, artistic, practical, or abstract) that they find intriguing, beautiful, or important; (2) they are able to do so in a challenging yet supportive environment in which they can feel a sense of control over their own education; (3) they can work collaboratively with other learners to grapple with the problems; (4) they believe that their work will be considered fairly and honestly; and (5) they can try, fail, and receive feedback from expert learners in advance of and separate from any judgment of their efforts (p. 109).

Through a community of learners and reflexive assignments, students were able to take ownership, become responsible for their learning, and trust the instructor to facilitate their learning (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Huba & Freed, 2000). When students take ownership, they see the value in sharing their ideas (Stearns, 2013). Doctoral students valued that they were offered opportunities for collaboration and discussion which made them able to share their ideas and past experiences as well as to learn from others. The acknowledgment of doctoral students' contributions encouraged their participation throughout the semester (Davis, 2009; Rocca, 2010). Also, the course assignments

related to students' prior knowledge and experiences (Davis, 2009; Huba & Freed, 2000; Merriam et al., 2007).

Students' learning is enhanced when they trust the instructor to facilitate their learning (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Huba & Freed, 2000). Providing realistic views and sharing real stories in the course allowed to create a great rapport between students and the instructor. In addition, doctoral students perceived that formal courses, which were part of a doctoral program, to be more beneficial and to better meet their needs. Related to challenges which doctoral students experience during their studies, students perceived that formal courses enhanced their commitment to prepare for the professoriate. Furthermore, doctoral students suggested that other doctoral programs should adopt similar formal preparatory courses for their students who desire a career in higher education. Further research is suggested on similar formal courses in different doctoral programs as well as in different institutions.

Implications

In terms of implications from this study, educators in doctoral programs need to address and evaluate students' challenges and preparatory activities. The revision of their students' challenges and preparatory activities will allow them to make adjustments for students that enhance their success in the program as well as in the professoriate in future. Also, there is a critical need for addressing faculty challenges by stakeholders in higher education. Faculty challenges are doctoral students' concerns which affect students' attitudes toward working in higher education. Addressing such challenges and concerns

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will better assist faculty to maintain balance and well-being as well as positively influence doctoral students' perspectives and attitudes concerning the professoriate.

In addition, the findings supported the importance of providing formal preparatory courses as part of doctoral programs. Formal courses within doctoral programs allow students to devote their time for preparation which will help them to better understand the professoriate and plan for their careers. Also, experienced professors are encouraged to share their experiences and views through the participation in such courses. Doctoral students appreciate feedback from experienced professors on higher education issues in a formal course setting. Formal preparatory courses within doctoral programs might become the best way to prepare students for the professoriate.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
A List of Weekly Topics Discussed in Class

Introduction and Course Syllabus

The Instructor's Journey Through the Professoriate

Entering the Profession

Teaching Undergraduate and Graduate Students: Similarities and Differences

Writing for Publication

Service

The Promotion and Tenure Process

Understanding the Administrator's Role

Leading from the Middle

Future of the Professoriate

Comparison of Administrative Roles

Role of a President

Appendix B
A List of Handouts' Titles and Black Board Material

Handouts:

Time Management for Professors

Some Things I Have learned About Healthy Eating

Ways to Make Your Communication More Efficient

2012 Faculty Beliefs and Values Survey

Entering the Professoriate

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Tips for Effectively Completing Research

Writing and Publishing a Manuscript

Tenure and Promotion Process

Community College Quiz

Writing Expectations for Doctoral Students

On Blackboard:

Faculty Evaluation Guidelines & Handbook

Writing Expectations

Searching Online Libraries

APA 6th Edition Guide

Appendix C
Interview Protocol Form

Student Interview Protocol

Institution: ……………………………………………………………..
Interviewee: ……………………………………………………………..
Interviewer: Mohammed S. Alkathiri

I. Introductory Protocol

You have been selected for this interview because you have been identified as a student who has taken The Professoriate course. The purpose of this research study is to explore what factors influence students' understanding, preparation and attitude toward the professoriate before and after taking this course.

Thank you for taking part in this interview. For the purpose of the study, I would like to audio tape our conversations today. After the period of time set by the IRB, the tapes will be completely destroyed. The consent form states your rights that: (1) all information is confidential; (2) you are voluntarily participating in this interview and you may stop at any time; (3) there are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. This interview is planned to last no longer than one hour. Please sign the consent form.

II. Interview Questions
A. Interviewee Background
1. Tell me about yourself and your background.
Probes:
- Where they have lived, worked and obtained degrees? (work history and field(s) of study)
- Why did you choose to obtain your most recent degree?

2. Please describe your journey so far?
Probes:
- Tell me about the sort of work that students undertake in your program.
- Can you tell any stories related to this?

B. Understanding, concerns and Attitude toward the Professoriate

3. What would it be like to become a professor?

Probes:

- What skills you have? Think you need?
- What work you expect to be doing?
- What concerns you?
- What opportunities **have been/would be** important for you to be prepared?
- Can you recall any stories related to this?

4. How do you feel about being/becoming a professor?

Probes:

- How would you evaluate your ability to get a job in higher education? Why?
- Please describe the type of work and responsibilities that you expect yourself as a future professor to perform?

5. In your perfect world, describe the job you will be doing after completion of the certificate or degree you are pursuing.

6. Tell me about the aspects that concern you regarding working in higher education.

7. Please describe what you think anyone planning to work in higher education should know about the professoriate.

C. Preparation for the Professoriate

8. Please describe how you are socializing and/or networking within your department/field?

9. Did you have a mentor?

- Tell me about what you believe your mentor's role was.
- Can you recall any stories related to this?

10. Please explain to me the challenges and difficulties you have experienced related to preparing yourself for the professoriate.

11. Tell me about the preparatory opportunities that are available to students in your program and how you discovered these opportunities.

12. In terms of preparation for the professoriate, please tell me how the program you are now in helped you and in what ways?

Probes:

- Are there any changes you would like to see implemented?
- If so, what might those be?

D. The Professoriate Course

13. Please describe the formal preparatory course (The Professoriate) you took.
Probes:
- What did it include?
    - Class environment? Required texts? Activities? Assignments?
- What topics were covered throughout the course?
    - What was the most interesting to you? Why?
- What role did it play in preparing students?
- Why was this course important?
- How did you feel about your experience taking the course?
- How thoroughly were your questions answered?
- How was the feedback provided?
- Were there any aspects of the course you would like to see changed?
- Were there assignments that were valuable to you?
- How do you see the impact of the course over time?
- What a professor was, before taking the course?

E. Wrap Up

14. Are there any other points relating to preparing students for the professoriate that you would like to make that we have not covered in this interview?

III. Other Topics Discussed

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IV. Post Interview Notes and/or Observations

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