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A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR K-12 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
AND THEIR USE AS THE DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE
FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EDUCATION DOCTORATE PROGRAM
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

by

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A dissertation in practice submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the College of Education and Human Performance
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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ABSTRACT

This study conducted at the University of Central Florida was completed to inform the Ed. D. in Education program within the College of Education and Human Performance. The main purpose of the study was to determine the Dissertation in Practice (DiP) project types that should be allowed for use as the capstone requirement based on a needs analysis of K-12 schools and school districts. The secondary purpose was to inform the instructional design of the program to ensure the necessary skills and knowledge required are included in the program.

The study was conducted in the University of Central Florida's Ed. D. in Education program and employed a qualitative approach to a needs analysis. Interviews were conducted with two distinctly different participant groups. The first group was comprised of administrators and teacher-leaders identified by a superintendent of a rural school district in Central Florida as "highly effective". The second group of participants was comprised of current Ed. D. students working in K-12 education with more than 10 years' experience.

This research identified specific project types that best support school improvement and should therefore be integrated into the Ed. D. in Education program as allowable project types for use as the Dissertation in Practice. The results also identified qualities of highly effective administrators and teacher-leaders that may be considered by program faculty for inclusion in the design and implementation of the curriculum for the Ed. D. in Education program.

Implications of this research include using the results to inform instructional practices and the allowable DiP projects for the Ed. D. in Education program. As this study was a needs analysis that serves as a basis for program instructional decisions, the results of this study may inform other Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) member institutions how to modify or enhance their programs as well.

The focus on this study was exclusively on K-12 education. However many students enrolled in the program work in business, government, or non-profit settings. This research could be replicated to determine improvement project types that are commonly implemented in those settings in order to better meet the needs of all students enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program.

I dedicate this project to my wife Junie who is also working to complete her Ed. D. in this program. Driving to class, studying, worrying about how to complete homework assignments, submitting IRB requests, and the many other issues that have arisen over the past three years were all fun because we were experiencing them together.

Without your support and guidance, I would have never been able to complete this process. When times got tough and I questioned my ability to continue in the program your assurances kept me going. You are the love of my life and I cannot imagine where I would be or what I would be doing if I was not your loving husband.

I love you more than words can say.

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I must first recognize Dr. David Boote for his help not only with this document but for his guidance throughout the completion of this program. You have been a mentor and advisor and helped me realize that I could not only complete the program but do well and learn more than I thought possible in the process. The many hours of assistance, discussion, and guidance over the past three years were invaluable and have been greatly appreciated. I feel very fortunate to have been able to work with you. It's not every day that a doctoral student gets the chance to work with the smartest person in the college. I have the utmost respect for you as an expert in education, as a researcher, teacher and mentor.

I also give thanks to Dr. Thomas Vitale, the program coordinator of the redesigned Ed. D. program. Being the first cohort, there were many growing pains and other issues that needed to be resolved during the presentation of the program as it progressed. Each semester brought its own new challenges, and you were always there to give advice and clarification. Over the past three years, whenever I started to doubt myself or was just confused, you were there with a quick and reassuring response, usually within an hour of receiving the panicked request. It has been a pleasure not only getting to know you but realizing that your first and foremost priority was the students. Your assistance and friendship have made this program a great success not only for me but, I am sure, for the rest of our cohort.

Finally, I must thank Dr. Valerie Storey. It was during the time when you were teaching our leadership class that you mentioned the International Conference on

Doctoral Education meeting coming up on our campus. This gave me the motivation to learn more about the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) and led me to my first conference presentation. That conference, where you took the time to introduce me to the many international experts on the subject of professional practice doctorates started me on the path that led me not only to my dissertation topic but my first published article. I am grateful that you took an interest in me and helped me pursue my research focus.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Traditional education doctor of philosophy (Ph. D.) programs require two to three years of coursework followed by several years of conducting research and writing a lengthy, formal dissertation. This traditional dissertation format is considered the signature pedagogy of Ph. D. programs. However, education Ph. D. programs were not producing professionals who could make effective and long lasting changes in our schools (Shulman, Golde, Bueschel & Garabedian, 2006). This led to the creation of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) with the mission to rethink the research doctorate and develop principles to redefine professional practice doctorates (CPED, n.d.). The CPED vision was for doctor of education (Ed.D.) programs to focus on problems of practice with the goal of creating scholar-practitioners as opposed to the Ph. D. trained academic-researchers (Shulman et al., 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The CPED was organized to provide guidance for universities to collaboratively redesign the Ed. D. to make it a stronger program for school practitioners (CPED, n.d.). They concluded the purpose of the education Ed. D. should be to create scholar practitioners who can use research methods, analyze data, collaborate with others, and have practical knowledge of leadership including organizational realities. To assist in the redesign efforts, CPED defined six working principles (Appendix A) as a guide for the development of professional practice doctorates (CPED, n.d.). CPED also recommended the traditional dissertation to be replaced with what was referred to as the Dissertation in

Practice (DiP). However, CPED provided no specific guidance on DiP formats or the type of skills, knowledge, and dispositions it should measure. At the time of this study, the faculty implementing the redesign of the Ed. D. in Education program at the University of Central Florida's (UCF) College of Education and Human Performance (COEHP) remained unsure as to what types of projects should be considered appropriate for the dissertation in practice. For the purpose of this study, the word project is used to define any type of initiative or process conducted within a school or school district that would lead to school improvement. Additionally, it should be recognized that UCF has three separate Ed. D. programs, the Ed.D. in Education and the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership which has separate two tracks. This study deals exclusively with the Ed.D. in Education program.

Their goal was to ensure the capstone requirements provide the necessary investigation and scholarship while providing an authentic representation of professional work that best meets the needs of the graduates in the program who are practitioners in K-12 environments. The problem of practice, therefore, was to identify the most appropriate K-12 school improvement projects that could then be used as the focus for the DiP in the UCF Ed. D. in Education program for those students employed in K-12 school environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in

Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. For the design of instruction to adequately support learning, it is important to understand the nature of tasks that students will be performing as a result of the instruction (Jonassen, Tessmer, & Hannum, 1999). To make this determination the researcher will conduct a needs analysis to identify what types of school improvement projects are needed to improve K-12 schools.

In an effort to meet CPED recommendations, member universities have been redesigning their education doctoral programs. Although Ed. D. programs are being successfully redesigned based on the CPED principles by experienced and knowledgeable faculty, the purpose and format of the DiP remains unclear. With no specific guidance, institutions are left to determine how to evaluate the attainment of skills, knowledge, and dispositions of their students through the use of the undefined DiP as the capstone requirement.

Another issue concerning the capstone project in the professional practice Ed. D. in Education program is that it should provide for an assessment of students' learning and their ability to perform successfully in the workplace (Willis, Inman & Valenti, 2010). Many educators agree that the best assessments of classroom learning are those that are authentic (Archbald & Newman, 1988). Most all definitions of authentic assessments include the requirement to have application in the real world (Frey, Schmitt, & Allen, 2012). Others define it as the process of "judging student learning by measuring performance according to real-life-skills criteria" (Yen & Hynes, 2011, p. 423). All of these definitions support the theories on teaching for understanding espoused by Wiggins

& McTighe (2005) and their principles of results-focused design. Rule (2006) conducted a literature review on the subject of authentic assessment in higher education and determined that there were four commonly agreed to characteristics of authentic assessment: (a) involve real world problems, (b) include open-ended inquiry, thinking skills and metacognition, (c) engage students in discourse and social learning, and (d) empower students through choice to direct their own learning.

Based on the CPED working principles, students completing a project that involves solving a complex problem of practice in the real world would be an authentic assessment. Applying this principle to the Ed. D. in Education at UCF, an appropriate DiP should require the student to conduct open-ended inquiry, improve thinking skills, be involved in social environments, and direct their own learning to solve a problem of practice in the workplace. These guidelines serve as further support for the importance of defining appropriate DiP projects which will be authentic and help ensure student success in the workplace.

A theory espoused by Archbald (2008) concerns the form and function of the doctoral thesis. He believes that in order for the education thesis, in this case the DiP, to be accepted as equal to the traditional dissertation it must contain four specific elements or as he calls “qualities.” These four are (a) developmental efficacy, (b) community benefit, (c) intellectual stewardship, and (d) distinctive form. Because the focus of this study is the project types that should be used in the DiP in the Ed.D. in Education program, the only quality that pertains to this research is the quality of community benefit. He defines community benefit as a product that benefits a larger community

including “the candidate’s organization, community constituents, clients, and professional peers.” (pg.709) In relation to the DiP, solving a problem of practice in a local school or school district would meet this quality.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. To make that determination, the primary question to research is, “What types of school improvement projects are needed to improve K-12 schools?” The answer to this question would include a list of the appropriate project types that should be used as the DiP in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. Although the Ed. D. in Education has accepted students from many disciplines including business, government, higher education, and non-profits into the program, the majority of the students enrolled were working in K-12 education. Thus, this research was focused only on that environment. Following are two additional subordinate research questions which were formulated to guide the researcher in the identification of underlying issues within K-12 education that could contribute to a complete answer to the primary research question and impact the instructional design of the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF.

1. What skills do “highly effective” teacher-leaders possess that others do not?
2. What school problems represent the highest concern for administrators and teacher-leaders working in K-12?

Significance of the Study

It would be helpful if member institutions define the purpose of the program's dissertation in practice to support graduates in being successful in their field. Educators involved in providing Ph. D. programs often believe that any doctoral program that does not include a traditional dissertation is inadequate. Faculty members who currently hold an Ed. D. are concerned that any doctoral program that does not require a traditional dissertation will result in decreased credibility of their degrees by their colleagues (D. Boote, November 13, 2013). Students enrolled in the redesigned programs worry that they will be perceived as completing something less than a true doctoral degree (In-class discussion, September 3, 2012).

It is the role and responsibility of program faculty to define the design of a dissertation in practice in a professional practice Ed. D. program. This will improve the ability of scholar practitioners to “construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities” (CPED, n.d., n.p.) while using practical knowledge of leadership and understanding organizational realities. A rigorous DiP, respected by both faculty and students, will assist in maintaining the credibility of both past and future graduates of Ed. D. programs. Establishing a flexible and rigorous format for the dissertation in practice can provide the signature pedagogy for the professional practice Ed. D..

Organizational Context of the Ed.D. in Education

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate began in 2007 with the goal of providing member universities guidance to distinguish the Ed. D. from the Ph. D. (CPED,

n.d.). UCF joined the initiative as a founding member and began the process of redesigning its Ed. D. in Education program with a focus on the practical application of educational leadership to adequately prepare scholarly and influential practitioners and to prepare educational leaders who could apply practical knowledge to the workplace (CPED, n.d.).

When the redesign of the Ed. D. in Education began at UCF, many faculty members did not support the concept. Without the direct assistance from the dean, the redesign efforts would not have progressed (M. Robinson, Personal Communication, Oct 21, 2013). With an emphasis on teaching the skills required for professional practice and not research, faculty were asked to shift their focus away from their personal interest in research and focus on student learning outcomes and success. This is not an easy request to make of faculty members entrenched in the “publish or perish” mentality of higher education (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

At the time of this study in 2013-2014, the College of Education and Human Performance (COEHP) at UCF offered those individuals seeking a doctoral degree four distinct options, giving prospective students the ability to choose the program they believe best suited their needs. These programs consisted of the traditional Ph. D., two tracks within the Educational Leadership Ed. D. including Higher Education and Policy Studies and the Executive Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, and the Ed. D. in Education referred to in the UCF catalog as a professional practice Ed. D. (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d.). Each program and track offers students a unique curriculum based on the educational track chosen by them. The focus of this study is the Ed. D. in Education only.

In support of the desire for UCF to become a top research university, the COEHP had concentrated its Ph. D. programs on research, similar to that of most Ph. D. programs. The COEHP offered 14 different Ph. D. tracks in a wide range of educational programs with all tracks requiring a traditional dissertation. The goal of these programs was to develop academic researchers capable of assuming faculty positions at universities (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d.).

Dr. Sandra Robinson, Dean of the COEHP, had long expressed an interest in redesigning the Ed. D. as a more practitioner-based program. A chance encounter with Dr. David Imig, the Co-Chair of CPED, in an airport led Dr. Robinson to express interest in becoming a CPED member. Based on that discussion, UCF became a founding member of CPED. Dr. Mike Robinson, head of all doctoral programs in the COEHP, also had a long history of Ed. D. redesign efforts. Starting in 1991, the leadership necessary to begin redesigning the Ed. D. programs was in place (M. Robinson, Personal Communication, Oct 21, 2013). Dr. David Boote developed the initial proposal for the Ed.D. in Education and led the first program redesign. This redesign did not include the Executive Ed. D. in Educational Leadership.

It was clear to the Dean that the Ph. D. programs, with their focus on research, were not meeting the needs of practitioners. She also recognized that the Ed. D. programs in place did not differ significantly from the Ph. D. programs. With these issues in mind, her goal was to create a clearly differentiated program with as much rigor as the Ph. D. The focus was to be on educating and preparing graduates as scholar

practitioners, the exact goal of CPED (M. Robinson, Personal Communication, Oct 21, 2013).

Following the principles of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), program faculty decided to focus on what tasks and skills the graduates of the program would need as practitioners in the field (D. Boote, personal communication, April 11, 2013). In 2008, the first redesign was completed and referred to as the Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction (C & I). In this program, much of the coursework remained the same as in the previous program, but the emphasis shifted to be more oriented to the CPED goals of professional practice. The classes were taught in the evenings with 15 semester hours required in specialization courses and all other classes determined by the student.

In 2009, in an effort to more fully implement the CPED guidelines, another redesign was completed by Dr. David Boote that eliminated the C & I name and referred to the degree as the Ed. D. in Education. Boote's task was to clearly differentiate the program from the Ph. D. tracks while maintaining the rigor of a doctoral program. In this revision, the course work was more precisely defined and sequenced, eliminating many of the options the students that were allowed in the previous version. In approaching the redesign from that standpoint, it became clear early on that the existing courses would not meet the needs of the students and that new courses would need to be created. Developing these new courses would result in an additional load on the existing faculty as the current program was using existing resources (M. Robinson, Personal Communication, Oct. 21, 2013). Unfortunately, most faculty were uncooperative and

made it difficult to provide the necessary course work to fulfill the requirements (T. Vitale, personal communication, April 17, 2014).

A new program coordinator was hired in 2010 and another redesign began. For six months, brown bag lunches were held once a week in an effort to gain faculty support (T. Vitale, personal communication, April 17, 2014). As in many other CPED universities, many issues were voiced by faculty. Most were concerned about the perceived lack of rigor for any program that did not require the traditional dissertation. Faculty believed that anything different was not an appropriate capstone requirement for a doctoral student. Others were just too busy with their current workload and did not have the time to be involved with developing and teaching new courses. In order to proceed with the redesign efforts, the faculty who did not support the redesign were not asked to be involved. These faculty members did not stand in the way; they simply chose to not be involved (Mike Robinson, Personal Communication, Oct 21, 2013). This resulted in a limitation in the specializations that could be offered to support the program.

After the initial redesign efforts and with more involvement with CPED, the new Ed. D. program based on CPED principles was implemented and listed in the UCF Graduate Catalog (n.d.) as the professional practice Ed. D. in Education. The first cohort was accepted in the program in the Fall of 2011. According to the UCF program description, this program “is problem-based and designed for practitioners who aspire to positions of influence through their engagement in the development of others” (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d., n.p.). The program included a core of courses in learning, development, motivation, data, accountability, leadership, and the use of inquiry to drive

decision-making and was “intended for professionals who are interested in teaching in a college, university, or community college, or leading program improvement in a school or school district, higher education, social service agencies, military or business settings” (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d., n.p.).

One of the main changes to the program was the elimination of the traditional social or behavioral research-based dissertation. To some faculty, this translated as a lack of rigor and prestige (D. Boote, personal communication, April 11, 2013). Many students who had or were completing their degrees believed that the redesigned program would diminish the credibility of their Ed. D. Also, because they had had to complete a traditional dissertation, anyone completing a doctorate should also complete the dissertation as it was the “rite of passage” to a doctoral degree. The organizational culture at the time did not support the CPED initiatives or the redesign process (D. Boote, personal communication, April 11, 2013). Even though the Dean of Graduate Studies, who was involved with the Council of Graduate Studies, recommended the elimination of the dissertation, most stakeholders believed that the political reality was that it would be too much change too fast and they would lose support and hurt the overall success of the redesign (D. Boote, personal communication, April 11, 2013). The tradition of completing a five chapter dissertation was well engrained in the institutional culture of the organization as the symbolic rite of passage for all doctoral students (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Based on the negative perceptions of the redesign voiced by many faculty members, it was clear that because of the organizational culture and the political reality of needing some level of faculty support, the elimination of the dissertation in its entirety

was not considered possible at that time. Unfortunately there were few exemplars to follow in defining an acceptable alternate format (D. Boote, personal communication, April 11, 2013).

At the time of this study (2013-2014), the Ed. D. in Education program had been redesigned based on the CPED principles and included a practitioner-based curriculum with a DiP as opposed to the traditional dissertation format. The Ed. D. in Education program includes a core of courses in learning, development, motivation, data analysis, accountability and leadership, and the use of inquiry to drive decision-making. Incoming students are placed in cohorts with a timeline for completion of three years (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d.).

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. To answer this question, interviews of two different groups of participants were conducted. The researcher's intent was to allow the participants in the study to discuss their experiences in K-12 education (Creswell, 2013) as they pertained to school improvement, qualities of highly effective administrators/teacher-leaders, and their top concerns within their organizations. One group (n=5) was comprised of administrators and teacher-leaders who were identified by their superintendent as highly effective. The other group (n=6) was selected from the current Education Ed. D. in Education students who were working in the K-12 environment and had a minimum of 10 years of K-12 experience. The results

of the interviews were intended to enable the researcher to develop a theory that will answer the research questions.

Limitations and Delimitations

The sample of students selected for this study was drawn from a single institution and, therefore, results may not be generalizable to other institutions. As participants in the study were primarily students working on their DiPs, it was assumed that they would answer questions truthfully and that they were not biased by their own DiPs. The administrators and teacher-leaders were drawn from a single, rural school district in Central Florida and may not be generalizable to other school districts. The relatively small sample size should still yield quality responses and be representative of the entire population of highly effective administrators and teacher leaders in Central Florida.

According to Creswell (2013), researchers are often heavily involved with the topic to be studied. As a member of the first cohort in the Ed. D. in Education program, I conducted this study, understanding that my personal experiences and beliefs could bias many aspects of the research. The challenge was in asking the right questions and coding the responses of those interviewed. In the interviews with administrators and teacher-leaders, I did not offer a specific definition of highly effective. This could have led to subjective identification of the participants selected for this study and limited the participants' abilities to be truthful and comprehensive. Rather, each participant was encouraged to identify specific traits they determined to be highly effective based on their professional experiences.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Beginning in the 1990s and up to the present, much has been written concerning the history and concerns of the Ed. D. compared to the Ph. D. degree. My intent in this research is to provide the necessary history for the reader to gain an accurate perspective on pertinent issues without re-stating what has been previously written many times (Archbald, 2011; Hanchi, 2013; Levine, 2005; Stevens, 2010). In this literature review, I have reviewed and critiqued the research and scholarship on the current requirements for the dissertation in practice for education doctoral programs. Although studies in education have been conducted that examined the basis for dissertations for Ph. D. programs, these studies have not identified the appropriate projects for dissertations in professional practice Ed. D. programs. As such, this literature review provides additional insight into the requirements and intended outcomes for the dissertation in practice for professional practice doctorates. The analytic focus on the various capstone projects in use at the time of the study also provided additional insight, and the many different types of projects being used for the dissertation in practice were analyzed for this purpose. In addition, although numerous studies in education have identified the requirement and format of the traditional dissertation, little analytic attention has been devoted to the justification of using selected formats for the dissertation in practice for professional practice education doctorates. I address this issue by arguing that the formats used in professional practice education doctoral programs have not been based on curriculum

theory or task analysis but were selected based on faculty opinions concerning rigor, prestige, and past experience.

History

National

Doctoral education was introduced in the United States during the mid-1850s based on the German model which focused on scholarly inquiry and research. Yale became the first American university to offer a doctor of philosophy degree, conferring three in 1861. Yale's program became the model and served as the catalyst for the growing trend of professional learning as doctoral programs expanded to both public and private universities across the country (Archbald, 2011). The traditional programs in these early years required full-time residency with two to three years of coursework followed by several years of conducting research and writing a lengthy, formal dissertation. Shulman (2010) defined this process as a marathon designed for "seeing who has the stamina to stay the course" (p. 2). The goal of these programs was to prepare students for future careers by training them to "think critically, empirically, and creatively" (Archbald, 2011, p. 8).

Much has changed in this country since the traditional form of Ph. D. program became the standard. In the early 1900s, only 15% of school aged children attended high school and only 2% went to college (Archbald, 2011). By the 1950s, over 80% of America's youth went to high school, and 20% chose to attend college. This dramatic increase in enrollment, along with the trend of industry to seek a more educated workforce, placed a challenging demand on higher education to provide both credentialed

college instructors and licensed practitioners in many new fields of study. As a result of these changes, Harvard University first offered an Ed. D. in 1922. Harvard's program was designed to provide an alternate to the Ph. D. as an advanced program in the field of education (Levine, 2005).

Other changes were occurring during the early 1900s as the US economy shifted from an agricultural to an industrial base during the Industrial Revolution. The traditional Ph. D. programs grounded in research and theory were no longer meeting the needs of practitioners in the field who desired graduate courses and programs in teaching, management, leadership, and policy (Browne-Ferrigno & Jensen, 2012). These problems began when professionals wanted the prestige of having a doctorate but did not plan on obtaining a position focused on conducting research. K-12 educators wanted the acknowledgement of having their work based on "science" (Boote, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Yazon, 2004). Another factor that affected doctoral education was the massive expansion of the GI Bill and the increasing number of baby boomers seeking terminal degrees. Until the 1950s, teachers in higher education were only required to have a masters' degree; however, expectations began to rise to the point where faculty needed to have a doctorate. Both of these factors impacted the design of the Ph. D., as it was acknowledged that Ph. D. training was becoming less relevant for the numerous types of work degree recipients intended to conduct after earning their doctorate. Thus, the first substantive change in doctoral education in the US, the redesign of the Ed. D. and other doctoral programs that have come to be known as professional doctorates, emerged due to these factors (Kot & Hendel, 2011).

Though professional doctoral programs have no common or easily identifiable definition, they generally seek to provide programs that combine research and advanced study with knowledge and practice in a specific profession or field of study (Kot & Hendel, 2011). This is a critical difference from Ph. D. programs and one which has resulted from emerging labor markets requiring workers who possess and can apply advanced skill and knowledge in order to adapt and lead organizations into the 21st century (Nyquist, 2002). Other factors have also influenced the need for professional doctorates. Changes in doctoral student populations, new demographic trends, and technological advances have had a major impact on the demand for new skill sets along with the changing social and economic issues in areas as diverse as health, the environment, and renewable energies (McCarty & Ortloff, 2004). Another change includes the increased requirements of professional associations and more stringent accreditation standards in higher education (Kot & Hendel, 2011). These conditions have brought the need to create research-practitioners, those that can bring their knowledge of both research and advanced study to the workplace, to the forefront (Guthrie, 2009). Professional doctorates are degrees for practitioners which combine higher learning with direct application to the workplace (Taylor, 2007).

From the first granting of an education doctorate in the United States, Ed. D. programs have mirrored the requirements of Ph. D. programs, as many of the same courses were taken by students in both programs (Caboni & Proper, 2009). Many teachers and researchers in the field of education believed that education doctoral programs must focus on research and include a dissertation and that an Ed. D. was

nothing more than a “low end Ph. D.” (Shulman et al., 2006, p. 25). In the very political culture of higher education, the traditional dissertation remained the only legitimate path to a doctoral degree, even when the format and content varied greatly between programs. To many, this blend of coursework had been successful at creating research professionals. However, traditional doctoral programs were not producing professionals who could make effective and long lasting changes in the nation’s schools (Shulman et al., 2006).

Levine (2005) completed an extensive study into educational leadership programs nationwide and concluded that the Ed. D. “is a watered-down doctorate that diminishes the field of education” (p. 67) and should be eliminated completely. His opinion was that those aspiring to school leadership positions needed only a master’s degree (Levine, 2005). Over the past 60 years much has been written concerning the role of the Ed. D. with some arguing for the program and others against. Hanchi (2013) and other researchers such as, Archbald (2011), Clifford and Guthrie (1988), Cremin (1978), and Learned and Bagley (1965) have all written articles on the relationship between the Ph. D. and the Ed. D.. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to debate the need or purpose of the professional practice Ed. D. but to accept it and recognize that it must be further developed by embracing the CPED guidelines, more fully defined, and differentiated from the Ph. D.

In the US, a growing number of professionals in education and other fields, following the guidance provided by the CPED and others, began to rethink the design of the education doctorate. The fundamental questions of any curriculum design or redesign are “What should be learned and how should it be organized” (Petrina, 2004, p. 82). In

the case of the professional practice Ed. D., these questions become even more important due to the politics of organizations. In political organizations, e.g., higher education institutions, the question of what should be learned is often overlooked as department chairs and tenured faculty, who wield political power in their organizations, make decisions based on their beliefs and values (Bolman & Deal, 2008). As experts in their fields, they often do not see the need to develop what should be learned (Petrina, 2004). The question of how learning should be organized is left for the program faculty as long as it fits in with the current allocation of resources and course loads. If what is designed meets within the constraints of resources and faculty perceptions, redesign can be easily accomplished. It is when someone suggests a radical change that the politics of the organization become important. This has been the case with the elimination of the traditional dissertation for the Ed. D.. This radical concept has crossed the political comfort zone of those who are entrenched in their beliefs (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Levine (2005) and others were increasingly critical of the Ed. D. programs and the poor quality of the research being conducted. This criticism included the traditional Ph. D. programs and the reality that these programs were not just confirming degrees on researchers. Based on these growing concerns, much attention was focused on the design of both Ph. D. and Ed. D. programs. For many institutions, the redesign of the Ed. D. was based on the guidelines presented by CPED with the goal to create research-practitioners as opposed to the Ph. D. trained academic-researchers (Caboni & Proper, 2009). To achieve this goal, programs were modified to focus on the practical application of educational leadership to adequately prepare scholarly and influential

practitioners (Zambo & Isai, 2012). This departure from the original design was accomplished to strengthen the problem-based format and establish an approach to prepare educational leaders who were educated in research methods and could apply practical knowledge to the workplace.

Another critical difference between the two programs was the elimination of the traditional dissertation replaced by a dissertation in practice as the culminating outcome. The capstone, or dissertation in practice, is a model frequently used in other disciplines to enhance the critical thinking skills of its graduates (Everson, 2009). Completing a DiP allows students to apply their problem-based learning and methods of inquiry in solving a complex problem of practice. With an understanding that in the world of education practitioners rarely work individually, some of the CPED programs have allowed or required students to work as partners to complete their projects. The value of working in teams is to create educational leaders who are team builders and work to develop professional capital within their organizations (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). These requirements came to be supported by many in the education field as the distinct characteristics that separate the professional practice education doctorate from traditional education Ph. D. programs (Shulman et al., 2006).

International

These changes were also being felt in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia (Kot & Hendel, 2012). During the 1990s, UK universities were experiencing a steady increase in the number of students entering their programs with an interest in research (Taylor, 2007). At the same time, the emergence of professional doctorates was also

taking place. In 1998, there were approximately 109 professional practice programs in the UK; by 2000, there were more than 153 (Taylor, 2007). In response to the interest in professional practice doctorates, the first Ed. D. program in the UK was established at the University of Bristol School of Education in 1992 (Gregory, 1995). These new Ed. D. programs brought the same questions and concerns as had been posed in the US: If the requirements for the Ph. D. and the Ed. D. are the same, (a) why offer the Ed. D. at all? and (b) Will the Ed. D. be perceived as having less value than the Ph. D.?

These questions also started a wave of interest in how to differentiate the two degrees based both on the student population and the expected outcomes. The demographics of the students in the UK and Australia mirrored the demographics of students in the US as most were older, mid-career professionals with extensive real-world knowledge who were not interested in careers at research universities but had the desire to improve educational systems from within (Costley & Lester, 2012). This understanding of practicing professionals drove the initiative to redesign their programs. Until this point the doctoral programs in the UK and Australia did not require any coursework. The redesigns were completed with a focus on the professional development of the students as practitioners and the need to develop new academic practices (Boud & Tennant, 2006). The goal, as in the US, was to create programs that provided opportunities for inquiry on applied issues or problems, based on a student's workplace and professional practice rather than on philosophical research questions (Johnson, 2005). As a result, these same universities recognized the need to differentiate professional practice Ed. D. programs from the Ph. D. (Neumann, 2005).

Programs were redesigned and curricula altered to meet the needs of the students. But the same question arose: What should be an appropriate capstone project? As a work-based doctorate, many realized that the traditional dissertation was not the appropriate vehicle for evaluating students' abilities as scholar-practitioners (Boud & Tennant, 2006). Even with this understanding, many UK universities, like the US, have been slow to differentiate the capstone product, clinging to a product closely resembling the traditional dissertation (Johnson, 2005). However, numerous universities in the UK and Australia have begun to use the portfolio, the culmination of papers created by the student while completing their programs, as their dissertation requirement (Maxwell & Kupezyk-Romanczuk, 2009; Neumann, 2005).

In Canada, the need for professional doctorates was first recognized in the 1890s. The Doctor of Pedagogy was created at the University of Toronto in 1894, and the first degree was awarded in 1898 (Kot & Hendel, 2012). By 2004, 46% of professional doctorates awarded at the University of Toronto were in the field of education. Contrary to the growth of professional practice doctorates in the US, UK, and Australia, Canada was slow to expand its professional practice doctorate, choosing to offer flexible Ph. D. programs intended for working professionals (Allen, Smyth, & Wahlstrom, 2002). This may have been the result of the lack of a requirement in Canada for K-12 administrators to have a doctoral degree. Other factors, including lack of government support and increased student fees for professional doctorates added to a decrease of enrollment in Ed. D. programs in Canada (Kot & Hendel, 2012).

In the UK and Australia, much attention has been given to the portfolio as the culminating experience. According to Maxwell and Kupczyk-Romanczuk (2009), the portfolio consists of a collection of short articles, generated during the completion of a program that allows students to build on their knowledge of a subject of importance to them. The rationale for the use of a portfolio is that it provides the student an opportunity to show a wide breadth of knowledge while developing a deeper understanding of the topic and producing scholarly work. In the programs reviewed that required a portfolio, all mandated the culminating paper to be a publishable article in a peer reviewed journal. Although the portfolio appears to provide a clear differentiation from the requirements of a Ph. D., I find no evidence that its use has been based on any form of task analysis. However, it does allow students to focus on a specific problem of practice and should be considered a possible alternative for the DiP.

DiP Formats

I have conducted an exhaustive review of literature concerning doctoral education assessment, the requirements for a traditional dissertation, and the CPED initiatives. My sources included handbooks, dissertations, Google Scholar, and the EBSCOhost and PsycInfo databases using the following search terms: doctoral dissertations, education doctorate, doctoral pedagogy, doctoral education, education researchers, literature reviews, problem-based learning, capstone, and educational leadership. My focus was on (a) the identification of literature in which the requirements of a traditional dissertation were discussed, (b) the types of projects that were currently being used as the DiP capstone requirement at other CPED schools, and (c) the basis on which the requirements

were determined. I found numerous articles in which the design of the Ed. D. program was discussed, but I did not find any literature discussing the basis, specifically any type of task analysis conducted, for the redesign and the format of the DiP.

A sample of the results of my review of project types that were being used by CPED members is contained in Appendix B. Not included in the list are the many Ed. D. programs that were found that still require the traditional dissertation. No evidence was found stating a basis for the types of projects that have been approved for use. It is likely each university completed some process for identifying these requirements; however, there was no evidence of a needs or task analysis having been completed as part of a process found in the literature or on university web sites. Based on this review, my critical perspective is that CPED member universities have redesigned their programs without conducting a formal needs analysis of the types of projects that graduates of Ed. D. programs would most likely be required to perform in the workplace to best support school improvement.

Research has been conducted on the non-traditional DiP formats by Vanderbilt University, Saint Louis University, and the University of Southern California by Stevens, (2010) who used faculty interviews and student surveys as the basis for his findings. His conclusions were that the faculty and students liked the programs; and on this basis, he inferred that the new formats must be good. His evaluation was not based on curriculum theory or cognitive domains to justify why specific DiP project types were chosen, why these programs are appropriate, or how graduates were performing in the job market. This type of evaluation did little to inform the real issue, as it would be expected that the

faculty involved in the redesigns and the students completing the programs would both have positive perceptions of their programs.

In the 1970s, the Saint Louis University (SLU) Ed. D. was designed to offer a program focused on leadership and “the practical aspect of educational leadership” (Everson, 2009, p. 87). However, the faculty realized that over time the doctoral report that was required evolved into the traditional five chapter dissertation. It had become clear to the program faculty that this format was detracting from their goal of providing a problem-based focus. Based on the work at the University of Southern California and Vanderbilt, SLU redesigned its program to strengthen the problem-based learning and establish concepts provided by Shulman and others to differentiate the Ed. D. from the Ph. D. and support the preparation of practice as opposed to the preparation for scholarship (Everson, 2009). The result was that students were required to work in teams to support local school improvement projects as their capstone projects. A format similar to the traditional dissertation was no longer required.

The University of Louisville has required a Modified Manuscript Model where students work in teams to address an educational problem of practice from multiple angles (University of Louisville Graduate Catalog, n.d.). Two universities, Boston College and North Carolina State, have used the successful completion of the state superintendent examination as the capstone project (Boston College University Graduate Catalog, n.d.; North Carolina State University Graduate Catalog, n.d.). Saint Louis University has also incorporated problem-based learning and has required group completion of a culminating project (Everson, 2009). The project types UCF has chosen

include a policy report or analysis, program design implementation, program evaluation, school or organizational improvement plan, a systematic literature review or design-based research (T. Vitale, personal communication, August 23, 2013).

The Ed. D. program at the Arizona State University was revised to use action research, based on the opinion of Zambo (2011) that the program had failed to adequately define the dissertation or justify its use. Zambo also discussed the history of the professional practice doctorate and the need for the development of a signature pedagogy. She posited that that action research, with survey results as proof, was what the Ed. D. needed in order to distinguish itself. However, no detail of the rationale for survey analysis was offered. It appeared to be another example of faculty deciding what is appropriate without an analysis of appropriate student outcomes.

The California State University (CSU) system has developed its DiP project as what is termed a signature pedagogy. The CSU Ed. D. programs were revised with a “reform-based curriculum designed to prepare transformational education leaders” (Slater, Brown-Welty, Cohn, & Rodriguez, 2009, p. 88). Slater et al. discussed the changes that were made and implemented on three separate campuses within the university system. The program at Fresno required embedded fieldwork during which students worked collaboratively on a project directly related to course-specific curriculum in a local school district, community college, or university. The result was a curriculum improvement plan. Long Beach described its project as a professional seminar and was directed more at school leadership qualities and results in the completion of a dissertation. The San Diego campus used a research and writing seminar sequence. It

emphasized collaboration and engagement as the best way to scaffold the students to complete their programs. Although Slater et al. provided fairly complete program descriptions, no curriculum basis or task analysis was provided as justification for the types of DiP projects in use.

The Peabody College at Vanderbilt University has been widely recognized as a leader in education doctoral programs. Smrekar & McGraner (2009), wrote an article about Vanderbilt's rationale in replacing the conventional dissertation with a client-centered, team produced capstone project. The article detailed the process that Vanderbilt's Ed. D. students follow from the beginning of the cohort experience through graduation, including the curricular basis for the decisions the department made when creating the new capstone project for its professional practice education doctorate. Program faculty members worked directly with local educational organizations to identify actual problems of practice which provided the students with an applicable topic for their DiP (Smrekar & McGraner, 2009). Working directly with the school or school district ensures that students are working to meet the needs of the organization, and this fulfills the concept of conducting a needs analysis and represents an authentic assessment.

Few evaluation studies have been conducted on CPED programs, and the studies that have been performed relied on student and faculty interviews and surveys of those involved in the programs (Stevens, 2012). No evaluations have been conducted on how well the graduates have performed after completion of their doctoral programs. A review of Li, Friedel, and Ruche's 2011 work reinforced my assessment that redesigning an Ed.

D. program based solely on faculty assumptions and student opinions did not yield very useful data. Li et al. conducted a study which used competencies for community college leaders to address the perceptions of what faculty in a doctoral program believed should be taught compared to the beliefs of administrators and faculty at community colleges. Both groups were asked to rate 45 competencies as to whether they believed they were “important” or “very important.” The community college administrators and faculty rated 44 of 45 as important or very important, but doctoral faculty rated only 11 as being important enough to be addressed at length in doctoral leadership programs.

These results showed that a significant gap existed between the perceptions of practitioners and doctoral faculty as to what should be included in the curriculum. Two examples of competencies rated important by administrators and faculty and not included in the doctoral leadership program were “Develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve the quality of education at your institution” and “Use data-driven decision making practices to plan strategically.” This gap represents a significant issue that may also be applicable to Ed. D. programs and supports the need to conduct some level of needs analysis prior to redesigning a program.

Summary

The redesign of programs that were reviewed seem to have been based on the opinions of existing faculty, not a formal task or needs analysis. Some schools conducted surveys of students and faculty after the redesign, and not surprisingly, all expressed satisfaction with the programs (Stevens, 2010). This method should be questioned as it stands to reason that faculty who developed the program would believe it was

appropriate, and graduates, who have built rapport with the faculty but who have not yet had the opportunity to apply their new knowledge in the field, would also believe the program they just completed was satisfactory.

Based on the available literature, it appears the most likely cause of the problem is that the CPED guidelines recommend the traditional dissertation be replaced with a Dissertation in Practice into redesigned Ed. D. programs without providing specific criteria. Without clear direction, universities have created their own formats. Some require a DiP that focuses on problems found within local districts. This provides students with an opportunity to solve a complex problem of practice. Others have simply continued to require the traditional dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION METHODS

Introduction

This qualitative study involved conducting a needs analysis. Prior to beginning the research, approval was sought and received by UCF's Institutional Review Board (Appendix C) and a selected school district (Appendix D) to conduct the study. The study was initiated with a thorough literature review to discover the purpose and concerns of the Dissertation in Practice (DiP) and to conceptualize the issues and problems related to the redesign of professional practice Ed. D. programs. I did not find literature that addressed these questions or identified analysis of student outcomes as a basis for the curriculum and instruction or the selection of DiP projects or formats. Because the CPED initiative represents a new direction in doctoral education and very few existing faculty members are graduates of a CPED based program, it was important to determine the needs of the ever-changing expectations of K-12 educators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed.D. in Education program for those students enrolled in the program employed in K-12 schools. Although students from many disciplines including business, government and non-profits have been enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education, the majority of the students enrolled have been employed in K-12 education. Thus, this research was focused only on that environment. The following two subordinate research questions were used to guide the

researcher in identifying underlying issues within K-12 education that could affect both the primary research question and impact the curriculum of the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF:

1. What skills do “highly effective” teacher-leaders possess that others do not?
2. What school problems represent the highest concern for administrators and teacher-leaders working in K-12?

Instructional system design specialists are familiar with the ADDIE model and understand the first step in instructional design is analysis (Carey, Dick, & Carey, 2000). Graduate faculty at CPED member universities should be familiar with the same methodology. As the Ed. D. is a practitioner-based program, it is important to conduct a needs analysis, based on the career paths of the students enrolled in the program, to determine what type of school improvement initiatives the graduates will likely be conducting in the field. That information can be used in identifying appropriate DiP projects to aid in student success. Unlike Ph. D. programs in education, professional practice doctoral programs, e.g., the Doctor of Nursing Practice and the Doctor of Social Work, teach students to solve problems of practice in the workplace. The same can be stated for the CPED based Ed. D. programs. Students are taught how to improve educational environments by making data-based decisions and completing projects that lead to school improvement.

Job, Task, and Needs Analysis

In the process of developing curriculum, the analysis phase has been defined in many terms. An accepted definition is by Harless (1979) who describes it as a front-end

analysis with the potential of solving performance problems. As the professional practice Ed. D. is guided on the principle of solving complex problems of practice, this definition seems most appropriate. The critical step in task analysis is to determine the tasks that are being completed by those involved in the workplace (Jonassen et al., 1999). In this case, the question is what types of school improvement projects are being completed by current K-12 practitioners in the field? It is therefore necessary to conduct a needs analysis to determine what types of school improvements projects are being completed by teacher-leaders and administrators in K-12 schools. To answer this question one must ask those involved in K-12 schools, specifically administrators and teacher-leaders who have experience in completing school improvement projects or have knowledge of what projects are needed to facilitate school improvement. Based on this analysis, a comprehensive list of the types of projects that would be most appropriate to use as the DiP can be identified.

Task analysis is traditionally divided into three sub sections: job, task, and needs analysis (Jonassen et al., 1999). The first to be completed is the job analysis, the determination of who is doing the job in question. To complete this step, because this research was focused on K-12 education, Ed.D. in Education students were selected as participants. Because the purpose of the program is to produce graduates who are successful in the workforce (Willis, et al, 2010), there was a need to determine what positions graduates hope to attain after graduation. The next step in the analysis process was to identify the tasks that those working in K-12 schools actually perform (Jonassen et al., 1999). As my research was focused on the DiP, I was not concerned about the day-

to-day activities but was interested in the specific types of school improvement projects in which K-12 educators may be involved.

There are numerous ways to conduct a task analysis based on the type of learning outcomes desired. The five most common methods are: (a) observation, (b) hierarchal approach, (c) critical incident, (d) process/decision flowchart, and (e) consumer research techniques including surveying and interviewing (Jonassen et al., 1999). I chose to use consumer research techniques because my belief is that it was essential to ask those involved in K-12 education about types of school improvement projects that were currently being completed in the field. Only by asking the consumers, in this case active professionals and teacher-leaders working in the field of K-12 education, can an answer be found to my stated research questions.

Methodology

To determine which types of projects would best meet the needs of K-12 educators who may be attracted to this program, a client-centered, responsive evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2001) which included current Ed. D. in Education students, K-12 administrators, and teacher-leaders was conducted in order to include as many stakeholders as possible. A key aspect of responsive evaluation is that it allows for flexible, changing methods and approaches which allow the evaluator to adapt to new knowledge as it emerges (Stufflebeam, 2001). This evaluation focused solely on the current Ed. D. in Education program at UCF and was not intended to address other CPED member school programs. The goal of the evaluation was to acquire the knowledge that

would help program planners relate program activities to outcomes students may need to be successful as scholar practitioners.

Using Stake's (1967) responsive evaluation model, the focus was to engage in-service practitioners to determine what specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need in the workplace. This method takes into account the multiple realities that exist in the K-12 workplace so that the opinions of students and administrators are obtained. As there were no graduates of the program at UCF, this assessment served as a formative evaluation with a focus on organizational learning. This type of evaluation has proven to be very effective in providing transformative information which can be best used in smaller organizations to determine their understanding and intentions of the program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011).

To answer the research questions, interviews were conducted with a number of individuals defined in the next section. My intent was to allow the participants in the study to discuss their experiences in K-12 education (Creswell, 2013) as they pertained to school improvement, qualities of highly effective administrators/teacher-leaders and to share their top concerns in the organization. The results of the interviews allowed me to answer the research questions.

Participants

In order to collect relevant data, semi-structured interviews of two distinct groups of participants were conducted. The first group of five (n=5) K-12 administrators and/or teacher-leaders was selected based on a purposive sampling method (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The first participant selected was a school district superintendent. Based on her

position as an appointed leader of a rural school district with over 40,000 students in Central Florida, her knowledge and experience of school improvement was essential to this study. The superintendent was asked to recommend administrators and teachers-leaders who she considered to be highly effective. For the purposes of this study, the school district superintendent defined highly effective based on her experience and position in the district. The remaining participants in this category were selected based on her definition and recommendation.

Understanding that students currently enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program represent many levels of K-12 education, this purposive sample included administrators and teacher leaders from the school district office, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the positions of teacher, program specialist, principal, and district administrator. This method of identification was chosen in order to obtain data concerning the skills a wide range of K-12 educators believed were necessary to be effective teacher-leaders and the types of school projects they believed would be most beneficial to support school improvement. By using this sampling method, the relatively small sample size was anticipated to yield the best responses and be representative of the entire population of highly effective administrators and teacher leaders in Central Florida (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). As this research was confidential, each participant in this category was assigned the letter A (administrator) and a sequential number resulting in the five administrator/teacher-leaders who participated being identified as A-1 through A-5. The demographic characteristics of the administrator and teacher-leader participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Effective Administrator/Teacher-Leader Participants

ID	Position	Race/ Gender	Years in Education	Previous Experience, Duties, Subjects Taught
A1	District Superintendent	Caucasian Female	32	Administration, Assistant Superintendent in large urban school district
A2	Middle School Principal	Caucasian Male	27	Principal at Elementary, Middle and High School, Taught Physical Education, Mathematics
A3	High School Teacher	Asian Male	6	Only position. School Rookie Teacher of the Year, 2011. History, physics, and government
A4	Middle School Science Teacher	Caucasian Female	8	District Teacher of the Year 2012, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Coordinator, Science
A5	Program Specialist for Teaching and Learning	Caucasian Female	9	Develop professional development, lead school and curriculum improvement. High School teacher for 5 years, instructional leader, chemistry, biology and reading endorsement for 6 -12.

The second group of participants (n=6) was also selected using purposive sampling (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Students enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program must have earned a graduate degree and have chosen to pursue a terminal degree. This sets them apart and above their counterparts and made them viable candidates for this study. To obtain the best possible responses, only students who, at the time of the study, were enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program and who were

employed in and had more than 10 years of experience in K-12 education were selected. I conducted previous research involving students enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF which showed they were considerably older than their Ph. D. counterparts and had an average of over 10 years of experience in the field of education (Biddle, 2013). Golde and Dore (2001) observed, in their assessment of doctoral programs, that students involved in the program can make a significant contribution to the program content and their input should be valued. Thus, these students were included as they possessed valuable and important knowledge as to the types of projects that would have the most relevance in supporting school improvement.

From this sample of students, two male and four female students were selected for participation. This ratio of males and females represented the approximate gender ratio of students in the program. To ensure different cultural perspectives were accounted for, ethnicity was also used as selection criteria to ensure representation of the entire student population of K-12 educators enrolled in the program. This resulted in the inclusion of one Hispanic female, one Asian male, one Caucasian male and three Caucasian females. The lack of African-American participation was unfortunate but was based on the fact that none of the African-American students in the three cohorts met the selection criteria of working in K-12 for more than 10 years. Participants in this category were assigned the letter S (student) and a sequential number resulting in the six student participants being identified as S-1 through S-6. As this study was not intended to be generalizable, I believe this sample size, based on the selection criteria, was sufficient to collect the

necessary relevant data to inform the research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The demographic characteristics of student participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Student Participants

ID	Current Position	Race/ Gender	Years in Education	Previous Experience, Duties, Subjects Taught
S1	High School Special Education Teacher	Caucasian Female	26	Department chair five times, teaches special education, composes lessons for seven levels of mathematics and 14 in reading, biology, economics, and social skills
S2	Elementary School Curriculum Resource Teacher	Hispanic Female	12	Instructional coach, testing administration, planning, organizing data, school improvement plans
S3	High School Math Teacher	Asian Male	15	Teach math, math team coach, math club sponsor, part time coach for Algebra 1, help other teachers, test writing
S4	High School Literacy Coach	Caucasian Female	25	District literacy coach for K-12, resource teacher, taught reading for university for four years
S5	Elementary School Music Teacher	Caucasian Male	18	Teaches seven classes, taught Physical Education for four years.
S6	District Department of Curriculum and Instruction.	Caucasian Female	24	Instructional coach for Secondary Social Studies 6-12, creates instructional standards-based support documents to support teaching and learning for planning, teaching, and assessment

Procedures

All of the administrator-teacher/leader interviews were conducted face-to-face. Of the student interviews, five were conducted via telephone, and one was conducted face to face. All were audio recorded to capture as much important data as possible and to ensure the actual words and phrases used by the participants could be accurately captured and used for codification. As the interview process progressed, I began receiving the same responses which led me to conclude that I had reached saturation with both groups of participants, indicating the sample size was appropriate to obtain the necessary information to answer the research questions (Seidman, 2006).

In order to keep the administrator/teacher-leader interviewees focused on the context of the interview, the following preamble was read to each participant prior to beginning of the interview (Seidman, 2006).

I have asked you to participate in this interview because I believe that your experiences and perceptions can help to inform the professional practice doctoral program at UCF. Specifically I am interested in improving the program for students who are or wish to become better teacher-leaders; that is, I am focusing on k-12 classroom teachers, instructional coaches, curriculum resource teachers, and teachers who work at the district level who support other teachers with curriculum and instruction. As you answer these interview questions please try to focus on the people who fill these positions.

Instrumentation

A key aspect of responsive evaluation is that it allows for flexible, changing methods and approaches which allow the evaluator to adapt to new knowledge as it emerges (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Open-ended interview questions were developed for both participant groups which served as a guide during the interview process. Both student and administrator/teacher-leader responses generated additional, probing questions that added to the fidelity of the research (Seidman, 2006). To be effective, the right questions must be asked concerning characteristics of effective teacher-leaders, their top concerns, and the types of improvement projects in which program graduates will most likely be involved in the field.

A pilot interview was conducted for both sets of interview questions. For the Administrator/Teacher Leader questions, I interviewed an area superintendent of a public school district in Central Florida. The student interview questions were also used in a pilot interview with a member of the Ed. D. in Education cohort. During this process, the interview questions were changed in order to collect data more pertinent to inform my research. Because the changes made were considered minor, further pilot sessions were not required.

Tables 3 and 4 contain the lists of questions asked during the student and administrator/teacher-leader interviews. Also shown is the rationale for asking the question, the data expected to be obtained, the expected product, and additional question prompts. As these were semi-structured interviews, these questions formed the basis of

the interview process. The administrator/teacher-leader participants were provided with and asked to sign an informed consent statement (See Appendix E).

Table 3

Interview Questions: Student Participants

Rationale/Data	Questions	Product/Prompts
Ice Breaker Personal and professional history	Where do you currently work? What are some of the activities you are involved in on a weekly basis?	Personal/work experience What they do in their job.
Why they value an Ed. D. What they hope to learn in the program.	What was your motivation to enroll in the Ed. D. program?	What do you expect to gain from the program? What do you expect to learn?
Beliefs on the important issues in the organization.	Thinking about your organization, what types of problems are your top concerns?	What do you see as the biggest problems?
What improvement projects are the most useful.	If there was one project you could do to improve your school, what would it be?	What needs improvement the most?
Do they value what they have learned?	What impact do you think you will make at work as a result of completing this program?	How will your new knowledge and experience help your career goals?
Member check	Paraphrase what I hear as the central beliefs of this student: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs on why they chose the Ed. D. program 2. What types of improvement projects they expect to be involved in. 3. Beliefs on the value of what they are learning and the impact they can make in their organization 4. Beliefs on how program completion will support career goals 	

Table 4

Interview Questions: Administrator/Teacher Leader Participants

Rationale/Data	Questions	Product/Prompts
Ice Breaker Personal and professional history	How long have you been in your current position? How long have you been involved in education?	Personal/work experience What is your career experience? How did you achieve this position?
What skills and knowledge are important to be successful.	Please think about a person you know who has been very effective teacher leader. What did this teacher leader understand that others did not?	Please describe how they demonstrated that understanding. Please describe how they differ from others.
Beliefs on what makes some teacher leaders more effective.	Thinking of this same person, what skills did they possess that others did not have?	Please describe how they demonstrated those skills. Please describe how they differ from others.
Beliefs on what types of improvement projects would best improve organizational effectiveness.	If you were given the money to hire an outside expert, what would that person do to help you with some of your current problems?	What specific activities do you help with?
	What would you ask that person to do?	What activities would have the greatest impact on school improvement?
Member check	Paraphrase what I hear as the central beliefs of this administrator: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beliefs on what skills and knowledge are important 2. Beliefs on what makes an effective teacher leader 3. Beliefs on what types of improvement projects are most important for organizational success. 	

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), the most difficult and time consuming aspect of qualitative research is the data collection and coding process. Data analysis conducted during qualitative research must follow a systematic and defined process in order to correctly identify the important key words and phrases (Creswell, 2013). I began the process by using open coding to develop specific categories on which to focus. The interview responses were coded using descriptive transcription to identify primary themes. Although some responses were quite specific and clear as to the project type, others needed to be analyzed, and key words and phrases were categorized into broad concepts. The context of the words the participant used during the interview had to be taken into consideration. For example, the response of “professional development” sometimes related to teacher quality and other times to school improvement.

Using axial coding, words and phrases were linked to primary themes and categories were identified. Any comments concerning “teacher/teaching improvement” were placed in the professional development category. At this juncture in the research, the audio results were reviewed a second time in order to perform selective coding to assemble the project types that best characterized the responses in the context given (Creswell, 2013). This process was intended to develop a narrative in order to connect all of the categories. The results in this phase included making decisions as to how the concepts, key words, and phrases linked together to answer the research questions.

Summary

This chapter has provided detailed information regarding the methods and procedures that were used to conduct the study. The purpose and research questions were restated, and the purposive selection of student and administrator/teacher leader participants was described. The instrumentation used to gather data in interviews with the participants was presented, and the steps involved in the data analysis were steps that were taken in gathering data through interviews were discussed.

The results of this evaluation are presented in Chapter 4. They represent a judgment made by the evaluator of the project types most appropriate for use as the dissertation in practice for the Education Ed. D. program based on the data collected. The two subordinate research questions have been answered with the intent of informing program improvement through open dialogue and understanding to best meet the needs of scholar-practitioner leaders in the field of K-12 education. Results may also inform future curricular decisions.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. The research question and resultant research was intended to ensure that students enrolled in the program were completing authentic projects that had direct application to K-12 school improvement. Although this program enrolls students from many disciplines including higher education, business, government and non-profits, the majority of students enrolled were working in K-12 education; thus, this research focused only on that environment.

To answer the research question, all participants were asked to identify specific school improvement efforts they believed would best support school improvement in their school or school district. To inform the primary research question, two additional subordinate questions were identified. First, administrators and teacher-leaders were asked to identify qualities of highly effective administrators and teacher leaders to inform faculty for possible inclusion in the instructional design of the Ed. D. in Education program. Second, students enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program who were working in K-12 schools with over 10 years' experience were asked to discuss their primary concerns within their particular school or school district. The purpose of including this question was to further inform the primary research question concerning

what school improvement projects could be completed that would alleviate some of those concerns. These additional subordinate questions were:

1. What skills do “highly effective” teacher-leaders possess that others do not?
2. What school problems represent the highest concern for administrators and teacher-leaders working in K-12?

Career Path Analysis

Career Path Analysis (Aanerud, Homer, Nerad & Cerny, 2006) was used to determine what positions the students currently enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program were working in at the time of the study and the positions they aspired to after graduation. This process was necessary to ensure that DiP projects used would be authentic and applicable to them following their completion of the program. To make this determination, all of the presently enrolled students in the Ed. D. in Education program (N=75) were asked to share their current positions and the position they hoped to attain after graduation. A total of 53 (70%) students (70%) replied. Of the 38 (72%) students who were currently working in K-12 schools, 32 (84%) stated that they planned to remain in K-12 education either in their current position or hoped to advance to a position of greater leadership. This career path analysis showed that the majority of enrolled students planned on remaining in K-12 education after graduation. The results substantiate prior research that showed that Ed. D. in Education students typically enter the program to improve in their craft rather than to pursue university faculty positions (Archbald, 2011; Biddle, 2013). The complete results of the Career Path Analysis are listed in Appendix F.

School Improvement Projects Identified

The primary research question was: What types of school improvement projects are needed to improve K-12 schools? Interviews yielded a clear list of project types participants believed would result in significant improvement within their school or school district. These project types included curriculum improvement, policy improvement, school redesign, program evaluation, professional development, and school improvement plans. The following section contains narrative descriptions of the results of interviews for each of these project types. Narratives of administrator/teacher-leader interviews and student interviews which led to the selection of these categories are contained in Appendices G and H respectively.

Curriculum Improvement

Curriculum includes the external standards, mixed with local goals to create a plan for effective and engaging teaching that guides the learning process (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Curriculum, therefore, represents the critical component, along with the teachers themselves, in achieving the desired student performance in the classroom. This project type was identified based on the comments by the study participants who stated their school had a “lack of new curriculum.” For one participant, new curriculum had not been purchased/developed in her subject area for over seven years. Another participant voiced a concern that the curriculum did not align with the subject area and grade level for which it was being used. Based on the importance of curriculum for effective teaching and learning, curriculum in use that does not align with current subject area standards or is being used in inappropriate grade levels could have a significant

detrimental effect on school effectiveness. Based on these results, curriculum improvement was identified as an appropriate project type.

Policy Improvement

A policy report can be defined as an assessment of the effectiveness, equity, or efficiency of an organizational policy, program, or practice (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Administrators and teacher-leaders work in school environments controlled by policies created at the federal, state, and local levels. Many times these policies are designed without the input or consideration of those who are affected (Burns, 2010). It was clear during the interview process that district and state policies were a major concern to all of the participants. Most of these concerns centered on teacher and student evaluations. “Too much high stakes testing” and “unfair teacher evaluations” were mentioned numerous times. One participant stated that policies were “creating poor morale and high frustration” within his school, with many employees choosing to leave the system or retire early from their positions. Participant S-3, a mathematics teacher, stated that a component of his evaluation last year was “based on FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test) reading scores that had nothing to do with me.” Another mentioned that poor teachers were allowed to continue teaching because of seniority or the School District’s Collective Bargaining Agreement, both of which represented policies created at a district or state level. A question I kept hearing was “Do current policies really work?” Most participants believed that many current policies, especially those concerning testing and teacher evaluations did not.

School Redesign

In the context of this study, school design (or redesign) was defined as the development and implementation of “purposeful, coherent, effective, and engaging programs or organizational change to achieve identified results” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 341). Participant A-1, a district superintendent, stated that she wanted “not a compliance activity but a design, not a redesign” of how schools are organized stating, “Give me a clean canvas and let’s create what a new model looks like.” Other administrator/teacher-leader participants expressed their beliefs that in order to increase school improvement, there was a need to “create a teacher-leader position” in the schools, a new design in teacher responsibilities and duties. The teachers placed in this new position would “redesign high-stakes testing, help other teachers monitor student progress and help build an academic schedule.”

Another topic stated by 82% of interviewees was the need for more time for teacher collaboration. Participant A-1 stated that many highly effective teachers were “hidden in the organization and doing well in the classroom but do not realize they are effective because they don’t have time to collaborate with other teachers.” She further stated, “They may be the leader and not know it.” Most participants (n=9) stated that they wanted to be involved in the redesign of some of the major processes within their school that they thought would lead to school improvement including professional development, teacher assignments, and establishing a schedule that would allow more planning and collaboration with other teachers.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation may be defined as the determination of the worth or value of an existing program, policy, or practice (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Many interview responses were questions concerning the value of existing policies or practices such as “Why don’t at-risk kids graduate?” or “How can we increase literacy?” Some interviewees questioned the quality of the curriculum they were forced to follow and wondered if it was effective. Another respondent wanted to conduct a study on the effectiveness of site-based professional development. Additional comments were more generic and dealt with the question of “How do we know this program is effective?” All of these questions can be answered by conducting an evaluation to make the determination if certain programs or curriculum are indeed effective. Program evaluation would be a defined and effective method for making those determinations.

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is defined as an activity that leads to the creation of “specialized knowledge, expertise, and professional language” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 80). Study participants reported that professional development in their schools usually involved some type of structured training that had been approved by the local school district and that all teachers were required to attend. I did not receive any comments that were positive concerning the professional development the interviewees had been exposed to over the years. In fact, this subject received more attention than any other topic, with almost every participant making a statement on the quality or lack of quality of professional development.

Respondents mentioned that the purpose of PD should be to “improve instruction and best practices” and should “build teacher capacity.” Also mentioned was the need to “look at different ways of teaching,” “help teachers that are teaching poorly,” and “help teachers to be more innovative.” Interviewees did not indicate that these purposes were being addressed. Participant A-1, the school district superintendent, stated that she would get rid of all PD as it presently existed in her district. Cited often was the dislike of someone outside the school coming in to present the PD. Many felt that PD is best when “taught by respected teachers from within the school.” These responses clearly indicated that both participant groups valued PD but not as it was currently being delivered. Most of the comments received could have been categorized under school redesign. However, because of so many negative comments, it warranted its own improvement project type.

School Improvement Plans

This was a difficult topic to categorize as many of the comments could fit into school redesign, policy improvement, or program evaluation. However, I felt that the comments obtained related to different topics that did not fit neatly into one of the other categories. The comment of “find money and resources to provide services not currently being provided” was different enough to define this as a unique project type. One participant stated that her school “had no transportation for after-school programs.” To me, this represented a concern related to how the school could improve its practice and was not an issue of design or policy. Another participant stated that he “can’t cover 50 standards in 40 days,” and another stated that his school was “unorganized.” It was difficult to determine if these statements related to policy, design, or some other project

type. However, based on the comments I believe school improvement plans, being similar but different from other project types identified, deserved to be a separate improvement project type.

Table 5 contains a comprehensive list of the key words and phrases used in interviews by both by the highly effective administrators/teacher-leaders and the Ed. D. students with 10 or more years' experience in K-12 schools. Also displayed are the resulting project types identified based on the words and phrases used in the context provided by the participants.

Table 5

Key Words/Phrases and Project Types Identified in Interviews

Key Words/Phrases from Participants	Project Types Identified
Lack of curriculum More alignment with subject area and grade level	Curriculum Improvement
Poor district leadership/policies Too much high stakes testing Decision making does not include all stakeholders Poor morale, high frustration due to current policies Unfair teacher evaluation Change current policies of what teachers do Do current policies really work? Teachers protected by tenure	Policy Improvement
Redesign high stakes testing Progress monitoring Help build an academic schedule Not redesign but design Create teacher-leader position in school Build in/allow more time for teacher collaboration Improve best practices More time for lesson study	School Re-design
Why at-risk kids don't graduate? Increase reading literacy Evaluate curriculum Evaluate program effectiveness Evaluate site-based professional development	Program Evaluation
Improve Instruction, best practices Professional development taught by respected teachers Build teacher capacity, staff development for teachers Teachers need to be more innovative Look at different ways of teaching, teachers teaching poorly Bring something that is relevant to my school Improve best practices	Professional Development
Unorganized Find money, resources No transportation for after-school programs Can't cover 50 standards in 40 days	School Improvement Plans

Table 6 lists the improvement projects identified, the number of respondents from each participant group, and the total percentage of respondents for each project type. Conducting a gap analysis and writing grants was mentioned by less than 20% of the respondents and was not, therefore, included in the results.

Table 6

Primary Research Question Responses by Group

Project Type	Administrator/ Teacher-Leader (n=5)	Student (n=6)	Percent of Respondents
Curriculum Improvement	5	4	82
Policy Improvement	4	5	82
School Redesign	4	4	73
Program Evaluation	4	5	82
Professional Development	4	3	64
School Improvement Plans	4	3	64

Results: Research Subordinate Question 1

What skills do “highly effective” administrators and teacher-leaders possess that others do not? This question was directed to the administrator/teacher-leaders participant group who had been designated by their superintendent as highly effective. Their responses were evaluated, coded, and major themes identified. The results identified six specific qualities of highly effective administrators/teacher-leaders. These qualities are discussed in the following section of this chapter.

Collaborative

The ability and time for teachers within a school to work together as well as with all stakeholders was high on each of the participant’s list of qualities of highly effective

teacher-leaders. One participant discussed the fact that “Teachers make the difference, as they must interact well with other students, teachers, parents, and administrators.”

Another mentioned that “If you collaborate effectively with others, it becomes their idea;” and “a good collaborator can get attention where it is needed.” It was interesting to note that this skill related directly to professional development, one of the project types most participants stated as being important for school improvement. An additional comment that supported this finding was “Build in time for teachers to collaborate to create a form of professional development that is closest to the classroom.”

Communicate Effectively

Mentioned along with the ability to collaborate was the closely related quality of effective communication. The statement that best summarized this quality was that teachers “must be able to communicate the practice of why they do what they do and how they know it is effective to other adults.” This statement combines the skills of collaboration and communication. Another statement used to identify this quality was “communicate well with others, network, and be a go-getter.” Finally, another phrase relating to professional development was “time for teachers to sit down and plan together.” Respondents believed that this process would only be effective if the teachers involved were effective communicators and collaborators.

Lead by Example

Effective leadership is important in any organization, and that philosophy was reinforced as all five highly effective administrator/teacher-leaders mentioned leadership as an important quality. “Lead by example, and believe in what you do” was a statement

made that typifies the responses in this category. “Have an open-door policy with other teachers” along with “willing and able to spend more time and effort to help other teachers improve.” One participant, in relating leadership to student learning, stated that “They see that I care about them, so they want to learn.” One final comment that seems to link numerous qualities together was stated simply as “leadership, content, and collaboration.”

Effective Evaluator

This quality was identified by many comments made concerning the ability to “conduct research, understand the data, and formulate an analysis.” This process leads to making data-driven decisions which is a key goal of the CPED working principles (CPED, n.d.). Numerous statements were made relating to research and evaluation. “Understand research, data, and statistics,” “rely on data to determine effectiveness,” and “conduct design-based research.” In discussing the value of literature reviews, one participant stated that highly effective teacher-leaders “must research literature to find out what works and use data to implement new methods.” A statement that coincided with those comments was “must be able to perform program evaluation and analyze school district policies,” (two of the improvement project types identified in this study). Another statement made that supported the CPED working principles was “be able to formulate an analysis that has educational value.” All of these responses supported and informed the types of improvement projects identified as results of this research.

Effective Educator

Another set of comments dealing specifically with having competence in the field were related to being highly effective in the craft of teaching. These statements represented skills that many may assume all teachers have. Realizing, however, that there are many levels of competence in teaching, the participants identified some specific qualities. “Extremely well versed in rigorous instruction” and “proficient at asking higher order thinking questions” are examples. An interesting comment made by one participant was that a highly effective teacher-leader “can pull something from you and relate it to education.” Another thought that an important quality was that a teacher “must be engaging, a good listener, and be very real.” Though this last statement could have been used in numerous categories, e.g., leading by example and communicate effectively, I treated it as a quality of effective teaching.

Build Relationships

The highly effective administrators and teacher/leaders interviewed seem to place great value in the ability to build relationships. In the interviews, it became clear that building relationships with other teachers, administrators, students, and parents was considered to be very important. “Have confidence and build relationships with others” and “build relationships to connect to the students” were common themes. One participant who had experience in low-income schools stated that it was essential to “build relationships with students whether affluent or poor.” Another participant expressed the importance of building relationships with “positive people” and to distance oneself from those who were negative which was in agreement with the comment, “listen

to others and make a concerted effort to find solutions.” This final statement supported the qualities of collaboration, effective communication, and leading by example. The key phrases used by the participants during the interviews and the qualities identified based on the participant comments are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Key Phrases Used by Administrators/Teacher-Leaders and Qualities Identified

Key Phrases Used by Administrator/Teacher-Leaders	Qualities Identified
<p>Build in time for teachers to collaborate and have that form of professional development that is closest to the classroom” Teachers make the difference as they must interact well with other students, teachers and administration If you collaborate then it becomes their idea A good collaborator can get attention where needed</p>	Collaborative
<p>Able to communicate the practice of why they do what they do and why they know it’s effective to other adults Communicate well with others, network, be a go-getter Time for teachers to sit down and plan together</p>	Communicate Effectively
<p>Lead by example and believe in what you do Leadership, content and collaboration Willing to spend time and effort to help other teachers improve Have open door with other teachers Believe in district initiatives and embrace change They see that I care about them so they want to learn”</p>	Lead by Example
<p>Understand research, data, and statistics Be able to formulate and put together an analysis that has educational value Must research literature to find out what works and use data to implement new methods Able to research, help with data analysis, understand data and make data-driven decisions Rely on data to determine effectiveness Must be able to perform program evaluation and analyze school district policies Conduct design-based research</p>	Competent Evaluators
<p>Extremely well versed in rigorous instruction Proficient at asking higher order thinking questions Must be engaging, good listener, and be very real Can pull something from you and relate it to education Know state standards</p>	Effective Educators
<p>Have confidence and must be able to build relationships Listen to others and make a concerted effort to find solutions Build relationships to connect to the learner Build relationships with students whether affluent or poor</p>	Build Relationships

Results: Research Subordinate Question 2

What school problems represent the highest concern for administrators and teacher-leaders working in K-12? This question was asked of the six students currently enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program who had been working in the K-12 environment for a minimum of 10 years. The only concern stated by a majority of the participants, and it was unanimous among all participants, was state and district policies and/or priorities. Individual school leadership and policy was mentioned by only two of the six respondents. The amount of testing and progress monitoring along with the extreme amount of paperwork required was also discussed by four participants as a top concern. Examples of comments included: “district leadership; their priorities are mixed up and they do not value experience;” “high stakes testing where so much weight is put on one exam, either FCAT or end of course exams with too much weight put on one day;” and “clear, consistent communication. Decisions are made that effect people and not all stakeholders were considered in making the decision.” Other comments that related to policy issues included: “The district is too political. They don’t know what is best for the kids, but think they do;” and “I see a lot of frustration. Teaching students is our priority but then all the outside pressure. We are asked to do more but not compensated for the extra work.”

Unfair teacher evaluations were a concern for many with comments such as “Last year a component of my evaluation was the FCAT reading results. I teach another subject so that had nothing to do with me.” One participant mentioned the reading ability of students; another mentioned lack of curriculum, and a third mentioned teachers

teaching poorly: “Some of the dead weight teachers that are teaching the same way they were 25 years ago need to go.” The key words and phrases elicited from administrator/teacher-leader participants for Research Subordinate Question 1 and students for Research Subordinate Question 2 are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Key Words and Phrases in Interviews: Research Subordinate Questions 1 and 2

Research Subordinate Question 1	Research Subordinate Question 2
Well versed in rigorous instruction	District leadership:
Proficient in higher order thinking	Priorities mixed-up
Know state standards	Too political
Know how to organize lessons	Expect too much
Be competent in field	Unorganized
Research existing literature	Trying too much too fast
Able to communicate best practice	Don't know what's best for kids
Understand research, data and statistics	Decisions made without stakeholder input
Use data to implement new methods	Unfair teacher evaluation
Formulate an analysis with educational value	Lack of clear, consistent communication
Rely on data to determine effectiveness	Lack of resources
Conduct research to solve problems	Too much testing/progress monitoring
Understand and apply data	Amount of/too much paperwork
Able to build relationships	Teachers teaching poorly
Lead by example	Reading ability of students
Communicate	Lack of curriculum
Collaborate	
Believe in what they do	
Be a real person, not afraid to make mistakes	
Interact well with others	
Listen to others	
Embrace change	
Believe in school initiatives	
Work with positive people	
Think outside the box	
Passion is teaching	
Concern for social justice	

Comparison of Results to the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

Another aspect of this study was to validate the results through a comparison of these findings to those of other professional practice doctoral programs. A cursory review of literature of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at UCF was conducted to determine what types of capstone projects were required. As this program was a relevant example of a professional practice doctorate (Willis, et al, 2010), the results provided

useful information on alternative capstone requirements. The approved project types for use in the DNP program were retrieved from the UCF Graduate Catalog for the DNP program (2014, n.d., n.p.). The project types approved for use in the DNP program were compared to the interview results of respondent's answers to the primary research question to further substantiate the findings. Similarly, key words and phrases used in the DNP capstone requirements listed in the catalog were compared to the school improvement project types identified as the results of the primary research question. Some key words used to define allowable capstone projects for the DNP program included "research, improvement, implement and evaluate, analyze and revise policy, design and use, assess integration of technology, and conduct financial analysis" (UCF Graduate Catalog, DNP program (2014, n.d., n.p.). Most of the project types identified in the present study were closely related to the guidelines provided for use as the capstone requirement in the DNP program. The comparative results are presented in Table 9 with key words and phrases used to match DNP requirements to the results of this study italicized.

Table 9

Comparison of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Guidelines to Ed.D. in Education Dissertation in Practice (DiP) Project Types

DNP Capstone Guidelines	Ed.D. in Education DiP Project Types
<i>Translate research into practice and evaluate outcomes</i>	Program Evaluation, School Improvement Plans
<i>Quality improvement (care processes, continuity of care, patient outcomes)</i>	School Improvement Plans, Professional Development
<i>Implement and evaluate evidence-based practice guidelines</i>	Curriculum Improvement, Program Evaluation
<i>Analyze policy: develop, implement, evaluate, or revise policy</i>	Program Evaluation, Policy Analysis
<i>Design and use databases to retrieve information for decision making, planning, evaluation</i>	School Design, Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation
<i>Conduct financial analyses to compare care models and potential cost savings, etc.</i>	Appropriate for any project type
<i>Design and evaluate new models of care</i>	School Design, Program Evaluation, School Improvement Plans
<i>Design and evaluate health promotion and disease prevention programs</i>	School Design, Program Evaluation, School Improvement Plans
<i>Assess integration of technology in care</i>	School Design, Professional Development

Note. Key words and phrases in italics were used in comparing capstone projects and DiP project types.

Summary

Based on the results of the interviews conducted with both the highly effective administrator/teacher-leaders and the Ed. D. students with over 10 years of experience in K-12 schools, a definitive list of project types the participants believed were needed to facilitate school improvement were identified. The results of Research Subordinate Questions 1 and 2 also provided relevant information that were used to inform both the recommended project types and the instructional design of the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF. In the following chapter, the results of this study are summarized and discussed as they relate to existing literature. Implications and recommendations for practice, along with recommendations for further study, are also presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) was organized to provide guidance for universities to redesign the professional practice Ed. D. to make it a stronger program for school practitioners (CPED, n.d.). It was concluded by CPED that the purpose of the Ed. D. should be to create scholar practitioners who use methods of inquiry to analyze data, collaborate with others, and have practical knowledge of leadership and organizational realities to solve problems of educational practice. To assist in the redesign efforts, CPED defined six working principles (Appendix A) as a guide for the development of professional practice doctorates (CPED, n.d.). CPED also recommended the elimination of the traditional dissertation to be replaced with the Dissertation in Practice (DiP). However, CPED provided no specific guidance on DiP projects, formats, or the type of skills, knowledge, or dispositions it should measure. The faculty implementing the redesign of the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF have been unsure as to what types of capstone projects should be considered appropriate for the DiP.

With no specific guidance, institutions were left to determine how to evaluate the attainment of skills, knowledge, and dispositions of their students through the use of the undefined DiP as the capstone requirement. According to Guthrie (2009), institutions should define the purpose of the Dissertation in Practice if they are to meet the goals established by CPED and differentiate the Ed. D. from the Ph. D.. Shulman et al. (2006), however, observed that allowing member institutions to define their own DiP formats

may result in professional practice education doctoral programs' continued use of the traditional dissertation format which may result in the on-going perception of the Ed. D. as something less than a Ph. D.. Based on the results of the literature review, most universities have continued to require the traditional dissertation. Even when a program refers to its capstone as a DiP, the focus has often been on research or evaluation projects (Stevens, 2010; Zambo, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the focus for the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF for those students employed in K-12 schools. By making this determination, other professional practice Ed. D. programs should have a basis on which to judge their DiP projects. A greater variety of allowable project types, beyond those with a focus on research and evaluation, have been identified as appropriate for DiP projects in this research.

Summary of the Study

A needs analysis research design was used in the present study to determine the types of school improvement projects needed to improve K-12 schools. The evaluation began with a thorough literature review to discover the purpose and concerns of the DiP and to conceptualize the issues and problems related to the redesign of professional practice Ed. D. programs. In my review, I did not find literature that specifically

addressed these questions, nor was an analysis of student outcomes as a basis for the instructional design or the selection of DiP projects identified. CPED initiatives represent a new direction in doctoral education and very few existing faculty members are graduates of a CPED based program. It was, therefore, important to determine if the Ed. D. program “prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices” (CPED, n.d., n.p.) through requiring a DiP that is based on the needs of K-12 schools to best support school improvement.

Summary of Findings

As the Ed. D. has been recognized as a practitioner-based program, it was important to conduct a needs analysis based on the career paths of the students enrolled in the Ed.D. in Education program to determine where graduates plan to be employed after graduation and the types of projects they would likely be conducting in the field (Aanerud et al., 2006). To make this determination, 75 students currently enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education at UCF were asked to provide their current positions and the positions they hoped to attain after graduation. A total of 53 students (70%) responded to the survey. Of the 38 (72%) who were currently employed in K-12 schools, 32 (84%) stated that they planned to remain in K-12 education either in their current position or hoping to advance to a position of greater leadership. This career path analysis showed that the majority of students working in K-12 planned on remaining in K-12 settings following the completion of their doctoral programs.

To answer the research questions, interviews were conducted with two separate groups of individuals (Creswell, 2009). The first group (n=6) consisted of current Ed. D.

in Education students working in K-12 schools with more than 10 years' experience in K-12. The second group (n=5) were administrators and teacher-leaders designated as highly effective by the district superintendent. The superintendent, because of her position and 32 years of experience in K-12 schools, was also selected as a participant in the study.

Research Question 1

What types of school improvement projects are needed to improve K-12 schools?

Interviews with students and administrator/teacher-leaders resulted in a list of school improvement projects participants believed to be the most important to improve K-12 schools. That list included (a) curriculum improvement, (b) policy improvement, (c) school redesign, (d) program evaluation, (e) professional development (PD), and (f) school improvement plans. The comments made by the superintendent concerning professional development were very strong and were supported by the many comments from other participants who voiced their dissatisfaction with the current PD process. To me, this was the biggest surprise of the study results. Students currently enrolled in the Ed.D. in Education program are completing PD activities under the name of school design however, based on the results of this study the ability to create a professional development activity should be clearly stated as an option. As professional practice Ed.D. programs continue to be redesigned, in the future it may become acceptable for students to complete an internship or practicum and present a professional development plan within a school that would replace the completion of the written DiP.

Research Subordinate Question 1

What skills do “highly effective” administrators and teacher-leaders possess that others do not?

Analysis of the interview data from administrator/teacher-leaders in one school district provided a specific list of qualities they believed highly effective administrators and teacher leaders should possess. The most commonly stated qualities called for highly effective administrators to (a) be collaborative, (b) communicate effectively, (c) lead by example, (d) be effective evaluators, (e) be effective educators, and (f) build relationships.

Research Subordinate Question 2

What school problems represent the highest concern for administrators and teacher-leaders working in K-12?

The only concern stated by a majority of the participants was state and district policies and priorities. Individual school leadership and policy was mentioned by two of the six respondents. The most commonly stated concerns included (a) state/district policies/priorities, (b) unfair teacher evaluations, (c) too much testing, (d) too much paperwork, and (e) poor/improper decision making.

Discussion

National Impact

The goal of CPED was for institutions to design or redesign their Ed. D. programs in order to “prepare educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge and for the stewardship of the profession” (CPED, n.d.,

n.p.). This study focused on determining more specifically what appropriate and specific types of improvement projects should be used as the focus for the DiP in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF. The results corroborated the goals of CPED, as the participants identified many types of specific projects they believed were necessary to facilitate school improvement.

Archbald (2008) espoused that an educational doctoral thesis should include four qualities: (a) developmental efficacy, (b) community benefit, (c) intellectual stewardship, and (d) distinctive form. The results of this study, if incorporated into a DiP, would solve a problem of practice and therefore benefit the local school or school district. Although not the focus of this study, the finding that a DiP should include a systematic literature review supports the quality of developmental efficacy. The finding that highly effective teacher-leaders should be effective evaluators and able to conduct research, analyze data, and form an analysis supports the quality of intellectual stewardship. The fourth quality, a distinctive form, was not addressed in this study.

Based on the literature review, the findings in this study as to the types of projects that should be used as a DiP differed considerably from the types of projects used in member universities at the time of the study (Appendix B). Many of the programs identified in the literature review, including that of Arizona State University (Zambo, 2011), University of Southern California (Marsh & Dembo, 2009), University of Louisville (Stevens, 2010), and Vanderbilt University (Caboni & Proper, 2009) have required DiPs that focus on solving a problem of practice. However, these types were essentially focused on research or evaluation, whereas many of the project types

identified in the present study such as professional development, curriculum improvement, and school improvement plans, would not necessarily require either. All of the administrator/teacher-leader participants in this study stated their belief that quality professional development was important in bringing about school improvement.

However, I did not find any current programs that even mentioned the use of professional development as an acceptable DiP. Based on these results, current programs may not be meeting the needs of their students who intend to work in K-12 settings after graduation.

Another goal of CPED (n.d.) was to differentiate the Ed. D. from the Ph. D. in education programs. The results of this study supported the need to educate program faculty in alternate types of DiPs. In an attempt to differentiate the Ed. D., programs have adopted the term Dissertation in Practice but have continued to require the same types of projects that focus on research and/or evaluation found in Ph. D. programs (Everson, 2009; Slater et al., 2009; Stevens, 2010; Zambo, 2011). The types of projects identified in this research should contribute to further differentiating programs by adopting the specific improvement projects that do not necessarily require in-depth research or evaluation while maintaining the need to solve a complex problem of practice. This would not only differentiate the programs but would support the goal of training scholar practitioners as opposed to academic researchers as advocated by Shulman and his colleagues (2006).

The findings of the present study contradicted the opinions espoused by Levine (2005) who wrote that the Ed. D. should be eliminated. The results of my interviews showed that administrators and teacher-leaders in K-12 schools deal with many problems

in the field, and programs need to integrate both practical and research knowledge to link theory with application to help them in solving those problems. Traditional Ph. D. programs do not require dissertations that solve problems of practice (Archbald, 2011) as the skills required for effective administrators and teacher-leaders in K-12 schools differ from those required of individuals who occupy university faculty positions (Neumann, 2005; Shulman et al., 2006). Redesigning Ed. D. programs based on the CPED working principles should include the development of those skills.

Comparison of Results to CPED Working Principles

The CPED working principles were developed to “focus research and development agendas to test, refine, and validate principles for the professional doctorate in education” (Appendix A). My understanding of these principles is that they were developed as a guide and represent core competencies that graduates of a professional practice Ed. D. program should emulate. Unfortunately they are written using abstract and vague terms and therefore do not state specific skills, knowledge, or dispositions graduates of professional practice Ed.D. programs should acquire. As the professional practice education doctorate continues to evolve what may be more beneficial to member universities would be to revise the working principles using clear, concise, and measurable standards to align them with the qualities of highly effective administrators and teacher-leaders identified in this study.

The qualities of highly effective teacher-leaders identified in this study support, to some extent, the CPED working principles that aim to create educators who can develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills (CPED, n.d.; Everson, 2009).

Nearly all of the study participants listed collaboration and communication skills as important in becoming effective teacher-leaders. Many of the programs identified in the literature review, including Arizona State University (Zambo, 2011), University of Southern California (Marsh & Dembo, 2009), University of Louisville (Stevens, 2010), and Vanderbilt University (Caboni & Proper, 2009) allowed or required group completion of a DiP. This would build not only collaboration and communication skills but would develop other leadership traits as well. Another method of building collaboration skills has been implemented by programs at California State University where program faculty have worked with local schools or school districts to identify a problem of practice, assigning a group of students, and working directly with the school formulate a solution (Slater et al., 2009). Saint Louis University has also required students to work in teams to directly support local school improvement projects (Everson, 2009).

Other skills identified as important were leading by example, being an effective evaluator and educator, and having the ability to build relationships with all stakeholders including students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. Some, but not all, of these qualities relate to those listed in the CPED working principles. Following is a comparison of the six CPED working principles with the results of this research.

Working principle 1 was framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice. This is an example of the working principles written in abstract terms. This is not to say that these are not important issues as equity, ethics, and social justice are very important considerations in

all educative environments and especially in K-12. However it would be helpful if these terms were explained using concrete terms. Only one participant voiced concern for social justice as an important quality. While my belief is that all administrators and teachers in K-12 schools are motivated by equity and ethical concerns, it was not mentioned by most participants in the present research.

Working principle 2 advocates the preparation of leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities. The recurring problem of how these principles are written relates to the ability of program faculty to assess the attainment of these skills. How do you determine that the student learned how to make a positive difference in the lives of others? This statement relates directly to the quality of being an effective evaluator and having the ability to understand research and formulate an analysis with educational value. It is apparently left to program faculty to determine if the students do in fact learn to make a positive difference as a result of completing the program.

Working principle 3 promotes opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities to build partnerships. This principle represents two of the important qualities identified in this research: being (a) a good communicator and (b) a good collaborator.

Working principle 4 promotes the concept that students should be provided with field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions. In writing this principle are the authors referring to the four frames espoused by Bolman and Deal (2008) or some other perceptual lens? This

principle does relate to the skills identified as being an effective evaluator; conduct a literature review, and understand research, data, and statistics to solve a problem. The focus of this paper was to identify problems that require meaningful solutions.

Working principle 5 is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge and that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry. This principle reflects the skills needed to conduct effective research through literature reviews and other research methods. It also relates to the skill identified as being an effective educator by building professional knowledge. Interestingly, this statement seems to support the finding of the importance of professional development as a DiP project type to effect school improvement.

Working principle 6 emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice. I question how program faculty would assess the attainment of this principle. Is it through completion of the DiP or other coursework? The qualities of being an effective educator and evaluator do support this principle as it relates to the ability to learn and apply knowledge to practice.

As a result of this comparison, it is clear that two qualities of highly effective administrators/teacher-leaders identified in this study are not explicitly stated in the working principles: the ability to (a) lead by example and (b) build relationships. These represent important dispositions for leaders in all educational environments (Senge, 2006). Based on the present research, a statement alluding to the development of these dispositions should be added using concrete terms to the working principles in some form.

The qualities of highly effective teacher-leaders identified in this research may also help inform other programs as to the type of instructional design and assessment criteria that should be included in redesigned programs. Although the qualities of highly effective administrator/teacher-leaders were aligned to some extent with the CPED working principles, the instructional design of programs may be best served if the redesign was focused on the qualities of highly effective leaders as opposed to the principles. The CPED may also seek to revise its working principles based on the results of this study. It is recommended that a complete review of the principles be conducted and revised to include specific statements that relate directly to skills, knowledge, and dispositions that represent the goals of CPED programs as opposed to the abstract and vague terms that are currently included.

Organizational Impact

In comparing the study results to the current Ed. D. in Education program at UCF, most of the project types currently allowed as the DiP are similar to the types identified by the study participants (UCF Graduate Catalog, n.d.). The program currently allows program evaluation, curriculum improvement plans, design-based research, policy analysis, school/organization improvement plans, and systematic literature reviews. All of these project types, other than the systematic literature review, were identified in the results as appropriate school improvement projects.

The ability to work in teams to complete a DiP was also supported by the results. The ability to collaborate, communicate, build relationships, and lead by example are all qualities identified as essential in the research results. The ability to conduct team or

group DiP projects encourages the development of those skills. To complete a successful DiP, all group members must develop their skills in these areas. As mentioned earlier in this paper, numerous universities, including UCF, have begun to either allow or require group completion of the DiP, and that practice should be encouraged.

The ability to conduct a “substantive, thorough, and sophisticated literature review” is considered by many as critical in becoming a scholar (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 3). Shulman, et al., (2006) also address this issue when they discuss the research-related skills needed for the Ed.D. and that graduates should “be able to read, very critically and analytically, research reports claiming to offer evidence that people should teach in certain ways.” (p.29) In looking at the responses provided by the participants, the ability to conduct a literature review was identified as important to being highly effective. At the time of the study (2013-2014), a literature review was required in all DiPs. The use of a systematic literature reviews were supported by the findings so long as it focused on understanding and solving a problem of practice.

The only project type identified in this study as being important but which was not specifically referenced in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF (or any other) was professional development. Professional development in K-12 schools has been defined as any activity that improves the ability of administrators or teacher-leaders to perform their jobs better (Superintendent, personal communication, February 12, 2014). Thus, projects that deal with school improvement, curriculum improvement, or school design plans are all examples of professional development. As such, they were supported by this study and should be included as allowable project types in the current program. Given

that most participants mentioned professional development as an important improvement project, program planners would be well advised to consider adding coursework to strengthen skills of students in effective professional development. Specifying it as a stand-alone improvement project is also recommended.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study provided a list of specific project types the participants believed were the most beneficial to support school improvement. As such, the list represents the project types that should be the focus for Ed.D. in Education DiP projects. Based on the interview results, it is also recommended that each of these project types include a thorough review of literature to provide significant historical research, theoretical underpinnings, and practice as related to the selected project topic. This would also assist students in their quest to become experts in their fields of interest.

This research was conducted specifically in the K-12 environment but the following recommendations are also applicable to business, higher education, and government environments. The following recommendations may be pertinent to all careers of students in the Ed. D. in Education program:

1. The DiP should include projects based on problems of practice and include curriculum improvement plans, school redesign, policy improvement, program evaluation, professional development, and school improvement plans.
2. Students should be encouraged to work in teams during both coursework and their skills of leadership, collaboration and communication assessed. Understanding that the College

of Graduate Studies may not support team completion of a DiP, including these skills in course work may be the only option.

3. Coursework should include detailed instruction on how to use data bases, key words, and other strategies to conduct and write a thorough literature review. A course specific to learning how to complete a quality literature review is recommended. The current program requires students choose a specialization and then complete four courses to support their chosen area. I would recommend eliminating one of these optional courses and require a course focused on the skills required to complete a thorough literature review.
4. Leadership skills should be included in the instructional design of the program with a focus on the practical application of leadership including leading by example and relationship building.
5. Coursework should be included in the program that helps students to understand data, formulate an analysis, and make data-based decisions.
6. Curriculum on the development of professional development, school design, and other project types identified in this study that are not explicitly covered in existing coursework should be included in the program.

A goal of this study was to inform the current Ed.D. in Education program at UCF therefore I am including my reflections on the process and implementation of the program at UCF in order to possibly inform other universities as they redesign their professional practice Ed.D. program. All of the students enrolled in the program were employed full time so offering the classes back-to-back on the same night each week was

very helpful and effective given that many of the students enrolled live and work many miles from the campus. By offering both classes on one night, travel time and expenses were greatly reduced. My major concern of the implementation of the program was the time given to complete our dissertation in practice. The Ed.D. in Education program was designed to be a three year start-to-completion program and this remains an important factor in choosing to enroll in this program. As the length of time from enrollment to graduation is a concern for Shulman and CPED in general, there are factors that must be considered if students are expected to complete a thorough and rigorous DiP in this time frame. During our initial program orientation and throughout the first two years of the program, students were encouraged to consider a problem of practice but not necessarily decide on a specific issue. We were then given one semester to develop our DiP proposal and then the final two semesters, six months, to complete it. However, the process to submit and receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may take over a month, especially if the student is submitting to the IRB for the first time. It is not a difficult process but one than can be frustrating for the student. The approval process can also be delayed solely on the amount of requests currently being considered by the IRB. The point is that with given only six months to complete the DiP, the first month or longer can be taken simply to receive approval to begin the study.

Most of the students enrolled in the Ed.D. in Education program at UCF work in the K-12 environment (Biddle, 2013). As a result, many of those students conduct research in a public school environment for their DiP topic. The school districts in Central Florida require approval of all research projects being conducted in their schools

and this process can be time consuming. The time it took to receive approval was approximately 45 days. Another district that I applied to conduct research finally granted approval almost three months after I submitted the request. This did not allow enough time to include that district in this study. The result is that many students have very little time, after receiving the necessary approvals, to conduct the research and complete their DiP. An on-going issue discussed previously in this study is the perception of the DiP compared to a traditional dissertation. Shortening the time to six months to complete the DiP does little to ensure a high quality and rigorous DiP is completed. My recommendation is that by the end of the second year of the program, possibly during their second Laboratory of Practice, students are required to determine the topic of their research so that they have the time necessary to complete all the steps required, including the final draft review by their committee members.

Recommendations for Future Study

The students enrolled in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF represent a number of diverse schools and school districts. If I could conduct this study again, I would include administrators and teacher-leaders from larger, more urban school districts as well as suburban districts to determine if those districts encounter different problems of practice. I would also include a diverse sample to capture as much data as possible and to ensure saturation is reached in the responses for this broad sample. Follow-up research should be conducted with program graduates after they have worked in the field for a year or more. It could then be determined if school improvement projects were

actually being completed by Ed. D. trained personnel and gaps in preparation could be better identified.

Additionally, surveys could be developed and administered to collect quantitative data that could be used to prioritize those projects most important to support school improvement and, therefore, the most likely to be completed. As currently enrolled students represent the fields of higher education, business, government, and non-profits, a needs analysis could be conducted to determine appropriate DiP projects for those career alternatives.

An important factor in considering the design of Ed. D. programs is not only the type of dissertation in practice project but the format of the actual document. Current faculty members are typically Ph. D. prepared and therefore familiar with the traditional five chapter dissertation. Though the CPED has promoted the use of other formats when completing the DiP, most universities have continued to use the traditional format, whether due to faculty comfort or various university colleges of graduate studies requirements. Archbald (2008) addressed this issue in his paper on the four qualities of an education doctoral thesis when he recommended a distinctive form be defined. Future studies should be conducted to determine if other formats are more suitable for the DiP projects identified in this study.

A content analysis of completed DiPs is suggested to determine strengths and weaknesses. That information could inform the instructional design of the program. Also, interviews could be conducted with students and faculty to determine perceptions of these two groups as to most and least beneficial components of the curriculum. This

could ensure that coursework specifically designed to better support the DiP project types identified in this study are addressed in sufficient detail to promote student success.

Asking students to participate in program evaluation has been proven to be a successful tool in improving program content (Aanerud et al., 2006).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to complete a needs analysis to determine what projects best support school improvement and, therefore, should be included as appropriate project types to be used as the focus for the Dissertation in Practice in the Ed. D. in Education program at UCF. The hope was that other professional practice Ed.D. programs can also benefit from this research as they consider a redesign or enhancement of their Ed. D. programs to include appropriate instructional design and a DiP based on a needs analysis.

Based on the results of this study, programs that are still working to identify appropriate DiP projects now have a basis for their decisions. By defining the needs of K-12 schools, DiP projects can be implemented at other professional practice Ed.D. programs that will ensure students obtain the necessary investigation skills and scholarship in a rigorous program and provide an authentic representation of professional work that best meets the needs of the graduates in the program who are practitioners in K-12 environments. This will, in turn, support school improvement at the local or district level. Some universities are already using some type of problem of practice for their capstone requirement. Based on the literature review conducted for this study, however,

these project types remain focused on research and/or evaluation (Stevens, 2010; Zambo, 2011).

Programs that offer a professional practice Ed.D. must define the purpose of the Dissertation in Practice if they are to meet the goals established by CPED and provide the necessary rigor, scholarship, investigative skills, and training expected in any doctoral program. Many educators involved in providing Ph. D. programs believe that any doctoral program that does not include a traditional dissertation is not adequate. Faculty members who currently hold an Ed. D. are concerned that any doctoral program that does not require a traditional dissertation will result in decreased credibility of their degrees by their colleagues (D. Boote, personal communication, November 13, 2013). Students enrolled in the redesigned programs worry that they will be perceived as completing something less than a true doctoral degree (In-class discussion, September 3, 2012).

It is the role of program faculty in colleges and universities to define the Dissertation in Practice in professional practice Ed. D. programs to meet the needs of program graduates to be effective in the workplace and to provide sufficient evidence of a high quality program. This will ensure that scholar practitioners can “construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities” (CPED, n.d., n.p.) while using their practical knowledge of leadership and operating under the reality of organizational constraints. A well-defined and authentic DiP, respected by both faculty and students, must be implemented by universities providing professional practice doctoral programs in order to maintain the

credibility of both past and future graduates of education Ed. D. programs and to successfully differentiate the Ed. D. from the Ph. D.

APPENDIX A: CPED WORKING PRINCIPLES

We, the members of CPED, believe:

"The professional doctorate in education prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession."

With this understanding, we have identified the following statements that will focus a research and development agendas to test, refine, and validate principles for the professional doctorate in education.

The Professional Doctorate in Education:

Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice.

Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships.

Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.

Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, that links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry.

Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice.

Developed by the CPED Consortium, October 2009

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF DiP PROJECTS CURRENTLY IN USE

University	Project Types Approved for DiP
Arizona State University	Action Research
Cal State – Sacramento	Case Study
Cal State – Fresno	Embedded field work at school or higher education setting
Cal State – Long Beach	Professional Seminar aimed at leadership qualities resulting in dissertation
Cal State – San Diego	Research and writing seminar sequence emphasizing collaboration and engagement
Duquesne University	Study of Problem of Practice, Educational Platform Briefing, Grant Proposal, Legislative Proposal/White Paper, Professional Development Plan, Community Development Plan, Professional Articles, Community Publication
Indiana University	Policy Analysis, Program Evaluation Substantive field-based improvement project
Lynn University	Consultancy Model, Group Work
Rutgers University	Problem of Practice in student’s workplace
Saint Louis University	Team Report and/or individual Analysis Report
San Diego State University	Problem of Practice within public school, college or university
San Francisco State	Quantitative, Qualitative or mixed methods dealing with a significant issue of practice or policy
University of Arkansas	Research Dissertation, Program Evaluation, Policy Formulation
University of Central Florida	Program Evaluation, School/Curriculum Improvement Plan, Design-based Research, Policy Analysis, School/Organization Improvement Plan, Systematic Literature Review
University of Colorado - Denver	Thematic Dissertation
University of Hawaii	Action Research
University of Louisville	Modified manuscript Model
University of Oklahoma	Thematic, Problem-based, Evaluation Study
University of Southern California	Thematic dissertation in groups working in a client organization to solve a problem of practice
Vanderbilt University	Report written by team of three students

Source. Information obtained from published articles or individual university websites.

APPENDIX C: UCF IRB APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Jeffrey C. Biddle and Co-PI: David N. Boote**

Date: **February 12, 2014**

Dear Researcher:

On 2/12/2014, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: Identifying project types most effective for use as the Dissertation in Practice for the Education Doctorate in the University of Central Florida's College of Education and Human Performance
Investigator: Jeffrey C. Biddle
IRB Number: SBE-14-10008
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 02/12/2014 01:09:43 PM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

IRB Coordinator

**APPENDIX D: SCHOOL DISTRICT RESEARCH REQUEST APPROVAL
LETTER**

March 3, 2014

Mr. Jeff Biddle
University of Central Florida
Department of Educational and Human Sciences
South Lake Campus
1250 N. Hancock Road
Clermont, FL 34711

Dear Mr. Biddle:

This letter serves as final approval to conduct your research study entitled, "Identifying Project Types most effective for use as the Dissertation in Practice for the Education Doctorate in the University of Central Florida's College of Education in Human Performance."

Per information submitted in your request, please note/adhere to the following:

- This research will be conducted to fulfill requirements for a doctoral degree through the University of Central Florida.
- All procedures set forth in the approved research request must be followed as approved by [REDACTED]
- The confidentiality of the district, schools, administrators, teachers and students will be maintained at all times.
- The district will be identified as a "district in Central Florida" or a similar identifier.
- Participation in the interview process is strictly voluntary on the part of [REDACTED] staff members.
- All participants must sign the approved consent form to participate in the research interview.
- Participants are to be fully informed about audio taping interviews.
- The staff members recommended by [REDACTED] for invitations to participate include:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- All Florida statutes and district policies and procedures must be followed at all times.
- A copy of the results of the research must be provided to the district upon completion.

Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]. I wish you much success with this research project.

Yours truly,

[REDACTED]

Director of Evaluation and Accountability

"Equal Opportunity in Education and Employment"

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT



IDENTIFYING PROJECT TYPES MOST EFFECTIVE FOR USE AS THE DISSERTATION IN
PRACTICE FOR THE EDUCATION DOCTORATE PROGRAM IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE.

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s): Jeffrey Biddle, M.A., M.P.A.
Faculty Supervisor: David Boote, Ph.D.

Investigational Site(s): University of Central Florida

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study which will include about 12 people. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are either currently enrolled in the Education Doctorate program at UCF with over ten years experience in K-12 schools or are a current administrator or teacher/leader identified as "highly effective". You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

The person doing this research is Jeff Biddle of the UCF Department of Education and Health Sciences. Because the researcher is a graduate student he is being guided by David Boote, a UCF faculty supervisor in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.



University of Central Florida IRB
IRB NUMBER: SBE-14-10008
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 3/4/2014

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to determine which types of school improvement projects would be most effective as a dissertation in practice format to support student success in the workplace. The data collected will be disseminated to the Education Doctorate program coordinator and faculty within the UCF College of Education and Human Performance to aid in the continuing improvement and redesign of the education doctorate program.

What you will be asked to do in the study: This is a qualitative research design using interviews to collect information for dissertation in practice in the EdD program. The researcher will use audio recording of all interviews to capture the data accurately and completely.

Location: Interviews will be conducted on UCF main campus or at an office/classroom of the participant.

Time required: The interview should last approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

Audio taping:

You will be audio taped during this study. If you do not want to be audio recorded, you can still participate in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If you are audio taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be maintained only until the completion of the study and the results are finalized.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study.

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of UCF.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to: *Jeff Biddle*, Graduate Student, Doctor of Education Program, College of Education and Human Performance () or Dr. David Boote, Faculty Supervisor, J

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.
-



Withdrawing from the study:

If you decide to leave the study, contact the investigator so that the investigator can select another participant. The person in charge of the research study can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include determination by the researcher that you do not meet the selection criteria or the research study is no longer in your best interest.

Results of the research:

You will be notified when the research is completed and may review the results upon request.

Your signature below indicates your permission to take part in this research.

DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THE IRB EXPIRATION DATE BELOW

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent



University of Central Florida IRB
IRB NUMBER: SBE-14-10008
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 3/4/2014

**APPENDIX F: CURRENT AND FUTURE POSITIONS
OF ED. D. IN EDUCATION STUDENTS IN K-12**

Current Position	Future Position
Assistant director of instructional design	Director of instructional support
12th grade English Teacher	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Charter School Manager, Program Accountability	Working in the field, higher up, possibly forming a department
2 nd grade classroom teacher	Classroom teacher
Literacy Coach	Maintain until another opportunity presents itself
Teacher/New teacher coach	Research and writing
Director, Specialized Services, ESE	On-line curriculum development
Instructional Coach at elementary school	Retain or consulting for state/national policy
K-8 principal	Keep job after graduation
School psychologist	Leadership position
English Instructor at Florida virtual school	Virtual K-12 Learning
Assistant Principal	National Educator
STEM Program Development and Training Specialist	Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent of a school district
Instructional Coach - Secondary Social Studies, Curriculum Services,	Retain position
AP Literature and composition instructor	Director of the Curriculum Department (unsure)
Staffing Specialist Intervention Coordinator at Elementary School	Principal, run an advocacy center, author/presenter
5 th grade teacher/Peer reviewer	Region office helping to develop and improve ESE programs and teach at local university
English 3 instructor	TBD, Director of curriculum
Director of Communications, College of Ed	Reading research and teaching
Instructional Support teacher with the district Transition Team in ESE	Director of charter school, work for a foundation, teach pre-service teachers in higher education
Program Specialist, ESE PK-12	Director, ESE Curriculum PK-12
Teach middle school students with Autism	Administrator at a UCPCFL school
Varying Exceptionalities teacher/ESE	District position or administrator
Math teacher/coach	Continue
Classroom psychology and theory of knowledge in secondary IB program	No idea, see what happens
IB Biology teacher	Continue in same position
Creative Writing teacher in middle school	Work with language arts curricula at district level
Elementary school media specialist	Teach educational technology
Science Dept. Chair (IB Biology & Chemistry at private IB school)	C&I Coordinator and/or Associate HS Director or Instructional coach or Science Curriculum Coordinator
Resource Compliance Specialist (ESE Staffing Specialist) and Support Facilitation Teacher	Eventually (after retirement from public school) Teach college students
3 rd grade teacher	Greater position in education field
4 th grade staff coordinator	Continue in same position

**APPENDIX G: ADMINISTRATOR/TEACHER-LEADER PARTICIPANT
DESCRIPTIVE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS**

A-1

Participant A-1 was the superintendent of a rural school district in Central Florida. She has served in many administrative positions including assistant superintendent of a larger, urban school district and has a total of 32 years of experience in K-12 education. As an appointed superintendent with many years of experience, I considered her an expert so she became the source for identifying others in the district that she considers highly effective.

When asked “What do highly effective teacher/leaders understand that others do not?” she responded that they should be “extremely well versed in rigorous instruction, proficient at asking higher order thinking questions, and able to communicate the practice of why they do what they do and why they know it’s effective to other adults.” She believes that these traits are not uncommon, just untapped. Many highly effective teachers are “hidden in the organization” and doing well in the classroom but not noticed as they do not have the time collaborate with other teachers. “They may be the leader and not know it.”

When asked the question concerning an outside expert, she responded that she would want “someone to help us build an academic schedule for both students and teachers that facilitated pure individualized learning. Built-in time for teachers to collaborate and have that form of PD that is closest to classroom. Maybe school improvement plan but I am not saying that.” Not a compliance activity but a design, not a redesign. When we redesign we are looking at things that we have always done and the past. Give me a clean canvas and let’s create what the new model looks like.”

As a follow-up question, I asked the superintendent what skills she would expect a graduate of the Ed. D. program to have and she was quite specific in saying that she would expect them “to understand research, data, and statistics. To be able to formulate and put together an analysis that has educational value.” She added that she thought they should be resourceful and know where to find grants.

A-2

Participant A-2 was currently serving as a middle school principal. He was a math and physical education teacher for two years and has been in administration for 25 years where he served in positions as elementary, middle and high school principals. He currently holds a Masters' degree in Education Leadership. When asked "What do highly effective teacher/leaders understand that others do not?", he responded that they should be "Competent in field, build relationships, communicate. Lead by example, believe in what they do."

When asked the question concerning an outside expert, he responded that he would want a "leadership coach, someone to point the staff in right direction. Somebody who has been there and understands what we do. Acts as a coach, not a mentor, sits by you but does not direct. Asks the right questions, if going in wrong direction would ask if you have considered this?" I then asked a follow-up question requesting that he explain what he meant by the wrong direction and he provided examples of school design/improvement, curriculum improvement and program evaluation.

I then asked him the question concerning what skills he would expect a graduate of the Ed. D. program to have. His response included "leadership, content, collaboration, and confidence and must be able to build relationships." He firmly believes that "teachers make the difference" as they must "interact well with the students, other teachers, administration and the district."

A-3

Participant A-3 was a high school teacher in his sixth year. He was teaching history, physics, and government and was designated his school's Teacher of the Year in 2011. When asked "What do highly effective teacher/leaders understand that others do not?", he responded that they should be "willing and able to spend time and effort to help other teachers improve instruction in the school and district. Give people a chance to talk and share their opinions. Listen to others and make concerted effort to find solutions. Help them be part of the solution. If you tell them what to do, there is no buy in; they don't really own it. If collaborative, then it becomes their idea. Competent in field, build relationships, communicate. Lead by example, believe in what they do."

When asked the question concerning an outside expert, he responded rather adamantly that he "did not necessarily want an outside person but a recognized leader within the school." He would create a teacher-leader position in school with teaching half time and coaching others half time. "Three periods a day would work with other teachers to improve best practice. Evaluate curriculum/outcomes. Have the flexibility to meet with teachers of same subjects to discuss curriculum." This would change the current policy of what teachers do. "They must also research literature to find out what works and use data to implement new methods."

A-4

The fourth participant is a middle school teacher who was selected as the district Teacher of the Year in 2012. She teaches 8th grade Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) physical science and is the AVID coordinator. She has a total of six years of teaching experience and loves teaching, saying “You have to be passionate.” When asked “What do highly effective teacher/leaders understand that others do not?”, she responded that they should “Believe in school/district initiatives and embrace change. Find great mentors and think outside the box.” She learned quickly to network with other people who were positive and stay away from negative teachers. “Communicate well with others, network, be a go-getter. Good collaborator and give attention where attention is needed. Have an open door with other teachers.” She also believed that it is important to be diligent and follow through. “If you are assigned a task, you stick with it. Being a part, get involved in projects that you are passionate about. If on a committee, get involved and be a part of the positive vibe on your campus. Play a role in the success.”

When asked the question concerning hiring an outside expert, she would want someone to help create more time for lesson study, more time for teachers to sit down and plan together. Curriculum improvement to help align subject area with grade level was another issue. Also mentioned was program improvement and school improvement plans that would allow more collaboration between teachers. Enhanced professional development “between teachers and taught by teachers that are respected.” Conduct policy analysis for school improvement in order to evaluate program evaluation and

effectiveness. I asked her the same question concerning what skills she would expect a graduate of the Ed. D. program to have and she replied “able to research, help with data analysis, understand data and make data driven decisions/instruction. Help with finding/writing grants“.

A-5

Participant A-5 is a program specialist at the district office. She has previous experience as a clinical laboratory technician but left the field because “healthcare was all about money” and she wanted to improve the lives of patients. She is now certified in chemistry, biology and reading in Grades 6-12. She taught high school for five years and became an instructional leader at another school where she taught an array of courses including chemistry and physical education. At the time of the interview, she was involved in school and curriculum improvement, professional development, and teaching and learning.

When asked “What do highly effective teacher/leaders understand that others do not?”, she responded that they should “Rely on data to determine effectiveness. Build relationships with students whether affluent or poor.” She is a firm believer in “social justice” and believes everyone is equal and all lives are equal. “They see that I care about them, and so they want to learn.” She uses multiple teaching methods to do whatever it takes to reach the kids. “Make real world connections. Relate science to their grandma, their sister.” Teachers must also be very engaging, be good listeners, and be “very real, build a relationship and connect to the learner.” She says highly effective teachers “can

pull something from you and relate it to education--pedagogy, cognitive complexity, or content.”

When asked the question concerning an outside expert, she would want someone to help “study school improvement in regards the effectiveness of site based professional development by teacher leaders in a hybrid role. Help teachers with curriculum improvement.” She believes teachers should have one foot in the classroom and one foot as coach for professional development coach in schools. Conduct design based research and ask “Will it improve teacher practice? Bring me something that’s relevant to my school, to my student population.” Always ask “Does this policy work? Must be able to perform program evaluation and analyze district/school policies.”

**APPENDIX H: STUDENT PARTICIPANT
DESCRIPTIVE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS**

S-1

S-1, the first student participant interviewed was a teacher at a rural high school and has been in her position since 2000. She teaches exceptional student education (ESE) classes, creates individual educational plans (IEP) for all students, composes lessons for seven levels of math, 14 levels of reading, and other lessons in biology, economics, and social skills. She also completes progress monitoring and data collection in middle and high schools. When asked what her major concerns were, she responded that there is too much paperwork required along with an overall lack of resources. In her school, no curriculum for high school ESE had been purchased in the past seven years. “I enjoy creating curriculum but now that the classes are so overloaded, it’s gotten overwhelming.” The major issue she has at her school is that the ESE kids do not have the transportation required to participate in clubs, sports or after-school tutoring. Other schools in the district have an activity bus that takes the students to these programs at other schools.

When asked what she would do to improve her school, she said it would be to find money, write grants to improve transportation. “I would love to be able to learn about grant writing through the Ed. D. program and be able to come back into the real world and help the kids that need after-school tutoring.” She said that in her area, the mothers usually do not have a car, so there is no way she can drive to pick them up and take them to these programs.

S-2

S-2 was a Curriculum Resource Teacher/Instructional Coach at an elementary school in a large urban school district. She participates in testing administration, planning, organizing data, and writing school improvement plans. Asked about her major concerns, she stated very directly that it was district leadership. “Their priorities are mixed up, and they do not value experience. They expect too much, are unorganized, and trying to do too much too fast.” She believes that many teachers are resigning or retiring because they are disgruntled with the changes.

When asked what she would do to improve her school, she would complete a school improvement plan to define root problems and root causes. “Having a team that would take in the data and identify goals, barriers, strategies, and action steps could really make a difference. I would want to do this with the teachers; our teachers want to do better.” She then mentioned professional development as a way to improve instruction by achieving small goals without trying to change too much. “Now we are doing so many things that nothing is getting done well.”

S-3

S-3 has been a high school mathematics teacher for 15 years. His duties include teaching mathematics, serving as the mathematics team coach, sponsor of the mathematics club, helps other teachers in lesson planning and test writing and is a part-time mathematics coach for Algebra I. His top concern is teachers teaching poorly. When asked how to improve teaching he thought “conducting a gap analysis to determine the differences in teachers would be a good start. Then review literature to find a solution.” He said teachers are forced to try new things but do not know if they will be successful. “They try programs recommended by others but not tested.”

He is also concerned about teacher recruitment, retention, and morale. “I see a lot of frustration. Paperwork, pay, Marzano, evaluation models. Not high spirits. We are asked to do more but not compensated to perform the extra work.” Teacher evaluation was also a big concern. “Last year a component of my evaluation was the results of FCAT reading scores. I teach math, so reading scores had nothing to do with me.” His other concern is with the achievement gaps in mathematics between African American and Caucasians/Asians.

He stated that he would like to design a school from scratch with no rules. It would include teaching 12 different languages in elementary school because “research shows they can learn languages easier then but not later in school.” He would also work to “create an atmosphere of care and respect for teaching. Kids are inquisitive, they want to learn.” He further stated that somewhere in elementary school learning stops being fun and kids start hating school. He wants to design a school where classes are “teacher led,

student discovered at their own pace. Every kid can learn math at some level in some amount of time. Create an atmosphere of care and respect for teaching.”

S-4

S-4 was a high school literacy coach and has been involved in K-12 education for 25 years. She holds a master's degree in reading and spent four years as a teacher at UCF. Her top concern is the reading ability of her students. "To me that is a foundation for life. My basic goal is to help kids read so that they can have a productive life in society." Within her school, she has no organizational issues but feels the district office is too political. "They don't know what's best for kids, but think they do." When asked what she would do to improve her school she said it would be to create staff development for teachers concerning literacy at the school and district levels. "I believe teacher skills can improve through professional development."

S-5

S-5 was a K-6 music teacher who was also certified to teach physical education. He has 18 years of experience teaching in an elementary school on the east coast of Florida. He teaches seven classes including one homeroom and a music class for each grade level. His top concerns are all the testing and the value added model for evaluation. He teaches music but is evaluated on the school wide scores. "Last year's reading and math scores have nothing to do with me."

Asked what he would do to improve his school, he stated school improvement/design, curriculum improvement and program improvement/evaluation. His specific comments dealt with testing and teacher tenure. "High stakes testing where so much weight is put on one exam, either FCAT or end of course exams. Too much weight put on one day. Redesign high stakes testing." He believes bad teachers are protected by tenure or the principal. "Some of the dead weights need to go that are teaching the same way they were teaching 25 years ago. I want the ability to keep good teachers around and pay them well."

S-6

S-6 worked for a district department of curriculum and instruction where she served as an instructional coach for secondary school social studies, creating standards-based support documents to support teaching and learning for planning, teaching, and assessment. She also works to create key vocabulary, essential questions, and digital curriculum. Her duties include the development of professional development materials. She has been in this position for 21 years and has a total of 24 years' experience in K-12.

When asked about her top concerns she replied "Clear, consistent communication. Decisions are made that affect people, and not all stakeholders are considered in making decisions." Asked what she would do to improve her district, her first answer was program evaluation in order to learn how to build teacher capacity to improve test scores. She believes that school improvement plans, professional development, and school implementation plans are also very important.

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